

# **SUSTAINING AMERICA'S DANCE LEGACY**

**How the Field of Dance Heritage Can  
Build Capacity and Broaden Access to Dance  
in the Next Ten Years**

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**National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum**

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Forum Facilitation and Plan Development  
**Institute for Cultural Policy and Practice  
at Virginia Tech**

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**Dance Heritage Coalition**  
**1725 Eye St., NW – Suite 300**  
**Washington, DC 20006**

**Phone: 202-530-3209 Fax: 202-530-3210**

**E-mail: [info@danceheritage.org](mailto:info@danceheritage.org)**

**Website: <http://www.danceheritage.org>**

### **American Dance Festival**

Laura Clark Brown, Director of Archives (to 2001)

Debra Elfenbein, Director of Archives (2002- )

### **Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University**

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, Curator

### **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival**

Norton Owen, Director of Preservation

### **Library of Congress**

Vicky Risner, Head of Acquisitions and Processing, Music Division

### **The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dance Division**

Madeleine Nichols, Curator

### **The Ohio State University, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute**

Nena Couch, Curator

### **San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum**

David R. Humphrey, Executive Director

### **DHC Staff**

Sali Ann Kriegsman, President (to 2001)

Elizabeth Aldrich, Director

**New Members of the DHC since the Forum:**

**Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture  
Smithsonian Institution**

**Dance Notation Bureau, Inc.**

**Institute for Cultural Policy and Practice  
School of the Arts  
Virginia Tech  
305 Performing Arts Building (0141)  
Blacksburg, VA 24061**

**Phone: 540-231-6616**

**Fax: 540-231-7321**

**E-mail [icpp@vt.edu](mailto:icpp@vt.edu)**

John McCann, Project Director  
Richard Evans, Facilitator and Strategist  
Helen Graves, Writer and Editor  
Christine Holmfelt, Project Coordinator

Of all the arts, dance most fully reflects the richness, diversity, and expressiveness of American culture. And especially in the 20th century, the United States has been the world capital of dance—theatrical dance, popular dance, dance of different communities. But the collection and preservation of sources relating to dance have lagged far behind the development of the art itself. Every scholar interested in the history of American culture and society will welcome a systematic effort to collect, preserve, and make readily available the rich record of dance in the United States.

**Eric Foner, President, American Historical Association**



The poems of Homer were first written down about 2,600 years ago; at that moment an otherwise ephemeral art was suddenly preserved for the millennia. It took the invention of writing to do that.

The twentieth century has seen the invention of media and technology that, for the first time ever, make it possible to preserve the heritage of dance. With that we have our first opportunity to preserve the legacy of a century of innovation, and pass it along to the creative men and women who will follow us. Let us not miss this grand opportunity.

**Lewis Hyde, Henry Luce Professor of Art and Politics, Kenyon College**



When we look to the south, to enormous countries like Argentina and Brazil, and also to Colombia, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the imperative of dance studies becomes acute. And the reason is: tango sums up black Argentina, samba is Brazil. Merengue defines in many ways Dominican identity and so does bomba dancing for Puerto Rico. We are not studying dances. We are looking at emblems of whole nations.

Accordingly, Latin American dances carry, in their wake, histories of literature, gesture, art and philosophy as well as the physical moves of bodies. Tango is a full-scale cultural industry in Buenos Aires. Mambo becomes more and more recognized for what it is, a danced manifesto, originally based on spiritual ideas from the classical religion of Kongo.

Meanwhile in the black United States, b-boyin' provides without doubt some of the richest choreography created on the planet in the last century and in the 21st. The wit in poetically translating our electronic age into choreography—the electric boogie—will keep scholars writing and pondering for a long time to come.

Dance, in sum, is critical to world knowledge precisely because of its commitment to ecstasy and transcendence.

**Robert Farris Thompson, Colonel John Trumbull Professor of History of Art, Yale University**

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# Executive Summary

The National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum is a major leadership initiative of the Dance Heritage Coalition, putting forward a new vision and plan for celebrating and sharing America's dance in all its richness and diversity. Greater knowledge of and access to this extraordinary and abundant legacy will be achieved by advancing the field of dance documentation and preservation.

The stated mission of the Dance Heritage Coalition is "to make accessible, enhance, augment, and preserve the materials that document the artistic accomplishments in dance of the past, present, and future." DHC convened the Forum because the consequences of inaction are immeasurable. The legacy of America's dance artists is simply too valuable to be left behind as we move into a new millennium.

The Forum has involved dozens of prominent professionals from both inside and outside the field of dance heritage—including dance historians, choreographers, notators, performing arts librarians, archivists, funders, technology and media specialists, administrators, presenters, and others – who reviewed the field's achievements in the past decade, and articulated the outcomes that are needed in the next ten years.

In order to make more dance materials available to the many constituencies that benefit from America's dance legacy, and to build capacity for dance documentation and preservation at the local, regional, and national levels, the participants in the Forum identified and agreed upon a set of **Goals for Dance Heritage—2000–2010**, which the entire field will work in concert to address. These goals—and the strategies to achieve them—address five broad areas:

- Improve dance and dance heritage education

In order to promote greater dance literacy by strengthening the teaching of dance documentation and preservation, and by broadening the use of dance heritage materials:

*Support the inclusion of documentation and preservation in dance education programs*

*Foster better use of technology in dance heritage education*

*Advocate that the field of dance education embrace diverse dance traditions*

- Build local capacity and regional coordination

In order to establish new linkages and forms of outreach that will enable effective action:

*Link spaces and resources at the local, national, and international levels*

*Provide training and get tools into the hands of the broader dance community*

*Undertake outreach and information-sharing through local, regional, and national service organizations, dance festivals, presenting organizations, and other performance venues and events*

- Mediate intellectual property rights issues

In order to manage intellectual property rights issues so as to honor both creators' and performers' rights and access rights:

