

Critical Reconsiderations of Dance Media Archives II: The Case of the George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives

Ok Hee Jeong*

I. Introduction	IV. Conclusion: Reflections on the Shift in Dance Preservation Discourse Bibliography Abstract
II. The Context of the Project: The Changing Atmosphere of Dance Preservation Discourse	
III. The George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives	

I. Introduction

As a sequel to my previous study on the New York Public Library(NYPL)'s Jerome Robbins Dance Division,¹⁾ this study aims to provide critical reconsiderations of the more recent trend of dance media archives, this time focusing on the case of the George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives(the Balanchine Video Archives). The Balanchine Video Archives were initiated, planned, funded, and carried out by Nancy Reynolds. As a writer and former member of the New York City Ballet, Nancy Reynolds established the Nancy Remick Reynolds Endowment in 1994 to donate 1.5 million dollars for this

* Ph.D. candidate, Temple University, amazingoki@gmail.com.

1) Ok Hee Jeong(2011), "Critical Reconsiderations of Dance Media Archives: The Case of the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division," *The Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 34 (Fall), pp. 215-256.

archive project. Unlike the traditional way of filming a dance work's choreography, the Balanchine Video Archives documents the process in which the original casts with whom Balanchine choreographed his dances coached younger dancers. The Balanchine Video Archives consists of two distinctive collections: the Archive of Lost Choreography and the Interpreters Archive. If the former is dedicated to retrieving extinct Balanchine choreography, the latter focuses on the interpersonal coaching of qualitative interpretation of a given work. Specifically focused on enriching a single choreographer's oeuvre and furthering the understanding of his artistic intent to the extent of subtle qualitative nuances, the archive project provides an interesting counterpart to the more traditional archive model of NYPL.

What seems intriguing with the Balanchine Video Archives is how a new archival strategy emerged out of the accumulation of abundant materials on his dance. Ballet choreographer George Balanchine's presence in the North American dance field is well described in the expression "Balanchine, along with Stravinsky and Picasso, are the titans of the art of our century."²⁾ Naturally, enormous efforts and interests were invested in specialized organizations to systematically protect and maintain his legacy. Shortly before his death in 1983, Balanchine endorsed "the Balanchine Project" of the Dance Notation Bureau in which his 18 ballets were notated, in addition to 14 other ballets that had been already notated.³⁾ Also, five months after his death, the George Balanchine Foundation was incorporated to utilize Balanchine's

2) Richard Englund, former vice president of the Dance Notation Bureau and director of the American Ballet Theater II company, quoted in Jennifer Dunning(1983), *Balanchine Ballets Kept*, *New York Times*, Dec. 18, p.102.

3) For more information, see the special issue of *Dance Notation Journal* devoted on the Balanchine Project. *Dance Notation Journal*, Vol. 6, Winter/Spring 1988-89. According to the Dance Notation Bureau's Notated Theatrical Dances Catalog, the total number of Balanchine's notated works has not grown from the total of thirty-two since the Balanchine Project. <<http://dancenotation.org/catalog/default.aspx>, Feb. 29, 2012>.

legacy via diversified activities including research, publications, and lectures, while the George Balanchine Trust was formed in 1987 specifically focusing on licensing his ballets to companies and troupes other than the New York City Ballet(NYCB). Currently about 75 ballets of his were kept, either via notation or video, all of which can be alphabetically browsed and requested for the permission of staging. The procedure of staging these ballets was structured in detail, as seen in the regulation that all licensing requires fees and should be staged by a Balanchine approved repetiteur.⁴⁾

Compared to the cases of most choreographers, whose dances are minimally preserved, Balanchine's oeuvre is rich, full and vast. Most of his works were already notated, recorded, controlled, protected, and ready for restaging by any ballet company. However, this does not slow the incessant efforts to dig out new knowledge of him. Indeed, materials on Balanchine grow continuously, and they have now become an industry that feeds on itself. Given that most of Balanchine's choreographies are already meticulously preserved and highly protected by the Trust and the Foundation, one might ask what further could be done to preserve his work. In this regard, the Balanchine Video Archives seem to find a niche in Balanchine's oeuvre by excavating forgotten dance works and shedding light on experiential aspects of the existing works. In fact, these two strategies comprised the two projects within the Balanchine Video Archives--the Archive of Lost Choreography and the Interpreters Archive, respectively. In that sense, the Balanchine Video Archives is a departure from the traditional mode of dance preservation that has primarily focused on inscribing choreographic structures.

As I have already overviewed in the article on the New York Public Library,⁵⁾

4) For more information, see <<http://www.balanchine.com>, Feb. 29, 2012>

5) Ok Hee Jeong(2011), Critical Reconsiderations of Dance Media Archives: The Case of the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division, *the Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 34, pp. 215-256.

much spotlight has been shed on dance media archives both in the United States as well as South Korea. Yet, what should be noted is that the Balanchine Video Archives has been neglected from this academic inquiry. Considering the presence of Balanchine in dance history, it is odd that little is written on this new ambitious archiving project of the Balanchine Foundation, except for a few short related articles.⁶⁾ I suspect this academic indifference partly stems from the relatively short history of the Archives – which is less than 10 years old – as well as from the limited access to Balanchine’s legacy. As seen in the famous lawsuit of Horgan vs. Macmillan, Inc. on the use of Balanchine’s *Nutcracker* image in a book,⁷⁾ Balanchine’s oeuvre is meticulously protected by his inheritors so that those who are not his inheritors have extremely limited access to the materials. Nevertheless, I believe that this archiving project deserves further interrogation, since it represents a transition in the genealogy of dance media archives, which becomes clearer in comparison with the NYPL’s Dance Division that I analyzed in the previous article.

If the NYPL’s Dance Division was analyzed as a representative of the traditional concept of a total archive, which aims to preserve all aspects of every form of dance, the Balanchine Video Archives seem to reflect a more recent trend specifically focusing on experiential and interpretive aspects of dance. In other words, while the NYPL’s Dance Division fits an all-encompassing repository, the Balanchine Video Archives are more specialized

6) Related articles published on *Ballet Alert!* and *Dance View* are linked in the Balanchine Video Archives homepage. <http://balanchine.org/balanchine/03/gbfvideoarchives.html>.

7) In 1986, Barbara Horgan, as executrix of the estate of George Balanchine, brought an action against MacMillan publishers for infringement of the copyright on Balanchine’s *Nutcracker* when MacMillan was about to publish a book containing photographs of Balanchine’s *Nutcracker*. Although both parties settled before the final decision, it became a significant case revealing not only legal principles for the infringement of copyrighted choreographic works but also the protective and exclusive attitudes of Balanchine’s inheritors. For more information, see Julie Van Camp’s Copyright of “Choreographic Works” in *Entertainment, Publishing and the Arts Handbook*, edited by Stephen F. Breimer, Robert Thorne, and John David Viera (New York: Clark, Boardman, and Callaghan, 1994), pp. 59-92.

and deep-focused projects. Instead of believing that the ever-enlarging and ever-deepening growth of both archives would enable us to grasp the ephemerality of dance, this study investigates what narratives and knowledge are formulated in this effort to secure dance via physical artifacts of filmic media. In so doing, the research questions it asks are: 1) what knowledge the Balanchine Video Archives seeks to preserve?; 2) what discursive issues are imbedded in its two projects?; and 3) whether this new emphasis on experiential and qualitative aspects of dance is substantially different from the traditional model or not?

To explore these questions, Chapter II contextualizes the emergence of the shift in dance preservation discourse in 1990s. As I have suggested in the previous article, the 1990s saw the turning point in the practice of dance documentation and preservation in the North American dance field, particularly symbolized by a few major publications, such as *Images of American Dance: Documenting and Preserving a Cultural Heritage*(1990) and *Securing Our Dance Heritage: Issues in the Documentation and Preservation of Dance*(1999).⁸⁾ I argued that these publications aroused nationwide interest in the issues of dance documentation and preservation in an unprecedented way, laid the bedrock for the institutionalization of dance preservation, and further brought the practice of dance documentation and preservation into the wider public sector. Based on this, Chapter II further traces the emergence of the shift to qualitative and experiential dance

8) William Keens, Leslie Hansen Kopp, Mindy N. Levine (1990), *Images of American Dance: Documenting and Preserving a Cultural Heritage*, Report on a study sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation(Washington, D.C.: Dance Program, National Endowment for the Arts); Catherine J. Johnson and Allegra Fuller Snyder (1999), *Securing Our Dance Heritage: Issues in the Documentation and Preservation of Dance*(Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources). The former is a national survey on the *status quo* of dance preservation in the North America, while the latter is a report to the Council on Library and Information Resources, especially addressing practical issues of dance documentation, access, and preservation.

knowledge and its impact on the Balanchine Video Archives. I particularly suggest oral history as a recently validated academic methodology and the predicament of modern dance as the direct stimuli for the Balanchine Video Archives. Meanwhile, Chapter III analyzes the two projects of the Balanchine Video Archives in terms of what aspect of dance knowledge it aims to preserve and what discursive issues emerged in it. Collecting historical materials(newspaper articles) and interview transcriptions, I conduct a discursive analysis. In that Reynolds's inception and execution shaped the general characteristics of the projects, interviewing her was a strategic methodology to investigate her rationales and logics for the project. In so doing, I examine the Balanchine Video Archives as the entity reflecting the shifting notions regarding dance, media, and archive. Concluding the analysis, Chapter IV reconsiders whether the dance preservation discourse presented in the Balanchine Video Archives is substantially different from that of the NYPL, and what it suggest in terms of the way we understand and make knowledge of dance phenomena.

