

# Getz Dance Library: Assessment Statements

## From Peter Bassett

To Whom It May Concern:

The library of books and periodicals on dance assembled by Leslie Getz is almost certainly unique amongst the private dance collections of the world. Brought together by the enthusiasm of an individual, rather than a national institution or dance educational establishment it has achieved what most of these, with their limited funding and need to feed their closely defined specialist requirements, could not do. It aimed at being as comprehensive a collection as possible on all forms of dance and, in so doing, has become an invaluable resource for the study of dance in its many varied aspects.

As librarian and archivist (1986-2000) of the then Laban Centre, London, I relied on Getz's monthly newsletter, *Attitudes & Arabesques*, to keep me informed of current mainstream international publications on dance as well as many out-of-the-way titles in the field. This was extraordinarily valuable information on a subject that still lacks any world-wide bibliographical database.

Currently it is becoming ever more difficult to locate and purchase back issues of periodicals, especially those published in other countries. The Getz Dance Library includes remarkable holdings (many in complete runs) of all the major English-language serials, which further enhances the significance of the collection. If books represent the considered thinking on a subject, then periodicals reflect the immediate reaction as events and developments take place. They are thus valuable no matter how recent or old the journal or magazine may be and are an essential part of any research library.

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of this collection as a resource for the serious study of dance at all academic levels. For any university with a research-oriented graduate dance program it would be an invaluable acquisition.

Peter Bassett, FCLIP, Dance Librarian & Archivist Emeritus, Laban Centre  
(now Laban), London.

## **From Lisa Fusillo**

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my sincere pleasure to offer my comments on the Getz Dance Library. The Getz Dance Library is well known and widely recognized by international dance scholars as one of the most comprehensive personal libraries on dance in the world. The collection is, without question, one of the most significant resources of dance literature and materials to be found.

Periodical literature is an essential component to any library and vital to dance scholars, particularly since dance literature is fairly “young” in comparison to the literature in the other arts. The size and scope of the periodical collection, with complete runs, is unprecedented in any library, public or private. This periodical collection is regarded by dance scholars as a superb treasure and is the envy of many public arts libraries.

I have had many opportunities to explore the magnificent collection of dance materials contained in the Getz Dance Library. The comprehensive nature of the library is inclusive of all types and styles of dance. The range of materials is extraordinary, containing a diverse list of subjects within and related to the field of dance. The enormous body of materials in the collection includes an extensive number of volumes and many rare editions covering a multitude of areas (dance history, dance philosophy, dance technique, dance medicine, etc.), styles (ballet, modern, tap, jazz, historical, social, folk, ethnic, popular, etc), and other aspects of dance; as well as ephemera vitally important to documenting the history of dance, such as souvenir programs, exhibition catalogs, press kits, memorial monographs, etc. While a majority of the materials are in English, the collection also includes important and, in many cases, extremely rare works in several other languages, particularly Russian.

The Getz Dance Library is a collection of major importance. The acquisition of this library would bring worldwide recognition to any institution and provide a center for serious dance scholarship in all areas of dance research.

Lisa Fusillo, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Head, Department of Dance, University of Georgia, is also a graduate of the Royal Ballet School (London). She regularly presents her research at international conferences and has authored several articles, including “The Influence of Italian Dance Traditions and Techniques on Early 20th Century Ballet, Massine's *Le Tricorne* – The Russian-Spanish Collaboration”; “Teaching Dance Heritage in the Classroom and Studio”; “Surviving in Dance with hallux rigidus”; and “Charles Weidman” in *The Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*. She contributed five major articles to the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, and “Dance in American Theatre” to *The Cambridge Guide to American Theatre*. Fusillo is the only American to be elected as a Council Member for the European Association of Dance Historians.