*Educate all constituents about intellectual and cultural property rights*

*Designate an organization or group of organizations to speak formally on behalf of dance heritage*

*Explore the advantages of creating a rights clearance organization for dance*

- Improve and broaden implementation of dance documentation and archival practices

In order to improve the quality and increase the quantity of dance heritage materials:

*Broaden awareness of, education on, and training in documentation and archival practice*

*Collaborate in the development of improved documentation and preservation tools, technologies, and media*

*Develop systematic approaches to decisions on documentation and preservation at the local, regional, and national levels*

- Build alliances and advocacy

To foster alliances that will promote the recognition of dance as a vital part of the larger culture, and to enhance the nation's investment in the sharing of dance knowledge and practice:

*Map the dance heritage field*

*Promote a better understanding of the intrinsic contribution of dance to society*

*Convene and communicate around multiple constituencies to ensure that the goals set forth here are voiced at meetings of scholars, archivists, dance practitioners, funders, and others*

*Support greater activism in support of dance documentation, preservation, and access*

*Determine the appropriate role for the Dance Heritage Coalition to play in the next ten years*

In May 2000 the Forum's Strategy Group drew upon these goals and strategies to propose a series of **Major Program Initiatives** that will build a strong platform for the implementation of the full plan:

- Mapping the Field  
*Survey the current state of dance documentation, preservation, and access*  
*Map the dance heritage field in terms of capacity and coverage*  
*Access and link existing information*  
*Establish a national database*
- Making a Case for Dance  
*Make the case to the larger dance community and general public for the documentation and preservation of America's dance heritage*  
*Create and distribute media kits*
- Righting the Rights Issue  
*Produce a near-term and long-term strategy for rights management—including the designation of a body to speak for the field in relevant cases*
- Advancing Best Practice  
*Develop case studies and create guides to best practices*  
*Launch a fellowship program in dance documentation and preservation*
- Artists' Memory Project  
*Pilot Artists' Memory Institutes to teach young artists how to create their own portfolios and older artists how to perpetuate their work*
- Networks for Change  
*Establish regional hubs to offer outreach and information-sharing and to facilitate action at the local and regional levels*  
*Work through the hubs to bridge the digital divide that prevents access to information and resources*
- Dance Portal Project  
*Establish and maintain an on-line portal with links to websites related to dance and dance heritage*

The Dance Heritage Coalition will serve as a clearinghouse for the implementation of this plan, with the full extent of its participation in that process to be defined during the organization's long-term planning process (now underway). DHC will play a leadership role during plan implementation, acting in collaboration with a wide variety of other organizations and individual leaders to ensure that the momentum of the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum is sustained throughout the field.

What do we expect the dance heritage field to achieve through the implementation of this plan? During the next ten years:

- The field will create a transparent, networked infrastructure, one that will facilitate the exchange of resources and knowledge. People and organizations at the local, regional, and national levels will have greater capacity for the work of dance documentation and preservation, and for the dissemination of dance materials. Dance heritage groups will form strategic alliances with one another and with groups working in other disciplines and communities.
- Significant advances will be made in the development of better documentation, preservation, and dissemination methods, tools, and media. The field's capacity to carry out this work will be greatly strengthened. Exemplary projects, products, and practices will be produced and disseminated. Critically endangered materials will be safeguarded. Information about dance heritage materials throughout the country, in all forms and disciplines, will be integrated, inclusive, and easily accessible.
- Dance practitioners and presenters will incorporate dance documentation and preservation into their daily activities, and will actively seek to share their efforts with others. Dance and dance education programs will incorporate more training in documentation, preservation, and access.
- New and greater support will sustain the work that must be done to advance dance documentation, preservation, and access. A compelling case will be made for this increased support—a case that is overtly inclusive in intent and in language.
- Dance will be recognized and celebrated as a vital and essential part of the cultural life of the United States.

Commitment and collaboration have been hallmarks of the work to date. The time is now to summon the will and muster the resources essential to sustained momentum, clear focus, and a decade of meaningful achievement.

# Background

## The work process

The work of the National Dance Leadership Forum was initiated, coordinated, and led by the Dance Heritage Coalition, and was supported by grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), The Pew Charitable Trusts through its grant program, the National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance (NIPAD), and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The Forum was designed and facilitated by the Institute for Cultural Policy and Practice within the School of the Arts at Virginia Tech.

In June 1999, DHC convened a Leadership Forum Advisory Committee. The Forum itself began on December 4–5, 1999, when a twelve-person Research Group met in Arlington, VA. The participants identified key opportunities and challenges that must be addressed if the field of dance documentation and preservation is to advance.

Four background papers were prepared for the next meeting: "The Scope of the Field and a Case for Inclusiveness," by Janice Ross and Sali Ann Kriegsman; "Local Initiatives in Dance Heritage," by Bonnie Brooks and Leslie Hansen Kopp; "Documentation and Dance Literacy: Uses of Technology and Notation," by Carl Wolz; and "Summoning New Myths and Models for the Future of Dance," by Richard Loveless. (Copies of these papers are available from DHC.)

From March 23–26, 2000, thirty-eight Forum participants met at the Airlie Center in Warrenton, VA, to review the Forum's goals and develop a framework for action. As the participants—dance historians, choreographers, notators, performing arts librarians, archivists, presenters, administrators, funders, technology and media specialists, and others—reviewed the achievements of the dance heritage field in the past decade and articulated the outcomes that are needed in the coming ten years, a preliminary framework of linked strategies took shape. In addition, essential leadership and alliances were identified.

A preliminary strategic plan was subsequently presented to a nineteen-member Strategy Group in Washington, DC, on May 19–20. This group developed the recommendations for goals and strategies, identified existing leadership, suggested potential allies, and proposed a series of major program initiatives designed to make the dance heritage field both more effective and more visible.

This plan is the culmination of the Forum's work process. The Dance Heritage Coalition expects to play a leadership role in coordinating its implementation.