II. The Context of the Project: The Changing Atmosphere of Dance Preservation Discourse

As a project conceived, funded, and directed by Nancy Reynolds, the initiation of the Balanchine Video Archives is rooted in her personal experience. In an interview with the researcher, Reynolds recollected that she did not have much chance to work with Balanchine while dancing in the NYCB, because she was a corps de ballet while Balanchine mostly worked with principal dancers.⁹⁾ When she quit dancing and became a writer, she

9) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by the author, June 5, 2009, New York.

interviewed principal dancers and was curious about Balanchine's creative process in rehearsals. Based on the belief that "everything Balanchine said is valuable," she was particularly interested in how Balanchine delivered what he wanted to dancers via verbalized or physicalized expressions. Based on this experience, Reynolds conceived the Balanchine Video Archives in order to capture what Balanchine transmitted to those dancers at the time of creating the works in the rehearsal rooms. Moreover, as the dancers with which Balanchine created new ballets began to age and passed away, the project gained more urgency than ever.¹⁰⁾

Besides Reynolds' personal motive, however, this video archive also reflects the changing atmosphere of dance preservation discourse. Although person-to-person transmission of dance had been regarded as a theoretical as well as practical drawback for the advancement of the dance field,¹¹⁾ oral history projects and film/video preservation were gradually promoted as an adequate impetus for exploring and acknowledging new and potential information in it. Oral history has grown from being a method in folklore studies to a way of recording, understanding, and archiving narrated memories across a range of disciplines. Although neither the Balanchine Video Archives provides transcription of its edited tapes nor Reynolds designates it as "oral history", it still has characteristics of oral history practice in a sense that it seeks to dig out individual dancers' interpretations and experiences that are left out of the official video documentation or notation. Thus, it seems undeniable that the positive attitude toward oral practice provided the groundwork for the

10) Since the project began, Alicia Markova and Tod Bolender have died, and Frederick Franklin, who contributed most to the project, is now in his late 90s.

11) Many philosophers such as Francis Sparshott pointed out that the difficulty of preserving dance contributed to the dearth of philosophical discussion of dance. See chapter 1, "Why the Aesthetics of Dance Has Been Neglected," of *Off the Ground: First Steps to a Philosophical Consideration of the Dance*, Francis Sparshott (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp.3-81.

appearance of the Balanchine Video Archives.

In the dance field, oral history became a valid method for creating historical materials on dance. In the case of the New York Public Library's Dance Division, its special projects included not only the Original Documentation program, but also the Oral History Archive and Project. Consisting of about 400 interviews, it has documented the voices and ideas of people in the dance field since 1965,¹²⁾ and similarly began with the film archive. Considering that oral history, a methodology mainly used in the anthropological area, had been treated only as a supplement to more traditional methodologies, it is remarkable that the Dance Division launched the oral history project as early as the 1960s. This could be explained by the anxiety toward the ephemeral nature of dance and the consequent embrace of any materials in various formats that created a hospitable atmosphere to accept oral history as a valid resource of dance. However, the Dance Division's oral history is differentiated from the anthropological oral history in that it aims to gather more information on major figures and events of dance, such as Ballets Russes, rather than give voice to the marginalized and non-literary population.

Since the 1980s, oral history in the dance field was highlighted with another factor of the dance field: the double loss of the dance field with the sudden deaths of aspiring dancers from AIDS in addition to the passing of older dancers. If the NYPL's Dance Division had been more geared toward supplementing prominent eras and figures in dance history, new oral history projects, such as San Francisco's Legacy Oral History Project lead by Jeff Friedman, were more focused on preserving the creative process of the artists. Interestingly, Friedman's rationale for creating an oral history opposes that of Jerome Robbins as he supported the NYPL's film archive 30 years ago.

12) Although it had started earlier, the oral history archive received \$1,000 from the American Dance Guild(then called the National Dance Guild) to develop the project in 1965.

According to Friedman, “the oral tradition is basic to dance, a form that defies articulation at some level. And because you can’t write down movements very easily, you have to communicate it from person to person.”¹³⁾ While he and Robbins similarly point out the limitation of writing in preserving dance, he, unlike Robbins, positively embraces the oral, physical, and interpersonal transmission of dance. He argues that oral history aims to document the process, not the product, of dance--“not only creative process, but the origins and evolution of an artistic vision from the time that one starts being a body.”¹⁴⁾ This challenges the fundamental premise of notation that preserving dance means preserving the intact, ideal structure of choreography.

Given that, the Balanchine Video Archives reflects oral history’s basic premises that person-to-person communication is innate to dance, and that the creative process and the evolution of artistic vision are worth preserving. Videotaping the coaching sessions during which original casts of Balanchine’s ballets teach younger dancers not only the steps but also the qualitative nuance of the dance, the project put in the foreground what Friedman referred to as the oral tradition of dance transmission. Yet, the Balanchine Video Archives goes further than oral history in that it substitutes the talking-head format of oral history with intersubjective and embodied interactions.

While oral history reflected the changing attitudes toward the experiential and embodied the practice of dance in general, the Balanchine Video Archives specifically paralleled the movement of the American modern dance field. In fact, the mechanism on which the two projects of the Balanchine Video Archives operated has much in common with the modern dance field rather than with the custom of classical ballet. First, the initiation of the archive reflected the

13) Joan Freese(1994-95), *Dance Preservation: A Report from the Field, Dance View*(Winter), p. 12.

14) Jeff Friedman, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 12.

rise of the “first-generation dancers” as the style transmitters, a prominent perspective in the American modern dance field. As the trailblazers of modern dance were disappearing, many felt the urgency to hand down the heritage of modern dance to the next generations who do not have first-person contact with the choreographers. In other words, in order to continue the Graham tradition, her dance should inevitably be performed by younger dancers who hadn’t met her in person. While Labanotation and other notations may enable the transmission of choreography to the next generation, style— which encapsulates a choreographer’s “signature”—is difficult to perceive through notation. In this situation, these first-generation dancers played a significant role in enabling the genealogy of modern dance by handing down the choreographers’ repertoires as well as the style and philosophy behind the repertoires. Ernestine Stodelle was the famous inheritor of Doris Humphrey’s legacy; Nona Schurman for Charles Weidman; and Christine Dakin, Terese Capucelli, and Janet Eilber for Martha Graham.¹⁵⁾ Similar to these first-generation modern dancers, those for whom Balanchine created new dances were considered the connectors to the Balanchine legacy. This is unique, considering that the concept of first-generation dancers is foreign to ballet. While classical ballet works are performed on the premise that classical ballet dancers share the fundamental principles of how to move, the Balanchine Video Archives is more geared toward transmitting the stylistic quality unique to Balanchine dancers, especially those who danced for him in the New York City Ballet.

Second, the Balanchine Video Archives’ inception of filming the process of retrieving old works coincided with other video preservation projects in the modern dance field, especially with the support of the National Initiatives to

15) Lesley Main(2005), The Dances of Doris Humphrey-Creating a Contemporary Perspective through Directorial Interpretation, *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 23(2) Winter, p. 107.

Preserve America's Dance(NIPAD). NIPAD supported a total of 43 grantees between 1993 and 2000, most of which included video and other digital media as a part of its methodological strategy in one way or another--from producing a documentary film to preserving vintage footage to transferring original footage to broadcast quality tape. Among them, the project that most resonated with the Balanchine Video Archives was the production of instruction videotapes in which Ernestine Stodelle reconstructed Doris Humphrey's five works, including *Air for the G String*(1928) and *Water Study*(1928).¹⁶⁾ Stodelle's coaching procedure as well as its outcome were recorded on video, accompanying the Labanotation scores. The fact that Stodelle, a well-known "Humphrey dancer," reconstructed Humphrey's work parallels the Balanchine project, and yet there also existed fundamental differences between the two projects. In Stodelle case, the project's aim was to restage the choreographic structure of the work. Stodelle's purpose was a faithful reconstruction of the original work, on which her interpretation was additionally added as a finishing touch. In comparison, the Balanchine Video Archives focused solely on the qualitative dimension of the work, so that even when it reconstructed lost choreography, it relied on the individual dancer's memory rather than on notation score. However, even with the notation score, the reconstructor would still rely on memory regarding nuances and qualitative aspects.