## From James Neufeld

To Whom it May Concern:

I have had the opportunity to examine the Getz Dance Library, a private library which rivals and even exceeds in scope the collections of most public institutions on the subject. Its great virtue is its wide-ranging eclecticism. Especially in the field of dance history, essential facts are found in memoirs, recollections, souvenir and memorial publications and other ephemeral sources frequently excluded by institutional acquisition policies. Leslie Getz has made it her mission to preserve precisely these sources, along with the general book literature of the field and the major academic works, so that her collection offers exceptional resources to the scholar about all types and aspects of dance. The impressive holdings in dance periodicals, both academic and non-academic, reflect the omnivorous tastes of this collector, and contribute substantially to the importance of the library. To have such a range and selection of serials in one collection, so many in complete runs, is virtually unheard of. The library also includes significant signed copies and inscriptions. The Getz Dance Library would be an acquisition of major importance for any university with a graduate program that emphasizes dance scholarship.

James Neufeld, Ph.D. (University of Chicago), Professor of English Literature, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, is the author of *Power to Rise: The Story of the National Ballet of Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1996) and *Passion to Dance: The Story of the National Ballet of Canada* (Dundurn, 2011). His writings on dance have appeared in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Dance in Canada*, the *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *Dance Now*, and *Ballet Review*.

## From Dee Reynolds

To Whom It May Concern:

In the late 1990s, when I was teaching at the University of Bristol, I was the recipient of a Leverhulme Research Fellowship for my book project on Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. At that time, a major hurdle in my research was the difficulty of obtaining relevant books and periodicals. For my previous research, I had used the Cambridge University Library, which, like Oxford, is a copyright library for the UK. However, for dance research, even this library could not meet my needs. For instance, I could not find there the articles I needed in *Ballet Review*, *Dance Observer*, *Contact Quarterly*, *Dance Chronicle*, *Dance Index*, or *Studies in Dance History*. I was fortunate to be close to London and the library of the Laban Centre (now Laban), which has a very good specialist dance collection. However, there were still numerous items which I could not obtain there. In 1998, I was appointed to a Chair at the University of Manchester, which has an excellently stocked library. However, its holdings on dance are minimal.

As part of my Leverhulme Fellowship I decided to undertake an extended trip to New York in the summer of 1998, so that I could research in the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, as well as interview dancers in the Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham companies. I had already booked this trip and rented accommodation for the family when I learned that the library was to be closed for a significant part of my stay. By this stage, I had drawn up a very long list of books and periodicals to consult, as well as videos to watch. The task began to appear impossible, but I was determined to accomplish the maximum in the time available.

After my arrival in New York, when I was working in the Dance Collection every minute that it was open, I was introduced to Leslie Getz by a colleague who knew about her dance library. Leslie offered to allow me to use her library when the Dance Collection closed. So I immediately crossed off my list of items to consult in the Dance Collection the books and periodicals in her holdings. To say that Leslie's generosity saved my life is only a small exaggeration! Not only did I find in her collection a huge number of items I had already identified as relevant to my project, but also, through her guidance, I discovered many other sources.

Dance Studies is in a very unusual position as regards the availability of research materials, because it is a relatively new academic discipline. For that reason, even the best endowed academic institutions, such as Cambridge and Oxford in the UK, have not invested in dance books and periodicals. Dance scholars are often dispersed in different disciplines (I myself hold a Chair in French Studies, not Dance Studies, which does not exist at my university), and this makes it more difficult to acquire precious resources. Especially since the 1980s, Dance Studies has burgeoned, and is now recognized as a dynamic, interdisciplinary field. But even this new-found recognition and associated financial support cannot solve the problem of the scarcity of research material. Back runs of major periodicals are hard to come by and many of the books are also scarce. In this context, it would be difficult to overstate the importance of the Getz Dance Library and the benefits for any university library of acquiring this outstanding and rare collection.

Dee Reynolds, Ph.D., Chair, French Studies, University of Manchester.  
Author of *Rhythmic Studies: Uses of Energy in the Dances of Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham* (Alton, Hampshire: Dance Books, 2007) and *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices* (Bristol, UK / Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2012).

## From Elizabeth Souritz

To Whom It May Concern:

I know the collection of dance books and journals belonging to Leslie Getz and have had the opportunity to work with it. It certainly is a quite exceptional collection. I am sure not only private owners, but even institutions specializing in arts are few that possess one as rich as this one.

I have been specially interested in books in Russian. Of course this collection is mostly a collection of books in English, but there is also quite a big section of books in other languages, including Russian. There are few books published in the 1900-1930s, but I must say that at that time there were not many books published and not many copies still exist. But as to books published after the Second World War and especially [sic] after the 1960s the Getz collection has most of them.