## **Dance Heritage Coalition**

The Dance Heritage Coalition, a national alliance of major dance collections and archives, was formed in 1992 to strengthen the national dance documentation and preservation network, in response to the recommendations of a Mellon–NEA study of the needs of dance preservation, *Images of American Dance*. DHC’s mission is to make accessible, enhance, augment, and preserve the materials that document the artistic accomplishments in dance of the past, present, and future. It also now serves as a think tank and convener for the dance heritage field.

Before DHC’s establishment, its members—like most organizations struggling to manage dance heritage materials at that time—had no mechanism for communicating with one another. As DHC Chair Vicky Risner says, “There was no exchange of information about even the most elementary problems.”

Now, thanks in no small part to the efforts of DHC, the situation has changed enormously. The same funding community that launched the organization is now looking to DHC to define issues and priorities. DHC’s major projects in the past year have included not only the National Dance Leadership Forum, but also the naming of *America’s Irreplaceable Dance Treasures: the First 100*, and, through the generosity of the White House Millennium Council’s “Save America’s Treasures” program, the presentation of preservation awards (totaling \$90,000) to the Katherine Dunham Center in East Saint Louis, IL; Cross-Cultural Dance Resources in Flagstaff, AZ; and the Halla Huhm Foundation in Honolulu, HI.

The success of these initiatives has demonstrated that DHC has an important role to play in promoting the cause of dance heritage. Its work has brought greater visibility to America’s extraordinary dance legacy. DHC has also, through its convening across multiple constituencies, improved the entire field’s ability to communicate across cultural, geographical, and disciplinary boundaries; to discuss issues and intersecting concerns; and to work in cooperation to advance a common cause.

The current members of the Dance Heritage Coalition are:

- American Dance Festival
- Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University
- Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival
- Library of Congress
- The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dance Division
- The Ohio State University, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute
- San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum

# Introduction

## Dance heritage: a working definition

What is the “dance heritage field”? In order to experience American dance in all its breadth and richness, we must take the most inclusive possible view of the field: it consists of all who document and preserve dance, and all who provide access to dance heritage materials. In other words, the definition of the “dance heritage field” lies in the work that is done, rather than in the diverse organizations and individuals who perform it.

Some consider that “dance documentation and preservation” are activities carried out solely by archivists and librarians, and that “access” is primarily of benefit to scholars. Certainly archivists, librarians, and scholars play a leading role in ensuring the survival of America’s dance legacy. However, dance is documented and preserved by a wide variety of people and institutions—including (but not limited to) dance creators and practitioners, presenting organizations and festivals, specialists in new technologies, and members of communities of many kinds.

And dance heritage comes in myriad forms. There are artifacts of the dance; there is the dance itself, a far less tangible entity. A dance may be passed on through direct interpersonal contact, preserved only in the physical memory of those who perform it (indeed, for millennia dance was scarcely recorded in any other way). The description of a long-ago performance may be recorded by an oral historian. Dancers’ steps may be entered into a notation score. A performance may be recorded on film or videotape. Movement may be translated into digital media through 3-D motion capture. Costumes and sets may be stored intact, or they may exist only in photographs or drawings. If there is no other record of a dance performance, much may be learned from programs, snapshots, or contemporary reviews and articles—or even from editorials condemning the daring of a particular dance artist.

Every dance is unique and irreplaceable. The ability to experience, even in part, a dance that has already taken place depends entirely upon one’s ability to access dance heritage materials like those described above. If a dance is not documented, or if the record has deteriorated, it is lost forever. It is the task of the dance heritage field to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to safeguard dance’s legacy for future generations.

## Why should we perpetuate dance knowledge and practice?

One of the first drawings made, dated to between 18,000 and 12,000 years ago in the late Paleolithic period, portrays a human figure dancing on the walls of the Trois Frères cave in France.<sup>1</sup>

Dance literally embodies vital aspects of our culture. It tells us who we are, who we have been, whom we can aspire to be. Dance comprises an entire world of spiritual and secular ideas, stories, emotions, and human experience, understood and expressed through movement. The rich history of dance in America serves as both a reflection and a record of this nation's increasingly diverse, dynamic culture.

Throughout the century just past, and continuing in the present day, there has been a tremendous flowering of creativity in all areas of dance. This has included not only ballet, modern dance, and other theatrical presentations, but also the dances imported by immigrants and refugees, Native American and Hawaiian dance, tap dancing, and dances linked to jazz, swing, R&B, rock-and-roll, and hip-hop.

Dance has been among this nation's most successful exports. From vaudeville houses, Broadway and Hollywood to community commons, folk festivals, powwows, ballrooms, urban streets and "raves," and in opera houses, concert stages, schools, museums and places of worship, dance is a physical, intellectual and emotional manifestation of the human spirit.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period, thanks to the development of new tools and the pioneering efforts of those eager to make records of dance, this three-dimensional art form has finally begun to receive the kind of documentation it needs in order fully to be preserved, studied, understood, and shared.

However, dance's kinetic nature, its unceasing celebration of change, its existence "at a perpetual vanishing point,"<sup>3</sup> make it uniquely difficult to capture. Only a small percentage of the work of American choreographers, dancers and other practitioners is currently being recorded. Past records are deteriorating (videotape is critically endangered) or are difficult to access. Much has already disappeared or is imperiled. Recordings of even such central works as Agnes de Mille's "Rodeo" or Alvin Ailey's "Revelations" are hard to locate, as are the records of the community observances that

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<sup>1</sup> Allegra Fuller Snyder, "Documentation." In Catherine J. Johnson and Allegra Fuller Snyder, *Securing Our Dance Heritage: Issues in the Documentation and Preservation of Dance*. Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources, July 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Sali Ann Kriegsmann, "The Living Heritage: Dance." Washington, DC: Center for Arts and Culture, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> *Images of American Dance: Documenting and Preserving a Cultural Heritage*, prepared by William Keens, Leslie Hansen Kopp, and Mindy N. Levine. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 1991.

celebrate the dances of indigenous and immigrant populations. While numerous dances have been recorded in notation scores, too few people are able to read them (a problem that may be alleviated by digital technology that will “translate” notation). As well, the new technologies that hold so much promise for the future are still expensive and/or still in development.