Also, Paul Taylor Dance Company carried Repertory Preservation Project upon receiving \$850,000 grants from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1992. Specifically designed for the purpose of preserving and restaging Taylor's works, this project uniquely utilizes video technology in restaging modern dance works. Recognizing that the conventional rehearsal records,

16) For more information, see *Frames of Reference*, 50. Besides, House Foundation for the Arts, Inc., received \$25,000 for producing a one-hour documentary tracing Meredith Monk's *Education of the Girlchild*(1973) by contrasting the premiere and the revival in 1993.

primarily a static shot from a tripod, are not suitable to teach and learn refined movements, the company tried to create more practical and innovative rehearsal records. For the purpose of reproduction, they color-coded dancers and captured movement on and off the stage.¹⁷⁾ Expected to be “a national model for preserving the finest of America’s performing arts,”¹⁸⁾ the project chose video as its main medium, and yet utilized it in a way opposite to that of the Balanchine Video Archives. If the Balanchine project is geared toward acknowledging and specializing the contingency of film media, the Paul Taylor project was more interested in perfecting the objective and mechanical records of choreographic structure.

Provided that both major video archiving projects on the two canonic figures in American modern dance field, Humphrey and Taylor, suggest related yet disparate approaches to the use of video in preserving dance, the analysis of the Balanchine Video Archives would provide a chance to reconsider the way in which his ballets were transferred to the next generation. The next chapter will focus on analyzing the historical premises underlying the two projects of the Balanchine Video Archives.

III. The George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives

1. The Archive of Lost Choreography

The Archive of Lost Choreography consists of choreographies excavated by former dancers with whom Balanchine created his dances in the early years of

17) Information explained in Paul Taylor Repertory Preservation Project, videorecording, promotional tape, produced by C.W. Shaver and Company, New York Public Library. Further information can be found in Joan Freese(1994-95), p. 11.

18) Ibid.

Balanchine's career in the 1930s and '40s. Since most of Balanchine's works are already well documented and preserved, the possibility of retrieving unheard-of works was inevitably small in terms of numbers. Currently, eight works are retrieved, and it is assumed that no more work exists. Videos of each session include coaching scenes, a final presentation, and an interview with the participant coach. Editing is minimally done, mostly capturing frontal, whole-body shots of dancers.

Methodologically, the archive relied on the memory of former dancers, especially that of Frederick Franklin, who was a former principal dancer and dance master of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Franklin played a seminal role in reconstructing a few lost choreographies, including a male solo from *Raymonda*(1946) that was choreographed specifically for Franklin and disappeared when he no longer danced it.¹⁹⁾ Moreover, he possessed an exceptional memory to reconstruct dances that he had not even danced, such as two pas de deux from *Le Baiser de la Fée*(1940). Thus, the Archive of Lost Choreography heavily relies on Franklin's memory and interpretation, as he reconstructed four out of eight works in the archive.

Although the project may sound simple and straightforward, it triggers a few long-held disputes about the way dance is transformed into historical artifacts. First, the total reliance on the dancer's memory recalls disputes in the dance field regarding "muscle memory," as more scientifically oriented researchers including Ann Hutchinson Guest criticized it. In an article called "And the Choreography is by...?" Guest directly challenges the practice of reconstructing a dance work based on muscle memory and personal

19) Franklin's memory is so vivid and accurate that an oral history project, sponsored by the George Balanchine Foundation and the Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, was conducted with the dancer. The resulting text consists of "41 edited transcripts of interviews with the subject, conducted once or twice weekly, for two hours at a time during the better part of 2000." <<http://balanchine.org/balanchine/03/30yearsofballet.html>, Feb. 5, 2012>

experience. Although Balanchine bequeathed his ballets to particular dancers, she is suspicious of the reliance on these individuals' memory in preserving his ballets properly. Regarding the recent reconstruction project on Nijinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Guest said, "None of these memory-based versions should carry the label "choreography by Nijinsky." Only the version that has come to us straight from his hand can claim that authorship."²⁰⁾ Particularly, she criticizes that custodial dancers of Balanchine ballets ignore the Labanotation scores of Balanchine's works, precipitating the divergences of his ballets. Guest criticizes the very premise of the Balanchine Video Archives that the original dancers are invaluable transmitters of knowledge of Balanchine's ballets as follows:

To return to Balanchine's choreography--why are many Labanotation scores not being used? They sit, gathering dust, while the guardian dancers continue to ignore them. Why? Because of the prevalent theory that any performer who has danced in the piece is a better source. It appears that only when such people no longer exist will the scores be used.²¹⁾

Yet this level of intense criticism was rare, and the Balanchine Video Archives was generally accepted well because of the above-mentioned hospitable mood for more process-oriented and lived aspect of knowledge. The following is one of its affirmative reports in the field:

Reynolds' methods are similar to the way that dance has always been passed down from generation to generation: through what amounts to show and tell. Although hopelessly low-tech(and with plenty of room for human error), this method corrects for the fact that no one medium truly captures the essence of dance in its full glory. "What I'm doing is absolutely not about technology. It's really the opposite. It's not quantifying anything, but it's getting those first-hand recollections on tape," Reynolds explains. In doing so, she hopes to contribute to the raw material that exists on Balanchine's life and works.²²⁾

20) Ann Hutchinson Guest(2002-3), *And the Choreography is by...? Dance Now*(Winter), p. 44.

21) *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Second, the Archive of the Lost Choreography also invokes the question of whether it is in accordance with Balanchine's own will. This is not easy to answer, primarily because Balanchine's attitude toward dance preservation was somewhat ambivalent. On one hand, Balanchine often compared ballet to butterflies and did not seem to care when his choreographic butterflies flew away.²³⁾ Indeed, it was easier for him to create new ballets than trying to revive his old ones. Moreover, Balanchine was flexible in his choreography, making many revisions not only in costume, set, and cast, but also in movement sequence itself. Sometimes he even opted to drop off some of his repertoires.

On the other hand, Balanchine was aware of the benefit of notation and supportive of it. Having been taught the Stepanov notation method while studying at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, he knew the advantage of notation. According to Ann Hutchinson, hearing of Labanotation, Balanchine convinced people of the importance of recording ballets to collect money to get his ballet notated.²⁴⁾ The Dance Notation Bureau began to notate fourteen ballets in April 1949, while Balanchine published the article titled "Recording the Ballet" in *Dance Observer* in 1950. In the article, Balanchine mentioned that he preferred notation, especially supporting Labanotation, to film in preserving the structure of his choreography. Balanchine praised Labanotation as "the closest approach to an ultimate answer that I have encountered."²⁵⁾ The shortcoming of Labanotation as being complicated did not matter to him, as he was suspicious of the possibility of a simple system through which to comprehensively record a dance. He argued that film is useful "in indicating the style of the finished project and to hint at the general over-all visual picture and staging."²⁶⁾ This comment

22) Joan Freese(1994-5), p. 10.

23) Jack Anderson(1980), How Much Do Ballets Change with the Years?, the *New York Times*, Jul. 11, p. C6.

24) Ann Hutchinson(1949), Adventure in Notation, *Dance Observer* 16(1), pp. 4-5, 14.

25) George Balanchine(1950), Recording the Ballet, *Dance Observer* 17(9), p. 132.

reveals that his understanding of notation and film was not much different from the traditional understanding of these media at the time.

Ironically, while conceptually approving Labanotation, Balanchine waited more than 30 years before taking action on notating his works. Only before his death in 1983, Balanchine endorsed the project of notating his 18 ballets, including *Serenade*, *Prodigal Son*, *Donizetti Variations*, and *Stars and Stripes*. This project received a total of \$150,000 in grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ford Foundation. The idea for a project to notate his ballets germinated at the end of Balanchine's life, and the project caught the attention of the dance field, extensively introduced in the *Dance Notation Journal*, the periodical of Dance Notation Bureau that carried out the project.²⁷⁾ Deciding which work to preserve seems significant, because Balanchine was a prolific choreographer who created about 400 works--including ballets, opera dances, operettas, movies, staged choral works, musicals, straight plays, concert works, television, and circus. According to Muriel Topaz, who undertook the whole project, once they decided that the notation would be undertaken when a dance was staged for companies other than the New York City Ballet, popular demand naturally shaped the collection. In other words, the methodology seemed to predetermine the subjects.

Despite Balanchine's acceptance of notation, what is at stake is that the act of notating requires authorizing and petrifying a dance work in a particular status. Usually its final version is notated, yet this contradicts the mechanism that dance works evolve, change, and even disappear over time. Thus, the very premise of the Archive of Lost Choreography is disputable. The evolution of a dance work became especially problematic for Balanchine's case, since older versions of Balanchine's ballets conflict with the current version. The most

26) Ibid., p. 133.