On the whole, I repete [sic] – this is one of the very best collections of dance books and journals I have ever seen.

Elizabeth Sourits (Sourits), Ph.D., a Senior Research Fellow at the State Institute for Research in the Arts, is Russia's most distinguished dance historian. She graduated from the Moscow Theater Institute in 1949 and then qualified as a candidate of Science at the Institute for Research in the Arts, where she has worked since 1964. She is the author of *Soviet Choreographers in the 1920s* (1979), *Carlo Blasis in Russia* (1993), *M. M. Mordkin: Ballet Dancer* (2003), *Ballet and Dance in the U.S.A.* (2004), and *Dance Artist and Balletmaster: Leonid Massine* (2012). In addition she has edited numerous volumes by and/or about Alexander Gorsky, and has contributed to books about Isadora Duncan and Léonide Massine. A familiar presence at international conferences, she writes frequently for journals and reference works published in Russia as well as the West. She received the title of Honored Art Worker of the Russian Federation in 2000.

## From Mary Strow

To Whom It May Concern:

The Getz Dance Library reflects six decades of meticulous collecting of dance materials by Leslie Getz, whose knowledge, dedication, and love for the subject has been a consuming passion. She has built her collection with care and commitment, and an eye toward comprehensive coverage, especially with respect to periodicals, which are such a vital part of the literature and are almost impossible to find in back issue.

Unlike archives focused on the life and work of an individual dancer/choreographer, or those centered on a particular dance form or style, Getz's collection is broad in scope, covering a wide range of dance traditions, histories, geographic regions, and personalities. From ballet to ballroom and hula to hip-hop the resources in the Getz Dance Library will be invaluable to students and scholars alike. While this is largely an English-language collection, there are also several hundred books in Russian and substantial holdings in several European languages – mainly Danish, Dutch, and Swedish. Altogether, the library comprises over 12,000 items [not including souvenir programs, press kits, playbills, and ephemera], over half of which are books and the balance are periodical issues.

To have a collection of this scope, size, and utility come on the market is an enormous opportunity for any institution seeking to develop its library resources in support of a graduate degree program that focuses on dance research.

Mary Strow, Head, Reference Department, Wells Library, Indiana University, Bloomington. Author, under the name Mary S. Bopp, of *Research in Dance: A Guide to Resources* (New York & Toronto: G.K. Hall & Company, 1993).

## From Leland Windreich

To Whom It May Concern:

I became aware of the Getz Dance Library and its resources in the 1980s. At the time I had just started research for a monograph-length article on Léonide Massine's *Aleko*, later published in *Dance Chronicle*, and I needed documentation from a variety of books and periodicals. I found the Getz collection had everything I needed, with the exception of holdings of daily newspapers. My research time was consequently cut to fraction of what I would have experienced had I used the considerably smaller libraries in a variety of cities. Travel and correspondence were thus reduced to a minimum.

The periodical literature is a key resource for research in the dance field. The holdings of the Getz Dance Library of both academic journals and popular magazines is remarkably comprehensive. With the exception of the Dance Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, I know of no other library that offers such an extensive array of dance serials.

There have been two major eras in which the publication of English-language books on the dance flourished. The first was in the 1930s and 1940s, when the touring Ballets Russes companies brought the art of ballet to communities in England and the Americas. The second was in the so-called "dance boom" of the 1960s and 1970s. Books published in these periods and many subsequent volumes are no longer available except on the antiquarian market. The Getz Dance Library acquired these materials when they were still to be found and continues, to date, to assiduously add new titles from both mainstream and academic presses. The Getz collection would be an ideal cornerstone for any university with a commitment to dance scholarship or a public performing arts library that seeks to have a strong dance research component.

Leland Windreich, Retired Librarian, Dance Historian and Dance Critic, is the author of over 300 articles on dance in American, British, and Canadian periodicals, both scholarly and popular, since 1977. He has also written two books: *Dance Encounters* (1998), *June Roper: Ballet Starmaker* (1999), and

is the editor of a third, *Dancing for De Basil* (1996), all published by Dance Collection Danse, Toronto, Canada.