In a nation that is ever more diverse, and in a field that has recently lost so many pioneers to old age and so many young artists to AIDS, the issue of preserving and ensuring access to America’s dance heritage has taken on a new and very real urgency. The heritage of this art form is intrinsic to its future development. It is vital that we make this legacy available to future generations, so they can know, embrace, and build upon the exceptional work that has been done.

## Ten years after

In 1991, the report *Images of American Dance* recognized that,

for the first time, we have the technology to disseminate widely both new works and the rich history of the art form, and to build basic libraries that reflect the breadth of our dance culture.”<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of *Images of American Dance* (popularly known as “the Keens report”) was not to inventory holdings or to conduct an in-depth analysis of major repositories and libraries, but rather to learn what, at that time, comprised the existing system of dance documentation and preservation, how transactions were conducted within the system, and to what extent the needs of the dance community were being met. Among the study’s recommendations: greater financial support across the board, a larger and more diverse array of documentation and preservation projects, improved technical assistance and dissemination of information, and “a formal association among the major repositories.”

The participants in the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum have both reviewed the dance heritage field’s accomplishments since the publication of the Keens report, and built upon that report’s recommendations to generate new goals and strategies for the coming decade.

We have seen significant progress since 1991. Prominent among the field’s achievements were the establishment of the Dance Heritage Coalition; the establishment of SAVE AS: DANCE, an initiative by The Pew Charitable Trusts that included grant-making through the National Initiative to Preserve America’s Dance (NIPAD) and technical and leadership training through the UCLA Dance/Media Project; Preserve, Inc.’s publication of *afterimages* and *Dance Archives: A Practical Manual for Documenting and Preserving the Ephemeral Art* (1995); the work of the Dance Notation Bureau; and pioneering uses of digital technology at The Ohio State University, Arizona State University, and Library of Congress, among others.

During the same period, important documentation, preservation, reconstruction, and educational projects were undertaken by individual companies, artists, scholars and organizations—among them the American Dance Legacy Institute, the American Repertory Dance Company, the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, the Legacy Project, the Paul Taylor Company, and the George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, José Limón, and Nikolais-Louis Foundations. The past ten years also saw encouraging growth in the field of dance scholarship in American universities and colleges, including the Ph.D. program in dance history, offered by the University of California at Riverside, and the publication of the six-volume *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, the first of its kind in English.

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<sup>4</sup> *Images of American Dance*.

The dance heritage field is stronger than it has ever been, thanks to a new spirit of cooperation, a strong collection of innovative ideas, exemplary projects, new technological possibilities, and an emerging strategic focus. The major challenge now is to implement new, more potent ways of working together to perpetuate and share dance knowledge and practice as an essential part of American culture.

How can we build the capacity for this to happen? New educational programs must address the immediate need for training in dance documentation and preservation. New networks must take shape to ensure better sharing of information, development of resources, and more effective advocacy. New approaches must be taken to the management of intellectual and cultural property rights, in order both to protect the rights of artists and to make dance materials more widely available. New technological tools must be brought into play to improve access and learning. New alliances must be forged, not only in the dance community but also with others who have access to dance heritage materials (including those outside the world of the arts).

Once, such important, popular movements as environmental, historic, architectural, and film preservation lacked visibility, resources, and synergy. Today we take the prominence of these fields for granted. *Now is the time for dance heritage to step forward in a similar manner.*

Fortunately, the urgent need for dance documentation, preservation, and access is becoming better understood—thanks to both the opportunities provided by new technology and the seriousness of the situation. More practitioners, archivists, scholars, funders, and others concerned with dance materials understand that America’s dance heritage will be lost to future generations unless a concerted, cooperative effort is made to safeguard this cultural legacy. Therefore, a field that has been perceived as “fragmented” is developing a strong collective voice.

At this critical point of readiness, the Dance Heritage Coalition has seized the initiative by launching the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum to create a new vision for the next decade of work. The implementation of this plan—the culmination of the Forum’s work—will significantly extend and deepen access to all forms of American dance over the next ten years, through a diversified, coordinated web of initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels.

## Who benefits from America's dance legacy?

Who benefits when dance is documented, preserved, and shared broadly? What is lost when this doesn't take place?

- Isadora Duncan said, "We find the dance of the future in the dance of the past." As in any art form or discipline, innovation and creativity are enhanced immeasurably by the ability of **dance artists**—choreographers, dancers, and other practitioners—to come to terms with what has been done in the past, and with what is coming into being today. Without access to its history, dance in the 21st century will be far poorer and many dance traditions will disappear.

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will help dance artists gain access to clear and powerful representations of the dances created by previous generations and by their own contemporaries. These artists will also have more opportunities effectively to document, preserve, and disseminate their own work.*

*Moreover, for dance practitioners, the implementation of this plan's goal of more effective advocacy and broader access to America's dance heritage will be a powerful tool for raising the profile of the field in the public consciousness.*

- **Scholars, including historians, folklorists,** and others gain enormous insight into the nature of a culture by examining its dance traditions and innovations. As the history of this nation and its peoples is recorded, written, interpreted, and revised, the role and message of the arts will be a key component. Those studying the history of dance must be able to make use of accessible, comprehensive archives in order to carry out their work.