27) Dawn Lille Horwitz(1988-89), Editorial, *Dance Notation Journal* 6 (Winter/Spring), p. ii.

general way to deal with this predicament is to have recourse from the choreographer's will. However, the fact that Balanchine endorsed the Labanotation project does not guarantee that he would have also agreed to retrieve his "lost" ballets, so that much of the debates were focused on figuring out Balanchine's intention. In 1985, before the Archives project was launched, Anna Kisselgoff criticized the New York City Ballet's recent performance of reviving his forgotten works in a provocative article titled "Why Did Balanchine Allow Ballets to Disappear?" She raised two issues: one, whether Balanchine consciously allowed some of his ballets to drop out of the repertory for artistic reasons, and two, whether the revivals gain or lose when they are presented in different contexts from those in which they were last seen.²⁸⁾ In other words, the first issue concerns the choreographer's intention, while the second issue concerns the work's contextual meaning.

Regarding the choreographer's intention, Kisselgoff argued that Balanchine was critical of dance preservation while saying that, "I believe in the moment. Ballet belongs to the dancer who is now in front of you."²⁹⁾ However, since he publicly supported Labanotation and endorsed the Labanotating project, he is clearly not so completely antagonistic to dance preservation as is contemporary choreographer William Forsythe. Forsythe said that he would not allow his works to be produced after his death, while arguing "There is no point in teaching these ballets once those generations have gone. You have to make room for people who follow--and the world will be different."³⁰⁾ Yet, as much as Forsythe already allowed leaving some prints of his choreography despite of his lack of sentimentality,³¹⁾ Balanchine at least accepted the

28) Anna Kisselgoff(1985), Why Did Balanchine Allow Ballets to Disappear? *New York Times*, Feb. 3, p. H8.

29) Anna Kisselgoff(1984), A TV tribute upsets Balanchine Stereotype, *New York Times*, Sep. 23, p. H6.

30) William Forsythe, quoted in Ann Nugent(2002), The Forsythe Saga, *Dance Now*(Spring), p. 49.

existence of his works beyond his death as he left them to individual people despite his ambiguous stance.

Regarding a work's contextual meaning, Kisselgoff presupposes its evolution over time. It is widely known that Balanchine frequently changed his works but then wanted to make sure that his dances be remembered in up-to-date versions.³²⁾ While documentation inevitably fixes the contingent as the immortal, equally emphasized is that these are the "last" versions instead of the "ultimate" version. As stated by the current artistic director of the NYCB, Peter Martins, "People can become hung up on the way it was, but Balanchine was the very last one to think like that,"³³⁾ the issue was succinctly summarized into the article's title, "Keeping Balanchine's Ballets *Authentic But Also Vital*"(italics added). Fundamentally, Kisselgoff criticized the revival movements relying on the criteria of whether Balanchine would endorse it or not. In other words, the underlying premise is that a dance work is its choreographer's property, thus he or she has the sole authority to determine the work's future.

However, one might further ask whether one can have agency in appreciating and remembering Balanchine's ballets today without subjugating oneself to the choreographer's intention--in other words, how much determinant power a choreographer has on a dance work done in the past, especially when it is now capitulated for the contemporary people's sake. One notable case happened at the International Festival of Ballet held in 2004.

31) "From a Classical Position / Just Dancing Around(Kultur Video, 2007)" is a DVD containing a documentary and one of his dance works. Also there are several books written on or by him, including *William Forsythe: Suspense*(written by William Forsythe, edited by Markus Weisbeck, JRP|Ringier; Bilingual edition, 2008), *William Forsythe: Choreography and Dance*(edited by Senta Driver, Routledge, 2000), and *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography*(Spier Stephen, Taylor & Francis: 2011).

32) Jennifer Dunning(1983), p. 102.

33) Larry Kaplan(1986), Keeping Balanchine's Ballets Authentic But Also Vital, *New York Times*, Jul. 13, p. H6, 12.

Seven Balanchine pieces were performed at the festival, yet only one was properly licensed by the George Balanchine Foundation. Beyond the issue of legal regulation of copyright vs. the right to enjoy his ballet as the treasure of humanity, what particularly drew attention was the Ballet Nacional de Cuba's staging of *Apollo* in its original yet extinct version in which the three muses in *Apollo* wore sparkling white caps instead of the contemporary bareheaded mode. It is said that the muses had worn wigs in the original production, yet Balanchine quickly discarded them. While the Balanchine Foundation saw this performance as offensive to Balanchine's own will--"If for 30 years 'Apollo' under George Balanchine had not been danced with the wigs, who are you to put a wig on it?"--the Ballet Nacional maintained that both early and late versions of the ballet are valid--"It is not that we invented the wigs. It was the first vision Balanchine had of 'Apollo.'"³⁴⁾

This conflict between the Foundation and the Ballet Nacional suggests that their arguments are based on differing rationales. The Foundation criticized the Ballet Nacional for violating Balanchine's own choice, while the Ballet Nacional rationalized it as the right to see and enjoy older versions of his ballet as the trace of his choreographic inspiration. Given that Balanchine wanted his ballets notated in up-to-date versions, it is assumable that he would prefer the current version to the original version. Yet, in that the Ballet Nacional presented the "origin" of Balanchine ballets that were also pursued by the Balanchine Video Archives that the Foundation officially sponsors, the Foundation's criticism of the Ballet Nacional is not so much grounded in the choreographer's intention as in the Foundation's administrative policy on his ballets. The Ballet Nacional's staging was nothing more than the offense against the Foundation's ontological authority as the substantial agency of

34) Erika Kinetz(2004), Balanchine in Cuba, Despite Barring of Americans and Authenticity Debate, *New York Times*, Nov. 6, p. B11.

George Balanchine's legacy.

Of particular emphasis in this episode is that the Ballet Nacional's rationale of intellectual inquiry resonates with the Archive of Lost Choreography. In fact, both of them share the rationale that being able to see the older versions or extinct works of Balanchine would be equally interesting and instructive as watching the last and active repertoires. Basically, it presupposes that the more information available on his artistic vision, the better we could understand his artistic scope. Nancy Reynolds also emphasized the "evolution of Balanchine's style" while saying that "Balanchine was not the same in the '40s as he was in the '60s, '70s, and '80s."³⁵⁾ Moreover, Alicia Alonso, the director of the Ballet Nacional who reconstructed *Apollo*, was one of the early Balanchine dancers who danced in the American Ballet Caravan, a precursor to the New York City Ballet, a fact that adds an interesting layer to the issue of the Archive of Lost Choreography. As much as Frederick Franklin or Alicia Markova did, Alonso possessed the embodied knowledge of Balanchine's works, yet her staging of *Apollo* was dismissed due to the fact that she did not get permission from the Foundation. The irony is that the original version of *Apollo* could be performed because Alonso ignored the regulation to acquire the permission from the Foundation. As seen in the expression "If you want to see how the first 'Apollo' was done, come to Cuba,"³⁶⁾ it is unlikely to see this particular version under the proper supervision of the Foundation.

The juxtaposition of the Archive of Lost Choreography and the Ballet Nacional de Cuba provides insights into the politics of dance preservation. The staging of older or extinct dances is more about fulfilling the contemporaries' desire to take hold of Balanchine's legacy than fulfilling the choreographer's own intention. While Balanchine's own stance on excavating forgotten works

35) Interview with Nancy Reynolds, by Alexandra Tomaloni, *Ballet Alert!* Online, no. 1, 1997.

36) Erika Kinetz(2004), p. B11.

is not clear, it does not matter much in the end, because reconstruction is done not for the choreographer but for the future generations of the dance field. This becomes clear in the aforementioned Forsythe case. Upon Forsythe's indifferent attitude toward dance preservation, Ann Nugent concluded as follows:

But if Forsythe's works are to be wiped from history, future generations will be left feeling frustrated particularly because despite the connection with the age of video, so little of his choreography is publicly available on video. Without it, can you imagine the workload for reconstructors, who will undoubtedly try to piece together some of his choreography.³⁷⁾

The last sentence implies that reconstruction can be justified even against the choreographer's own will. Naturally, since the similar restaging of older or forgotten works between Ballet Nacional de Cuba and the Archive of Lost Choreography generated contradictory responses from the Balanchine Foundation reveals that the question of who has the authority to preserve matters in the discourse of dance preservation. In the dance reconstructions, Balanchine's forgotten ballets are revived not for Balanchine's own sake, but for the contemporary desire to hold on to his legacy.

2. The Interpreters Archive

The Interpreters Archive, the other half of Balanchine Video Archives, records the process that the original cast's interpretations reveal while they were coaching younger dancers. So far, 34 sessions were recorded, whose participants included Maria Tallchief, Patricia Wilde, Arthur Mitchell, Melissa Hayden, Merrill Ashley, Allegra Kent, and Suzanne Farrell. The resulting edited tapes are housed, in all or in part, in 70 libraries worldwide, including

37) Ann Nugent(2002), p. 49.

the New York Public Library's Dance Division, while other tapes await funding for editing.