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will offer scholars in multiple fields valuable new research tools by mapping the dance heritage field, establishing an online database and portal, and facilitating the improvement of documentation and preservation methods—so that, in future, archival materials will be more abundant and better maintained.*

- **Educators** use dance heritage materials in many different ways. Obviously, dance teachers must have the means fully to communicate to their students the richness, the variety, the very essence of the world they are entering. In addition, K-12 teachers, as well as college-level instructors working in other disciplines, use dance materials and demonstrations to lend immediacy and excitement to subjects ranging from history to music.

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will increase the dance heritage resources available to educators, provide them with a fuller picture of the dance heritage field, and disseminate better information about what they can do to obtain dance materials.*

- **Communities of many kinds** benefit from the perpetuation of dance knowledge and practice, through which customs, traditions, and histories are shared. Members are able to stay in touch with one another and with their heritage through traditional dances and contemporary interpretations.

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will help members of immigrant, indigenous, and other communities gain access to a wider array of dance materials. These materials will link their present-day dance traditions and creativity to those of their forbears, allowing those traditions to be passed on, unbroken, to future generations.*

- Dance offers cutting-edge challenges to those who are **developing new technology**. In such areas as motion capture, computer animation, three-dimensional representation, interactive interfaces, and media migration to new formats, dance provides complex, lively content, and continually pushes the limits of available technological resources.

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will encourage the development and application of new technologies at the university level and elsewhere, ultimately engaging the for-profit sector in this process. Short- and long-term solutions developed by the dance heritage field to safeguard deteriorating formats such as videotape will benefit those working to preserve information in other sectors, such as medicine, sports, and news, as well as other art forms.*

- Those who seek to foster greater cultural understanding in **our diverse society** can gain much from a better knowledge of dance. The practice of dance has the potential to unite people, by serving as an ongoing reminder of shared values and aspirations. “Preserving dance’s heritage is an act of respect and gratitude for the continuity of human expression and thought. The purpose of preservation is not to fix a dance in amber but to illuminate the varieties of human experience and artistic expression.”<sup>5</sup>

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will make the full spectrum of dance more widely available, through new tools for sharing dance materials, and through better management of the rights issues that currently impair the ability to share America’s dance heritage more broadly.*

- For the **public at large**, access to America’s dance heritage informs and enhances the ability to experience, enjoy, and participate in contemporary dance. Without this knowledge, those who live outside the core dance community too often consider dance a mysterious and opaque art form. People who are actively involved in dance at the community level may well believe that the kind of dancing they enjoy is perceived to be outside the “canon” and therefore unworthy of preservation. With a broader public sense of pride and personal investment, dance can flourish both in the community and on the concert stage. And such a connection to dance is central to Americans’ understanding of who they are and what they can achieve.

*The initiatives and strategies presented in this plan will bring more dance of the past, present and future into the lives of communities across America, by making dance heritage more accessible. From the concert hall to the community center, from the classroom to the computer screen, people will be able to learn about and participate in a far wider variety of dance activities.*

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<sup>5</sup> Kriegsman, “The Living Heritage: Dance.”

## **Goals for Dance Heritage - 2000-2010**

The participants in the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum have identified and agreed upon a set of goals around which the entire dance heritage field can unite, and which can be achieved over the coming decade, so that dance—past, present and future—can assume its rightful place in American culture and society. These goals address five broad areas:

- 1. Improve Dance and Dance Heritage Education*
- 2. Build Local Capacity and Regional Coordination*
- 3. Mediate Intellectual Property Rights Issues*
- 4. Improve and Broaden Implementation of Dance Documentation and Archival Practices*
- 5. Build Alliances and Advocacy*

On the pages that follow, the goals are discussed in greater detail, and the strategies necessary to accomplish them are outlined.

## **1. Improve Dance and Dance Heritage Education**

*Goal: Promote greater dance literacy by strengthening the teaching of dance documentation and preservation, and by broadening the use of dance heritage materials.*

In order for America's dance heritage to take its rightful place in the larger culture, educational programs focusing on dance and dance documentation and preservation must be strengthened.

In recent years there has been an encouraging growth in dance scholarship in many different areas of study (not only dance history, but also folklore and others). This expansion has given rise to a concurrent proliferation of publications, exhibits, and other activities. During the same period, academic programs have become more inclusive in their definition of dance and dance heritage.

However, many dance programs at the university level have not integrated dance literacy (including notation), dance heritage, or dance documentation technologies into their curricula. And much more can be done to bring a broader range of dance traditions into the academy.

### **Strategy 1.1: Support the inclusion of documentation and preservation in dance education programs.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Assist in the development of curriculum materials for university programs in dance documentation and preservation, in partnership with library and computer science programs and other disciplines.
- Convene dance education leaders on a regular basis to strategize and to share best practices.

### **Strategy 1.2: Foster better use of technology in dance heritage education.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Advocate that technology courses be taught as an integral part of university dance and dance education programs.
- Facilitate strategic partnerships among universities, research and digital labs, communities, entrepreneurs and funders.

**Strategy 1.3: Advocate that the field of dance education embrace diverse dance traditions.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Work to help scholars, educators and students gain access to the full diversity of American dance by championing such innovations as electronic libraries and other new technologies.
- Encourage the education sector to make use of existing dance heritage materials. Encourage those individuals and organizations who hold dance heritage materials to share them as broadly as possible.

## **2. Build Local Capacity and Regional Coordination**

*Goal: Establish new linkages and forms of outreach that will enable effective action.*

It is vital to nurture action, especially *local* action, in dance preservation. The challenges that must be addressed include not only funding, but also education and overall professionalism. How can the learnings, successes, and failures of current programs in dance documentation and preservation be shared—so that, in the future, every dancer, choreographer, company, theater, presenter or videographer does not have to “reinvent the wheel”? How can those working in dance heritage convey the urgency of preservation to the larger dance field? It is by addressing these questions that the full diversity of dance in America will become more visible and more widely appreciated.

### **\* Strategy 2.1: Link spaces and resources at the local, national, and international levels.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Establish regional hubs offering a variety of models for documentation, preservation, technical assistance, and access.
- Develop a national on-line database of available resources, training, consultants, and other information. Establish an on-line portal to link websites related to dance and dance heritage.