The Interpreters Archive provides two alternatives to the existing notion of dance documentation. First, it focuses on the original cast rather than the choreographer. The spotlight on Balanchine dancers seems natural in a situation in which they became legendary figures in the dance field, many of whom published autobiographies.³⁸⁾ Also, the fact that they had worked most closely with Balanchine strengthened the imperative to secure as much knowledge as possible from those dancers, especially when Balanchine chose specific people upon whom he created a dance. More fundamentally, however, the highlight on the original cast reflects the discursive turn in the field acknowledging the creative process of choreography as an intersubjective collaboration between the choreographer and dancers. Modern and contemporary dances tend to interweave dancers' experiences more intimately as a crucial part of the finished dance work, contributing to the spread of the idea that choreography is not solely the choreographer's metaphysical idea materialized by dancers. Given these impetuses, it seems justifiable to acknowledge the original cast's presence and contribution to Balanchine's artistic achievement.

Second, the focus of the Interpreters Archive is to capture the original cast's experiential interpretation rather than to preserve the work's choreographic

38) Among them, Allegra Kent(*Once a Dancer: An Autobiography*, 1996), Suzanne Farrell(*Holding onto the Air: An Autobiography*, 2002), Merrill Ashley(*Dancing for Balanchine*, 1984) published their memoirs. Other Balanchine ballerinas also published their memoirs, including Gelsey Kirkland's *Dancing on My Grave*(1986) and Toni Bentley's *Winter Season: A Dancer's Journal*(2003). As seen in the rather direct title of the memoir of Barbara Fisher, who danced with NYCB, *In Balanchine's Company: A Dancer's Memoir*(Wesleyan, 2006), these memoirs of former Balanchine dancers became a resourceful mine from which to excavate episodes and snippets of Balanchine. Besides, a documentary film titled "Dancing for Mr. B: Six Balanchine Ballerinas(DVD, 2008)" features six ballerinas of Mary Ellen Moylan, Maria Tallchief, Melissa Hayden, Allegra Kent, Merrill Ashley, and Darci Kistler on the theme of being "Balanchine dancers."

structure. Uniquely, the project treats the coaching session as a valid knowledge-generating process, which is further grounded on the reconsideration of the conventional interview practice. Although oral history endows power to the traditionally marginalized groups of people who do not rely on written words, its static interview format still gives limited capacity for dancers to express their embodied knowledge. Nancy Reynolds described this choice of filming coaching as an alternative to the talking-head mode of documentary film and oral history saying that, “If you have dancers in a studio who move, you will get something out of it that you won’t if you just talked to the coach with the microphone just sitting there. In other words, they reveal things in the movement that they would not know how to verbalize.”³⁹⁾ This person-to-person and interactive communication further justifies the whole project in the context of the rich and abundant materials on Balanchine. Reynolds added that, “Balanchine spoke most clearly to his dancers through movement. So however much document there is, it doesn’t get to that side of things what he wanted.”⁴⁰⁾ This conceptualization of new knowledge was possible because of video technology. As a medium of mechanical reproduction, video captured the original cast’s most spontaneous responses upon the younger dancers’ dance. This is the kind of embodied knowledge that is not possible to capture in conventional interviews or written monographs. So in a sense, Reynolds is using new technology to capture what has been somatic/oral tradition in dance.

Based on these alternatives to the existing mode of preserving Balanchine’s heritage, the archive conveys that these dancers express a crucial aspect of the work’s identity. In a sense, this is not a new idea, since it was well known that Balanchine choreographed his dances specifically based on the characteristics

39) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by the author.

40) Ibid.

of individual dancers. In fact, the original cast's role in the Balanchine ballets has been well acknowledged to the extent that some would even argue that the dancers determine the work's identity. John Taras, former City Ballet's ballet master, said that, "You never saw [the ballet *Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto*] entirely unless you saw Marie-Jeanne. It was done for her and, so often in Balanchine ballets, I find that the dancer the work was made on is what the ballet's about. When the cast changes, the work survives, but it's not the same ballet; it becomes diluted."⁴¹⁾ Also, Peter Martins, the artistic director of NYCB, who "inherited" Balanchine, was fully aware of the effect dancers had on ballets. Martins remembered Balanchine saying, "A dancer makes a ballet; or doesn't make it."⁴²⁾ Likewise, the pervasive atmosphere is that these original dancers are not mere interpreters who mechanically performed the blueprint of the dance, but creators who enabled the dance in its inception.

While Taras's attitude seems extreme and idealistic, these comments hint at the discourse that style is the determinant of the integrity of Balanchine's works. This coincides with the situation in many modern dance companies that style transmission became the most urgent task as their founding choreographers passed away. In other words, the Martha Graham Dance Company without Martha Graham should prove not only its existential grounds beyond the choreographer's lifetime, but also should toil at maintaining her unique movement style in the generations of dancers who may not have even met Graham in person. Similarly, witnessing that Doris Humphrey's style had been weakened in the performances given during the Humphrey centenary in 1995, dance critic Marcia B. Siegel expressed concern about the dilution of the choreographer's movement style over time regardless of continuous restaging based on notational documents. The notion that style

41) John Taras, quoted in Larry Kaplan(1986), p. H6.

42) Peter Martins, quoted in Larry Kaplan(1986), p. H12.

has been regarded as encapsulating “the choreographer’s ‘signature’ and identifies the work as belonging to that particular tradition”⁴³⁾ explains why the original casts gained such attention, as they most approximated the choreographer.

When it comes to Balanchine, the attention to his style has been remarkable. For example, when the Dance Notation Bureau carried out a project to Labanotate 18 of his ballets in 1983, it tried to identify and capture his style in notation. While each notation score would faithfully record objective information of the traces made by moving bodies in time and space, the Labanotators also paid substantial attention to the Balanchine “look”--the qualities associated with the New York City Ballet Company. Virginia Doris, notator for the project, described it as the emphasis on “speed, elegance, a long line, amplitude in the use of space, economy in the épaulement, and energy--not only in motion but in sustaining stillness.”⁴⁴⁾ Moreover, Balanchine style is not confined to movement but also applied to the physical characteristics of the dancers, notably producing the Balanchine look--the slender, all-leg-and-arm, beautiful female bodies generally associated with the NYCB dancers. Both the respect for the dancer’s role in the work as well as the urge to retain the choreographer’s style contributed to promoting the original cast not only as the embodiment of the “Balanchine look,” but also as the knowledge holders of his style and even choreographic philosophy.

However, while the pursuit of style promoted the original cast’s significance in Balanchine’s legacy, the dancers could not simply be reduced to the embodiment of Balanchine’s style. In other words, the agency of individual dancers complicates the discourse of style. The more the dancers were regarded as the style holders, the more it is also acknowledged that the most

43) Lesley Main(2005), p. 107.

44) Virginia Doris(1988-89), A Notator’s View, *Dance Notation Journal* 6(Winter/Spring), p. 6.

famous “Balanchine dancers” were quite distanced from the very stereotype of Balanchine style. As dance critic Anna Kisselgoff pointed out, famous Balanchine dancers were also considered “controversial interpreters of his ballets because they were not his most neutral or most malleable instruments.”⁴⁵⁾ For instance, Maria Tallchief was not so slender and tall as the stereotypical NYCB dancers, but it is no doubt that she became one of the most significant Balanchine dancers. Also, Violette Verdy used to be warned by Balanchine not to over accent her dancing, and yet she is now considered one of the most valid interpreters of his ballets.

The ambivalence of style in securing Balanchine’s heritage--that the stylistic identity should be maintained on one hand while room should be made for individuality on the other hand--is also reflected in the discourse of interpretation in the Interpreters Archive’s *modus operandi*. On one hand, the dancers’ subjective interpretation was most appreciated and encouraged. In fact, these embodied and experienced aspects of Balanchine’s works are the kind of knowledge pursued in this project. Assuring some dancers who felt a burden of providing personal interpretations that may not be valid in today’s performances, Reynolds told them, “Just for these few hours, in front of the camera, they [the younger dancers] must put themselves in your hands and try to see how you saw them [Balanchine’s works].”⁴⁶⁾ Given that the dancers’ interpretation has not drawn much attention until lately, particularly in the field of ballet, this focus on “the wisdom of Balanchine’s muses”⁴⁷⁾ acknowledges the agency of those dancers.

On the other hand, however, the fundamental goal of this project does not

45) Anna Kisselgoff(1984), p. H6.

46) Interview with Nancy Reynolds, by the Author, Jun. 5, 2009.