### **\* Strategy 2.2: Provide training and get tools into the hands of the broader dance community.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Launch a national fellowship program in dance documentation and preservation.
- Create and widely disseminate guides to and examples of best practices.
- Publicize, both on- and off-line, information about technological tools that will facilitate dance documentation, preservation, and access.
- Develop a network of circuit riders and advocates to speak across the field to artists, managers, and educators about fully integrating dance documentation and preservation into their ongoing practice.

*\*Further developed in “Major Program Initiatives,” pages 24 – 26.*

**Strategy 2.3: Undertake outreach and information-sharing through local, regional, and national service organizations, dance festivals, presenting organizations, and other performance venues and events.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Create a set of documentation resources and models to increase the capacity of festivals and dance events/presenters to incorporate documentation and preservation.
- Take advantage of the diversity of dance festivals and dance artists/presenters to forge alliances and promote action among a broad spectrum of communities and forms of dance.

### **3. Mediate Intellectual Property Rights Issues**

**Goal: Manage intellectual property issues so as to honor both creators' and performers' rights and access rights.**

Although new technologies have opened up an enormous range of possibilities for improving access to dance heritage materials, that access can be hampered or denied by issues related to copyrights, performance rights, and union rights. At the same time, the creators of dance are legitimately concerned that their work may be used, without their permission. It is vital to protect artists' rights; it is also vital to broaden access to these materials. How can both concerns be addressed?

**Strategy 3.1: Educate all constituents about intellectual and cultural property rights.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Foster a broader understanding of the concept of "fair use," as distinct from illegitimate use of artistic material for commercial gain.
- By making clearer the distinction between "exploitation", "access," and "use," encourage those who hold the rights to dance materials to allow wider access to them.

**\*Strategy 3.2: Designate an organization or group of organizations to speak formally on behalf of dance heritage.**

*This organization or group of organizations will:*

- Negotiate "safe harbors"—a set of situations in which use would be legally acceptable, for example to unions and to film and video companies.
- Engage with unions to standardize agreements that will allow better access.
- File *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") briefs in court cases whose outcomes might affect access and/or artists' rights.

**Strategy 3.3: Explore the advantages of creating a rights clearance organization for dance**

*Such an organization could:*

- Develop and disseminate clear guidelines on rights issues.
- Issue annotated standard forms of agreement.
- Issue blanket licenses (as ASCAP does with respect to the use of music). It could also issue duplication licenses.

*\*Further developed in "Major Program Initiatives," pages 24 – 26.*

## **4. Improve and Broaden Implementation of Dance Documentation and Archival Practices**

*Goal: Improve the quality and increase the quantity of dance heritage materials.*

Some individuals, dance companies, libraries, museums, and other organizations have the know-how and the resources to follow exemplary archival practices. They use the best materials available, catalogue their collections thoroughly, and store them in the optimal environment.

However, many of those who are documenting and preserving dance heritage materials are doing so “on the fly,” and they may have little knowledge of or access to the best archival practices. Many dance archives exist in antiquated formats, or are stored in such a way that they are likely to deteriorate (for example, a box of videotapes kept next to a radiator), or are so inadequately catalogued that no one knows what the collection contains.

There is a need for a more widespread understanding of how to go about creating and maintaining a dance archive. In particular, there is a need for practitioners in the field (choreographers, dance companies, presenters, managers, performing arts and community-based organizations) to have better access to information on “best practices” and to the necessary tools and materials.

### **\*Strategy 4.1: Broaden awareness of, education on, and training in documentation and archival practice.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Develop case studies of best practices in dance documentation and preservation.
- Disseminate information and best practices both on- and off-line.
- Pilot “Artists’ Memory Institutes” to teach young artists how to create portfolios and older artists how to perpetuate their work.
- Define “good stewardship” so each community has the ability to deal with its dance materials on its own terms.

### **\*Strategy 4.2: Collaborate in the development of improved documentation and preservation tools, technologies, and media.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Work in cooperation with university-based multimedia programs and other labs and centers to develop tools that will advance dance documentation, preservation, and access.

*\*Further developed in “Major Program Initiatives,” pages 24 – 26.*

- Actively seek a solution to the magnetic media crisis.
- Seek partnerships in the for-profit technology sector.

**Strategy 4.3: Develop systematic approaches to decisions on documentation and preservation at the local, regional, and national levels.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Articulate appropriate practices for the selection, acquisition and preservation of, and access to dance collections.
- Encourage funders to think strategically about how to support programs that will benefit the largest possible segment of the dance heritage field.
- Explore the creation of a worldwide digital repository of dance archives.

## **5. Build Alliances and Advocacy**

*Goals: Foster alliances that will promote the recognition of dance as a vital part of the larger culture. Enhance the nation's investment in the sharing of dance knowledge and practice.*

In order to advocate effectively for an understanding of dance knowledge and practice in all sectors of American society, those in the dance heritage community must cooperate with one another—and with others who are responsible for documentation, collections, and scholarship on dance. Therefore, a key next step is the forging of longer-lasting, more inclusive alliances among organizations working in these areas; with dance practitioners and presenters; with librarians, museum curators, educators, ethnographers, folklorists and other scholars; and with those working in community-based organizations.

### **\*Strategy 5.1: Map the dance heritage field.**

*In order to implement this strategy, the dance heritage field will:*

- Survey the current state of dance documentation, preservation, and access.
- Map the dance heritage field in terms of its capacity and coverage.
- Access and link existing information on dance heritage via a national database that will integrate the content of disparate databases and websites.

### **\*Strategy 5.2: Promote a better understanding of the intrinsic contribution of dance to society.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Publicize and celebrate the work that is being perpetuated around such initiatives as the “Artists’ Memory Institutes.”
- Create and distribute media kits to get the dance community’s message out to policy makers, funders, artists, service organizations, and members of the press.
- Stimulate the use of archival dance materials in “products” that reach the larger public, such as films, documentaries, exhibitions, curriculum materials, and scholarly and historical texts.
- Make a case for substantial corporate support of dance documentation and preservation by emphasizing the creative impact that dance can have on the development of new technologies.

*\*Further developed in “Major Program Initiatives,” pages 24 – 26.*

**\*Strategy 5.3: Convene and communicate around multiple constituencies to ensure that the goals set forth here are pursued through the work of scholars, archivists, dance practitioners, funders, and others.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Participate in cross-disciplinary meetings to enhance communication, awareness, and action.
- Publicize existing on-line information and make available, on an ongoing basis, new information on goals, activities, model programs, and best practices.

**Strategy 5.4: Promote greater activism in support of dance documentation, preservation, and access.**

*In order to implement this strategy, over the next ten years the dance heritage field will:*

- Engage dance advocacy organizations in joining together to lobby funders for support.
- Advocate that dance materials in libraries and museums be prioritized for preservation and enhanced access.
- Launch a national campaign to address the magnetic media crisis.

**Strategy 5.5: Determine the appropriate role for the Dance Heritage Coalition to play in the next ten years.**

*In order to implement this strategy, the Dance Heritage Coalition will:*

- Convene Task Forces to develop and oversee the major program initiatives detailed in this plan.
- Review the organization's own composition, structure, and staff/board requirements, in light of the Forum's outcomes.
- Consider the ongoing role the organization might play in convening cross-disciplinary meetings and in re-granting.
- Examine other organizational and programming concerns.
- Facilitate any necessary changes in DHC's identity, composition, structure and programs, in order for the organization to lead the dance heritage field's implementation of this plan.
- Report annually on field-wide progress toward plan implementation.

*\*Further developed in "Major Program Initiatives," pages 24 – 26.*

## Major Program Initiatives and Preliminary Timeline

In May 2000, a Strategy Group met to review the goals and strategies that had been developed during the course of the National Dance Leadership Forum. The group proposed the following eight major program initiatives as being of primary importance in realizing the goals identified by the Forum. These initiatives were selected from the strategies described on pages 14-22 for their ability to move the field forward over the next three to five years.

Subject to the planning described in Strategy 5.5, it is proposed that the Dance Heritage Coalition will coordinate the implementation of these initiatives, in close alliance with other organizations. In addition to DHC's members, key allies will include the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), the Dance Notation Bureau, Dance/USA, The George Balanchine Foundation, the New England Foundation for the Arts, Preserve, Inc., and the Smithsonian Institution, among others.

The timetables provide a preliminary calendar to inform the launch of each Initiative. The scheduling of specific tasks should be regarded as no more than an initial model. The early meetings of each Task Force will ultimately make the key decisions on the scope and pace of each Initiative that will formalize the work over the next several years.

### Mapping the Field

*Appoint Task Force: December 2000*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organization: February 2001*

- **Survey** the current state of dance documentation, preservation, and access – including dance companies, presenters, service organizations, community-based groups, museums, libraries and archives. *(Implementation: June - December 2001)*
- **Map the dance heritage** field in terms of its capacity and coverage, and assess the ability of its diverse sectors to achieve the new goals that have been articulated during the course of the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum. *(Implementation: January - June 2001)*
- **Access and link** existing information. *(Implementation: March - December 2001)*
- Establish a national **database** integrating the content of disparate databases and websites with information on dance heritage materials. *(Implementation: January - September 2002)*

### Making a Case for Dance

*Appoint Task Force: December 2000*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: March 2001*

- **Make the case** to the broader dance community and to the general public for the documentation and preservation of America's dance heritage. *(Implementation: August - December 2001)*

- Ensure that the goals set forth by the participants in the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum are voiced at important convenings of scholars, archivists, and dance practitioners. (*Implementation: December 2000 and ongoing*)
- Create and distribute **media kits** to get the message out to policy makers, funders, artists, service organizations, and members of the press. (*Implementation: December 2000 - July 2001*)

### **Righting the Rights Issue**

*Appoint Task Force: June 2001*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: September 2001*

- Produce a near-term and long-term strategy for **rights management**. (*Implementation: September 2001 - December 2001 (short-term); December 2001 - December 2004 (long-term)*)
- Articulate for the wider field the philosophical basis of this strategy, as well as its practical purposes. Designate a body to speak for the field in negotiations with unions and film and video companies and through *amicus curiae* (“friend of the court”) briefs in relevant court cases. (*Implementation: From January 2002*)
- Explore the establishment of a rights clearance organization for dance. (*Implementation: October 2001 - March 2002*)

### **Advancing Best Practices**

*Appoint Task Force: December 2000*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: March 2001*

- Develop **case studies** of best practices in dance documentation, preservation, and access among dance practitioners and among those holding the rights to dance heritage material. (*Implementation: December 2000 - March 2002*)
- Create a set of **guides to best practices**, aimed at people working in different areas of dance and dance heritage. (*Implementation: December 2001 and ongoing*)
- Launch a **fellowship program** in dance documentation and preservation, beginning with the member institutions of the Dance Heritage Coalition. Train fellows in documentation and archival practice and assign each a documentation and preservation project with a dance company, community organization, library, choreographer, or collector. Projects could include oral history, notation, and video documentation, among other activities. (*Implementation: From September 2001*)

### **Artists’ Memory Project**

*Appoint Task Force: June 2001*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: September 2001*

- Pilot **Artists’ Memory Institutes** at university and college dance programs and at dance festivals. These 1–2 week courses would teach young artists how to create their own portfolios, and older artists how to perpetuate their work. The Institutes

would not only further the cause of dance heritage, but would also help artists market themselves. *(Implementation: September 2002 - August 2003)*

### **Networks for Change**

*Appoint Task Force: April 2001*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: September 2001*