47) Brigitte Heilmann(1997), In Search of the Original Secret: two video collections from the Balanchine Foundation preserving the wisdom of Balanchine’s muses, *Ballett International* 5, p. 19.

reside in the highlighting of those dancers' role in Balanchine's works as much as it seems on the surface. Rather, the project aims to delve more deeply into Balanchine's intention. In other words, the dancer's interpretation is respected only to the extent that they are the medium to get in touch with the fundamental idea of the choreographer. As Reynolds clearly suggested, the Interpreters Archive's goal is two-fold: "One was to get closer to Balanchine's creative process, and the other was to glean from these original creators what he might have had on his mind at the first"⁴⁸⁾--both aspects of which are fundamentally geared toward Balanchine's intent. Also, according to the official website, the mission is to "capture Balanchine's original choreographic intent through the dancers who created new ballets with him in the studio, transmitting his initial ideas in the most direct possible way."⁴⁹⁾ This explanation implies that, no matter how much importance is placed on dancers, what is more weighted in the end is Balanchine's intent rather than the original cast's interpretation. This is also visible in the videotapes of each session. The actual sessions proceed just as any regular rehearsal scenes, except that the coach keeps referring to Balanchine. The mentality of "Because Mr. B. Told Me So"⁵⁰⁾ permeated the comments of the coaches. Reynolds acknowledged it, while adding that "Yes, it is all about Balanchine. Since he is not here, what we hope is the closest possibility to get his ideas straightforward."⁵¹⁾ This provokes the question of whether the apparent highlight on these dancers is only the means to strengthen Balanchine's artistic authority.

Observing the coaches unfolding their own interpretations, Reynolds

48) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by Alexander Tomalonis.

49) <http://www.balanchine.org/balanchine/03/gbfvideoarchives.html>. Accessed on Feb. 10, 2011.

50) Toni Bentley(2005), Because Mr. B. Told Me So, *New York Times*, June 12, p. A1.

51) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, 2009.6.5.

envisioned the Interpreters Archive as a “silent record, without comment, just from a historian’s point of view, not telling anybody what to do.”⁵²⁾ The intervention is minimal in that she neither makes any statement on what it collected nor plans further action on it. Reynolds said, “It is what it is. I am NOT doing the corps de ballet, I am NOT restaging it, I am NOT doing a bunch of other things, and I am NOT notating.”⁵³⁾ Arguing “I am not trying to make a statement about how they SHOULD be danced. Instead it just says about how they WERE danced at the moment of conception,”⁵⁴⁾ Reynolds intended the project as a neutral record of the moments during which dance is transmitted from one generation to the next generation.

Yet, considering that neutrality is also a kind of positioning, the *modus operandi* of the Interpreters Archive should be understood as a particular statement on how Balanchine’s legacy should be formulated and remembered. First, challenging the skepticism “The latest version is his latest thinking, so who cares what he did in the ‘40s?,”⁵⁵⁾ the Interpreters Archive historicizes and relativizes the Balanchine’s style. Largely focusing on the earlier versions of the currently active repertoires, the Archive endows Balanchine’s oeuvre with historical depth. As Reynolds acknowledged, Balanchine was not the same in the ‘40s as he was in the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s. While some people accepted it as the sign that Balanchine crystallized his view in his later works, Reynolds reiterated it as the rationale for digging into the evolution of Balanchine’s style and his point of view. It is true that Balanchine made sure that up-to-date versions would be notated when he endorsed the Labanotation project in 1983. Yet, the latest version is not necessarily the ultimate version, which allows multiplicity of the dance work’s identity. Peter Martins

52) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by Alexander Tomalonis.

53) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by the author.

54) Ibid.

55) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by Alexander Tomalonis.

commented that, “As soon as you have the mentality of preservation as your goal, you miss out on the evolution.”⁵⁶⁾ Also, by recording the original cast’s interpretation, the Archive further presupposes the evolution of the dancers’ interpretations of the work. By revealing the layers of interpretations that might not be necessarily valid today, it gives volume to historical and experiential aspects of the work, or “what this person thought about it at that time.”⁵⁷⁾ Even though the teacher may say that Balanchine told them something, it is still interpreted by this person over time.

Also, historicization necessarily relativizes the meaning of the dance. Encouraging the original cast to uncover their own interpretations, Reynolds allows multiple versions of a dance rather than articulating its ultimate version. Regarding this, Reynolds comments, “Everybody’s idea of Balanchine is different. There is no one Balanchine... But it is just Tallchief version or Violette Verdy version or Freddy Franklin version.”⁵⁸⁾ In other words, by relativizing the interpretation of a work, the Archive enriched its meanings.

Second, Reynolds also aims to democratize style by allowing young dancers other than those at the NYCB to participate in the coaching session. Many of the participants were NYCB dancers or students from the School of American Ballet, the official sister school of the NYCB, yet also from professional ballet companies other than NYCB, including American Ballet Theatre, Pittsburg Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Dance Theatre of Harlem. Inevitably, the participants were not thoroughly trained in Balanchine movement style, and much of the coaching focused on articulating Balanchine’s style. Reynolds rationalized this choice on the grounds that, “One of the ideas behind this project, I’m hoping, is to show that

56) Peter Martins, quoted in Larry Kaplan(1986).

57) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by the author.

58) Ibid.

Balanchine is not exclusively danced at the New York City Ballet, that they're not the only ones who can do it."⁵⁹⁾ In other words, while pursuing stylistic identity, it also opens possibilities that stylistic identity can be learned and exerted well enough by dancers in the company other than the NYCB.

This openness toward the qualification of dancers is more grounded in the view that a temporal gap is a prime determinant in acquiring Balanchine's style. NYCB is no doubt the hothouse of Balanchine style, yet it could not avoid the dilution of style resulting from the temporal gap. It acknowledges that not only dancers from other companies but also contemporary NYCB dancers are distanced from Balanchine's style, since techniques and style in general have rapidly changed since the Balanchine's days. This was visible in one of the Archives of Lost Choreography when Frederick Franklin reconstructed a male solo from *Raymonda*(1946) with the NYCB principal Nicholaj Hübbe. Instructing Hübbe to do the pirouette from the second position instead of the fourth position, Franklin said, "Well, I understand that today men do it from the fourth position, but in my days we always did it from the second." Likewise, in the sessions of the Interpreters Archive, coaches repeatedly advised contemporary dancers to lower their arms and legs and make the ports de bra "flat, two-dimensional." These stylistic gaps reflect not only the shift of Balanchine's style but also that of the perspectives of ballet movement in general.

Then, how did video recording impact the whole project, and what kind of historical implications were drawn out of the filming procedure? First of all, media's indexicality enabled the Interpreters Archive in the first place, which then overturned the negative connotation of media as a means for preservation. In order to extract style from intersubjective and spontaneous interaction between the original cast and younger dancers, the production team actively

59) An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by Alexander Tomalonis.

utilized media's indexicality to capture fleeting moments and contingent events. While contingency was an obstacle for the traditional dance preservation of choreographic structure, it now becomes a new realm of historical knowledge. In so doing, the filming team positioned itself as a witness. His non-intrusive and static camera work with minimal editing of the whole process is constructed to make the viewer witness the coaching session. This creates the illusion that the viewers are in the rehearsal room of Balanchine and the dancers, whose roles were substituted with the original dancers and younger dancers, respectively. Considering that the creative process between the choreographer and dancers in a rehearsal room is most spontaneous and intimate realm, the Interpreters Archive tries to simulate and archive this most contingent realm of a dance work. This archival desire expands the standards of knowledge, transforming the contingent into a filmable event.

Summing up both projects of the Balanchine Video Archives that pursue Balanchine's intention via the original casts' coaching sessions, its methodological premises bear two paradoxes. First, while thoroughly pursuing Balanchine's intention, the project also acknowledges multiplicity of interpretation. On one hand, resorting to Balanchine's original intention, it posits the choreographer as the source of authenticity and originality of his works. On the other hand, however, the project also suggests that disparate interpretations of the style are equally meaningful.

Then, an area for interrogation is whether the multiplicity of interpretation is substantial and whether it allows contemporary dancers to have more agency in interpreting Balanchine's work or not. I am rather skeptical of this question, due to the hierarchical positioning of Balanchine, the original cast, and the contemporary dancers. While shedding new light on the original cast, the prioritization of the choreographer's style also burdens contemporary dancers.

Since they do not have the person-to-person interactions with the choreographer as the original cast did, it is not easy for contemporary dancers to obtain authority in the choreographer's style, not to mention coming to terms with their own style. For example, dancer Wendy Whelan joined the NYCB as an apprentice in 1983 after Balanchine had died. While being a long-time principal dancer, Whelan confessed that it has taken time to think of herself as a Balanchine dancer. "Because he [Balanchine] is not here and I never knew him, he's such a mystery that it fills my imagination and it makes me want to please him that much more. I don't know if he would even choose me for this company."⁶⁰ The lack of authorization from Balanchine deprived Whelan of the opportunity to have confidence in her own interpretation. If she were to perform the "Ruby" section of *Jewels*, she would watch video records of Patricia McBride, who danced that segment in the 1967 premiere. Whelan forms an ontologically unequal relationship with the original dancers. She said, "If ever I meet a person who danced for him, I have a reverence for them because I know they know something about him I'll never know."⁶¹ Her comment shows that the original cast's interpretation, which was accessible via video records, has already predetermined how one could interpret the work, which only gets furthered by the intentional setting of the Interpreters Archive in which the original cast verbalized his or her interpretation via coaching.