- Establish **regional hubs** that can offer a variety of models for the perpetuation of dance knowledge and practice, and, through outreach and information-sharing, can facilitate documentation and preservation activities at the local and regional levels. *(Implementation: January 2002 - December 2005)*
- Work through the hubs to **bridge the digital divide** that prevents many in the dance heritage community from accessing information and resources. *(Implementation: June 2002 and ongoing)*

### **Research and Development for New Solutions**

*Appoint Task Force: August 2001*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: January 2002*

- Work with academic and corporate laboratories and computer departments to facilitate research and development of **new ways of documenting and preserving dance**: new tools, new technologies, new media. *(Implementation: January 2002 and ongoing)*
- Through lab partnerships and a national publicity campaign, work toward a solution to the **magnetic media crisis**. *(Integration: March 2001 and ongoing)*

### **Dance Portal Project**

*Appoint Task Force: December 2001*

*Decide Scope and Lead Organizations: March 2001*

- Establish and maintain an **on-line portal** with links to websites related to dance and dance heritage. *(Implementation: August 2001 and ongoing)*

## **National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum Participants and Informants**

+ Participant in Leadership Forum Advisory Committee only

\* Participant in Leadership Forum Advisory Committee *and* in the National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum

Elizabeth Aldrich  
Director, Dance Heritage Coalition

+Ella Baff  
Executive Director, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

Shelley C. Berg  
Director of Graduate Studies, Dance Division, Meadows School of the Arts, Southern  
Methodist University  
President-elect, Society of Dance History Scholars

\*Bonnie Brooks  
Chairperson, Dance Department, Columbia College

Laura Clark Brown  
Director of Archives, American Dance Festival

Beth Davis Brown  
Confidential Assistant to the Librarian, Library of Congress

Peggy Bulger  
Director, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

+Suzanne Carbonneau  
Associate Professor, Institute of the Arts, George Mason University

Terry Carter  
Council for Positive Images

+Martin Cohen  
Former Executive Director, Dance/USA  
Executive Director, The Washington Ballet

\*Nena Couch

Curator and Associate Professor, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research  
Institute, The Ohio State University

Lynn Dally

Artistic Director, Jazz Tap Ensemble

Ann Daly

Associate Professor, Department of Theatre and Dance, College of Fine Arts, University  
of Texas at Austin

Carol Derfner

President, C. W. Shaver & Company, Inc.

\*James Early

Director, Cultural Studies and Communication, Center for Folklife and Cultural  
Heritage, Smithsonian Institution

Paul H. Epstein

Partner, Proskauer Rose LLP

President, George Balanchine Foundation

+Michelle Forner

Former Director, Dance Heritage Coalition

Ilene Fox

Executive Director, Dance Notation Bureau

LeeEllen Friedland

Preservation Directorate, National Digital Library Program, Library of Congress

Jeff Friedman

Project Director, Legacy Oral History Project

Bonnie Oda Homsey

Artistic Director, American Repertory Dance Company

David R. Humphrey

Executive Director, San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum

Marda Kirn

International Tap Association

\*Leslie Hansen Kopp  
Executive Director, Preserve, Inc.  
General Administrator, The George Balanchine Foundation

\*Sali Ann Kriegsman  
President, Dance Heritage Coalition

Murray Louis  
Artistic Director, Murray Louis and Nikolais Dance

Richard Loveless  
Consultant and Former Director, Institute for Studies in the Arts, Arizona State  
University

Vera Maletic  
Professor, Department of Dance, College of the Arts, The Ohio State University

Deanna B. Marcum  
President, Council on Library and Information Resources

Donald McKayle  
Choreographer and Director  
Professor, Department of Dance, University of California, Irvine

Sam Miller  
Executive Director, New England Foundation for the Arts

Judy Mitoma  
Director, Center for Intercultural Performance, and Professor of Dance, Department of  
World Arts and Cultures, UCLA

Steven Newsome  
Director, The Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture,  
Smithsonian Institution

Madeleine M. Nichols  
Curator, Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Margaret Norton  
Former Executive Director, San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum

\*Norton Owen  
Director of Preservation, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

\*Chris Prentice  
Program Associate, Performing Arts, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

+Charles and Stephanie Reinhart  
Co-Directors, American Dance Festival

Nancy Reynolds  
Director of Research, The George Balanchine Foundation

\*Vicky J. Risner  
Head of Acquisitions and Processing, Music Division, Library of Congress

Janice Ross  
Dance Historian and Critic  
Faculty, Drama Department and School of Education, Stanford University

Gema Sandoval  
Artistic Director, Danza Floricanto/USA

\*Abby Smith  
Director of Programs, Council on Library and Information Resources

Allegra Fuller Snyder  
Professor Emeritus and former Chair, Department of Dance, UCLA

\*Andrea Snyder  
Director, National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance  
Executive Director, Dance/USA

Sally Sommer  
Associate Professor, Dance Program, Duke University

Douglas Sonntag  
Director, Dance Program, National Endowment for the Arts

Elizabeth Streb  
Artistic Director, Streb

Selma Thomas  
Watertown Productions, Inc.

+Muriel Topaz  
Writer, formerly associated with The Juilliard School and Dance Notation Bureau

Michael Uthoff  
Former Artistic Director, Ballet Arizona

Marta Moreno Vega  
President, The Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center / African Diaspora  
Institute  
Professor, Black and Hispanic Studies, Baruch College (CUNY)

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson  
Curator, Harvard Theatre Collection

Carl Wolz  
Executive Director, World Dance Alliance

**For the Institute for Cultural Policy and Practice**

John McCann  
Project Director, National Dance Heritage Leadership Forum

Richard Evans  
Facilitator and Strategist

David Bury  
Facilitator

Tamsin Foreman  
Project Administrator

Helen Graves  
Writer and Editor

Christine Holmfelt  
Project Coordinator