Second, the project presupposes the paradoxical ontology of style. Conceptually, style is superior to the physical representation of the work; practically, however, style is supplementary to the preservation of choreography. Underlying the project is the fact that embodied interpretation and stylistic identity seem more essential to the dance practices than mere documentation of dance steps. However, it should be remembered that the

60) Robin Pogrebin(2004), Exuding Balanchine's Essence, *New York Times*, April 23, p.E21.

61) Ibid.

Balanchine Video Archives was possible because most of his choreographies are already well preserved and firmly protected by the Balanchine Trust as well as the Balanchine Foundation. The priority of choreography above interpretation is visible in the episode of how the Archive of the Lost Choreography grew out of the Interpreters Archive. Reynolds reflected that in their first filming session in which Alicia Markova taught a dance that Balanchine created for her in 1925 and had not been danced since. As the focus of coaching was more put on pulling the steps out of the past, it turned out that its historical value involved more than just coaching the style of the dance. The Archive of the Lost Choreography is much smaller than that of the Interpreters Archive, due to the near-perfect documentation of Balanchine's works, yet its significance is not at all smaller. Like the Marxist view of history that the material infrastructure gives rise to more conceptual and intellectual civilization, choreographic records give rise to the pursuit of more experienced and qualitative style. In fact, the Balanchine Video Archives is a luxury that is not possible for most choreographers and dance companies for whom regular and stable preservation of choreographic structures as recommended by Dance Heritage Coalition is already a burden to keep up with properly.

IV. Conclusion: Reflections on the Shift in Dance Preservation Discourse

The Balanchine Video Archives were established with premises of dance preservation that are different from those of the NYPL's Dance Division. Notwithstanding the two archives' differences in their scales and scopes, the juxtaposition of them reveals the shifting idea of how and what aspect of dance should be preserved. While the Dance Division started with the premise

www.kci.go.kr

that the person-to-person, haphazard transmission of dance had long been the obstacle for the advance of the dance field, the Balanchine Video Archives shed new light on the same practice as a means to get closer to the embodied knowledge of dance. The recursive signification of interpersonal transmission of dance in the 1990s invites a Foucauldian question on historicity; the genealogy of preservation methodology in dance, from person-to-person communication to written script to photography and film to digital media, may not be as logical and evolutionary as it is commonly thought. If the innovation of filmic records had rendered pre-film modes of dance documentation and transmission as outdated, superficial, and thus limited, the introduction of process-oriented modes of preservation, such as oral history and other hybrid methods, rekindled an interest in what had been suspected as severely limited in its capacity of capturing the fleeting performance of dance. This indicates that the genealogy of the mode of dance preservation may not be a necessarily evolutionary, rational progress, and its progression is not necessarily better, more humane, or more logical than what came before.

Upon contemplating whether this shift from a quantitative to qualitative focus shown in the two archives is a meaningful paradigmatic shift, I am skeptical about it. I see that the comparison between the Dance Division and the Balanchine project shows the enlargement, not the shift, of archival subjects. In other words, it is not that the archival subject shifted from choreography to performance, but that it now embraces choreography as well as their qualitative and experiential dimensions. Although the attraction to the contingent and embodied aspects of dance might be resistive toward the traditional mode of dance preservation rendering dance into data of choreographic structure, the ardent efforts to materialize and fixate the contingent, such as style, seem to reinforce this rationalizing process. Financially supporting the NYPL's film collection in the 1960s, Jerome

Robbins aimed to prevent dance's natural decay or variation over time. What he conceived as the supposedly authentic version was mainly choreographic structures, and now, not only choreographic structures but also qualitative nuance or style also become the subject of preservation. This indicates that what should be salvaged against corrosion has gradually expanded from choreography to style to experiential, embodied knowledge, and so on.

Also, the fact that "style dilution" was problematized throws a sidelight on the premise that choreographic structures are already preserved. Dilution of the choreographer's style has become the most pressing issue for many modern dance companies, yet on the other side of the coin, this becomes an issue only when the choreographer's works are documented and preserved thoroughly enough to be presented by dancers and companies without the face-to-face transmission of dance. Style is the final touch rather than the prerequisite to a choreographer's repertory. Given that objectification had been considered the most urgent task for early modern dance field in order to stabilize and popularize modern dance to the level of ballet in the mid-20th century, the fact that style dilution became the primary concern half a century later reveals that the modern dance field has stabilized the system of restaging the works. As discussed earlier, style becomes a topic only when it establishes a mechanism to fully and stably preserve choreographic structures. Especially in the case of Balanchine, his works are thoroughly preserved and circulated in the consumer mechanism to the extent that his repertory can be browsed and requested for performance through the website of the Balanchine Trust, as if to make a purchase in the free market system. It is no surprise that dilution of the "Balanchine look" was discussed more often than that of any other choreographer. Currently, the work's social validity is not considered to be the subject of preservation, but this is only tentative because of the heaviness of sacrosanct heritage. For instance, Balanchine did not believe that every aspect

of dance should be documented,⁶²⁾ yet his dances are as thoroughly documented, preserved, and protected as possible. Although the Balanchine Foundation cannot manipulate the social validity of his works, they are in fact already protected in the name of heritage. In the end, if the assumption of the corrosiveness of time drives archival desire in dance, the immaterial ideology of heritage drives the dream of ever-expanding dance knowledge.

Concluding my critical reconsiderations of both the NYPL and the Balanchine Video Archives, I would suggest that, while the genealogy of dance media archives reveal that the archival desire in dance raised the standards of knowability in the dance field, it should also be noted that it resulted in the past and the future encroaching on the present. First, the enlargement of dance preservation discourse burdens contemporary dancers. Performing dance repertory in the past, contemporary dancers have to authenticate not only choreographic structures but also their interpretation and styles. In so doing, they are deprived of the agency to unfold their idiosyncratic styles. In the Balanchine Video Archives, the original casts' interpretation was respected, yet only when Balanchine, the origin of the authority, was deceased. As even the most contingent element of dance becomes taxidermied, there is little room for contemporary dancers. However, as the original casts were idiosyncratic in the premiere of Balanchine's works, so are contemporary dancers when they learn from those older dancers. This complicated the methodological discourse of coaching, since the younger dancers' idiosyncratic characteristics influenced the project as much as the older dancers shaped the creation of the dances. In other words, younger dancers become the subjects onto whom the original cast members project their interpretation, but they are far from blank canvases.

Moreover, the present is pledged for the tentative benefit in the future. As

62) George Balanchine, "Recording the Ballet," p. 132.

much as the term “access” became one of the three keywords of Dance Heritage Coalition, the expectation for accessibility has been enhanced, especially with digital technology. However, visitors to the NYPL’s Dance Division often get frustrated when they find out that many of the media resources are not open for the public viewing due to the intricate contracts with donors, choreographers, and musicians. Although the library supports the fair-use programs of the Dance Heritage Coalition, it is also bound by the contracts with the donors, and Jan Schmidt acknowledges that it is increasingly more and more amount of the staff time to clear rights for the materials.⁶³⁾

Thus, an ironic situation results when things exist but cannot be seen. A nuance of relief runs through Oswald’s reminiscence:

We were able to get the New York City Ballet to allow us to come in and film their works. We were able to film the Joffrey Company. And we filmed Martha Graham—we were able to convince Martha Graham to record some of her works. We did a magnificent film of Graham technique. Now, that can’t be seen. All of these things are restricted by AGMA, the musician’s union. But the thing is, they’re there. We filmed about seven hundred works.⁶⁴⁾

This indicates that predicaments of the present are acquiesced for the immaterial goal of heritage in the future.

Yet, what should be emphasized is that the issues of heritage are not so much about the future as about the present. Conceptualization of dance as heritage needs to be further explored as it changes the way we perceive and preserve an individual dance phenomenon. Anthropologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that heritage is “not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. It is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past.”⁶⁵⁾ According to her, heritage adds values to existing assets that

63) Interview with Jan Schmidt, Nov. 18, 2008.

64) Genevieve Oswald, interviewed by Katja Kolcio, *Movable Pillars*, p. 190.

65) Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998), 150.

have either ceased to be viable or are in danger of disappearing. This explains why “dance heritage” became such an imperative goal of the dance field, since dance has been primarily defined as ephemeral in its nature, thus predestined to disappear. Once we perceive heritage not as something innate that we inherit from the past, but as a value that we attach to the particular kinds of assets, places, or practices, it enables us to see various projects under the banner of dance heritage not just as a neutral and imperative act, but as an active production of new values. Indeed, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out that, “despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, re-creation, recuperation, revitalization, and regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past.”⁶⁶⁾ In light of this idea, the goal of preserving dance heritage seems to suggest questions about the way we construct history out of dance phenomena. Considering Walter Benjamin’s warning that appreciating heritage is a catastrophe, efforts to preserve dance heritage is a political engagement--no matter how imperative and universal--imposed on the dance field.

In sum, the preservation discourse imbedded in the Balanchine Video Archives shows that dance media archives have enlarged the scope and depth of dance knowledge, which has both positive and negative effects on those in the dance field today.

■ Bibliography

- Breimer, Stephen F., Robert Thorne, and John David Viera, eds. *Publishing and the Arts Handbook*, New York: Clark, Boardman, and Callaghan, 1994.
- Sparshott, Francis. *Off the Ground: First Steps to a Philosophical Consideration of the Dance*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988.

66) Ibid., 149.

- Phelan, Peggy(1997). *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*. London: Routledge.
- Jeong, Ok Hee(2011). "Critical Reconsiderations of Dance Media Archives: The Case of the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division", *the Korean Journal of Dance Studies* 34: 215-256.
- Main, Lesley(2005). "The Dances of Doris Humphrey-Creating a Contemporary Perspective through Directorial Interpretation," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 23(2): 106- 122.
- Anderson, Jack(1980). "How Much Do Ballets Change with the Years?" *New York Times*, July 11, p. C6.
- Balanchine, George(1950). "Recording the Ballet". *Dance Observer* 17(9), pp. 132-133.
- Bentley, Toni(2005). "Because Mr. B. Told Me So." *New York Times*, June 12, p. A1.
- Doris, Virginia(1988-89). "A Notator's View". *Dance Notation Journal* 6 Winter/ Spring, pp. 6-8.
- Dunning, Jennifer(1983). "Balanchine Ballets Kept". *New York Times*, Dec. 18, p. 102.
- Freese, Joan(1994-95). "Dance Preservation: A Report from the Field". *Dance View*, Winter, pp. 9-14.
- Heilmann, Brigitte(1997). "In Search of the Original Secret: two video collections from the Balanchine Foundation preserving the wisdom of Balanchine's muses". *Ballett International* 5, p. 19.
- Horwitz, Dawn Lille(1988-89). "Editorial". *Dance Notation Journal* 6, Winter/ Spring, p. ii.
- Hutchinson Guest, Ann(2002-3). "And the Choreography is by...?" *Dance Now*, Winter, pp. 43-45.
- Hutchinson, Ann(1949). "Adventure in Notation". *Dance Observer* 16(1), pp. 4-

5, 14.

Kaplan, Larry(1986). "Keeping Balanchine's Ballets Authentic But Also Vital".
New York Times, Jul. 13, pp. H6, 12.

Kinetz, Erika(2004). "Balanchine in Cuba, Despite Barring of Americans and
Authenticity Debate". *New York Times*, Nov. 6, p. B11.

Kisselgoff, Anna(1984). "A TV tribute upsets Balanchine Stereotype". *New York
Times*, Sep. 23, p. H6.

_____ (1985). "Why Did Balanchine Allow Ballets to Disappear?"
New York Times, Feb. 3, p. H8.

Nugent, Ann(2002). "The Forsythe Saga". *Dance Now*, Spring, pp. 44-49.

Pogrebin, Robin(2004). "Exuding Balanchine's Essence". *New York Times*, April
23, p. E1, 21.

An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by the author, June 5, 2009. New York.

An interview with Nancy Reynolds, by Alexander Tomalonis, *Ballet
Alert!Online*, No. 1, Oct. 1997. An interview with Jan Schmidt, by the
author, Nov. 18, 2008. New York.

The George Balanchine Foundation <[http://www.balanchine.org/
balanchine/03/gbfvideoarchives.html](http://www.balanchine.org/balanchine/03/gbfvideoarchives.html), 2011.2.10>.

논문투고일	2012년	1월	24일
심사일		2월	21일
심사완료일		2월	29일

춤 미디어 아카이브에 대한 비판적 고찰 II: 조지 발란신 재단 비디오 아카이브를 중심으로

정 옥 희
템플대학교, 박사과정 수료

본고는 <무용예술학연구> 34집에 실린 “춤 미디어 아카이브에 대한 비판적 고찰: 미국 뉴욕공립도서관의 제롬 로빈스 무용분과를 중심으로”의 후속연구이자 무용수의 경험 및 작품의 질적 요소를 강조하는 춤 미디어 아카이브의 최근 경향에 대한 사례연구이다. 조지 발란신 재단 비디오 아카이브를 구성하는 “소실된 안무 아카이브”와 “해석자의 아카이브”를 분석 대상으로 삼아, 이에 담긴 보존 담론 및 역사적 전제들을 분석함으로써 이것이 기존의 전통적인 아카이브 모델과 실질적으로 다른가를 비판적으로 고찰했다.

구술사가 유용한 역사적 연구방법론으로 대두한 것과 미국 초기 현대무용가들의 무용단의 세대교체 과정에서 스타일의 보존이 급선무된 것에 영향 받아 1990년대 중반에 설립된 발란신 아카이브는 다음의 두 가지 측면에서 뉴욕 공립도서관의 무용분과로 대표되는 전통적인 춤 미디어 아카이브와 구별된다. 첫째, 전통적 아카이브가 모든 춤의 모든 기록물을 무차별적으로 보존하는 무한확장적 경향이 있다면, 발란신 아카이브는 특정안무가의 작품세계에서도 특히 초연 무용수의 생경험과 주관적 해석을 집중적으로 파고든다. 둘째, 완성된 작품의 안무구조를 재공연할 목적으로 보존하는 기존의 방식과는 달리 발란신 아카이브는 연습실에서 이루어지는 춤의 창작과정에 주목하여 무용수와 코치의 즉각적 상호작용을 비디오로 기록했다는 점에서도 특징이다.

소실된 안무를 복원하고, 초연에 출연한 무용수의 해석을 중점적으로 파고든다는 점에서 기존의 무용 아카이브와는 차별 짓는 발란신 아카이브는 무용 보존 및 역사적 전제에 대한 다양한 논쟁거리를 제공한다. “소실”된 안무를 안무가의 의도와 상관없이 복원하는 것이 옳은가, 무용수의 기억에 의존하는 복원이 신뢰할 만한가, 기록이 작품의 일시적 양상을 고정시키는 것이라면 계속적으로 변화하는 작품의 정체성과 충돌할 수 밖에 없는가, 초연 무용수의 해석을 기록하는 것이 과연 그 무용수에게 주체성을 부여하는 것인가 아니면 안무가의 의도를 더욱 파악하기 위한 수단일 뿐인가, 초연 무용수에 대한 존중은 오늘날의 무용수의 소외효과를 가져오지는 않는가, 스타일을 유의미한 춤 지식으로 추구하는 것은 기존 안무중심의 춤 지식개

넘에 안티테제를 이루는가, 무용수와 코치의 상호과정을 소극적으로 기록하는 것은 객관적 관찰자라 할 수 있는가?

이상과 같은 논쟁들을 살펴봄으로써 본 연구자는 발란신 아카이브가 내세우는 과정중심, 해석중심의 보존담론이 전통적인 보존담론에 대한 실질적 대안이나 유의미한 패러다임의 변화라기보다는 그 확장이자 강화라고 보았다. 발란신의 작품들이 조지 발란신 재단이나 조지 발란신 트러스트에 의해 이미 철저히 기록되고 관리되는 상황에서 그 위에 비로소 이루어지는 스타일의 추구는, 비록 안무구조보다 더 큰 존재론적 의미가 부여될 지라도 실질적인 대안이라 할 수는 없다. 나아가 스타일에 대한 집착은 춤 지식이 안무구조에서 스타일, 해석, 사회적 함의 등으로 점점 확장되어가는 과정을 드러낸다. 또한 안무가-초연무용수-현재의 무용수 간의 서열이 공고해짐에 따라 오늘날의 무용수는 단지 안무구조를 충실히 수행하는 것 외에도 춤에 대한 해석마저 초연 무용가들에게 의존해야 하는 “역사의 부담”이 더욱 커지게 되었다. 그러나 과거의 빛나는 유산이라는 명분으로 오늘날 무용인이 소외되거나 희생되는 것이 당연시되는 경향에 대해선 경계할 필요가 있다. 왜냐하면 전통이나 유산이란 이미 주어진 어떤 것이 아니라 오늘날 우리의 필요에 의해 생산해낸 정치적인 산물이기 때문이다. 따라서 발란신 아카이브는 단순히 “발란신의 유산”을 보존하는 담지체가 아니라, 춤 미디어 아카이브가 춤 지식의 영역을 점차 확장해왔으며 그것이 오늘날 살아가는 무용인들에게 긍정적이고도 부정적인 영향을 미치고 있음을 드러내는 구성체라 할 수 있다.

주제어: The George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives(조지 발란신 재단 비디오 아카이브), The Archive of Lost Choreography(소실된 안무 아카이브), The Interpreters Archive(해석자의 아카이브), Nancy Reynolds(낸시 레이놀즈), dance preservation(춤 보존)