



Courtesy of Madeleine Nichols

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“...So, how do you measure your work? You measure it by their success. That’s it. That’s all you have your eye on. That’s fun!”

As curator of the Dance Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center from 1988 until her retirement in November 2005, Madeleine Nichols has been a vital force for the dissemination and preservation of dance information, history, and materials. Coinciding with her important work at the library, Nichols has been a dance research educator, having shared her knowledge as an adjunct professor for New York University’s program in dance and dance education for over fifteen years. Nichols is also an attorney. Her legal work focuses on issues of copyright, contracts, and estates as they relate to the rights of performing artists. She has served as chair for both the arts section of the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, and for the New York Public Library Research Libraries Council, and has been on the board of directors and editorial board of the Society of Dance History Scholars. In 1992, Nichols helped to found the Dance Heritage Coalition. In 2006, Dance/USA and the dance community honored Nichols’s many years of commitment to the documentation and preservation of dance and her persistent efforts on behalf of dance artists’ rights by awarding her an Ernie, which recognizes “unsung heroes” in the field of dance.

SETTING THE SCENE

Although it was unplanned, Madeleine was the perfect finale to my interview journey. We met in her office, tucked away in the back of the vast holdings of the Dance Research Collection of the New York Public Library. As always when I have had an opportunity to speak with Madeleine, her clearheaded thinking and eye to the future made me pause and reassess my own perspective on dance once again. Hers is a generous and macrocosmic worldview, one that encourages a person to dream and think *big*, allowing the dance world to be just that, big—big enough for everyone’s dreams.

— R.C.

Q: Well, Madeleine. You are the last of my interviews. So, here we go! How do you describe what you do to other people? For example, if you met a group of kids or people who didn't know that much about dance?

MN: That happens all the time and I wish I could have twelve words or less to describe it. Everyone wants to know what a curator is. "What is that?" In a museum sense, a curator is understood, and that's part of my job. The other part of my job involves information service for a very specialized subject that has a comprehensive research library collection. We collect materials, all kind of materials, and then from that pool of materials, we display them with the help of the museum staff that's here in the building. Then I ask people questions about what I've described. Because some people understand it and some don't.

Q: What kind of questions do you ask them?

MN: It depends on the audience and upon whether or not it's a family member, or someone in the library world, or someone in the dance world. If it's someone in the library world or other research areas, historians, or people who do that kind of academic research, they are interested in the fact that we communicate all the time with people through the Internet. In addition to dealing with people in person, we use the Internet, and e-mail, and the telephone. Actually, more people use this library off-site than come on-site. And that's been the case for about ten years. *That* amazes people. The world is changing so fast and we get librarians that want to see it in action here. This is a very exciting place if you are in the library world or if you are a historian or in any of these traditional areas, because we are dealing with far more than books.

If you are coming from the dance area and you are either a choreographer or dancer or are producing shows, then you want to know how this applies to you. How can you use it? If you are a choreographer, say, in South America, here's how it works. You somehow come to this country, you find this place, and you see that we're really eager to have some photographs and programs,

videotapes, or some kind of documentation of choreographic works and other dance activities. It doesn't have to be theatrical, proscenium concert dance. It can be any kind of dance. And the minute you get that information to us, we do what libraries do. We catalog it, it goes up on the Internet, and the choreographer or dancer in South America can say to family, friends, and other presenters there, "See, they recognize me, you should, too." If this lends credibility to an international event, well, that's an easy thing for us to do with our regular resources. We don't need anything extra; it's very simple. It's one thing this library has to add to the field.

The other thing it adds to the field is something that Jerome Robbins had a vision for, understood, and used this library for. He felt that dancers and choreographers needed a place where they could see other styles of dancing, pure styles of any kind of dancing. There's not a limit to what we think is dance. For us, it can include gymnastics or ice-skating. For example, there's a lot of religious and sacred dance catalogued here. Now you get very close to an anthropological perspective of dance and how it is viewed in culture. We then link to other libraries that are anthropology libraries. So we try to do that.

What we are *really* interested in here is the *dancing*. What shows the dancing? What describes the dancing? What explains the context of the dancing? And if it is being overlooked elsewhere, now we *really* start to care about it, because otherwise it's going to be lost and we really don't want that to happen. That facet is a characteristic of the New York Public Library in particular. This library is one of the top five research libraries in the world. Depending upon how you're counting, it always comes up near the top and it has no national limitation as a national library would. It has no tuition limitation as a university library would. So it really fills in a gap. It has, for over a hundred years now, kept its eye on mankind's knowledge and how you get it and save it, and make it accessible so that people all over can do what they want with it. Well, now you know why I can't find my twelve words or less.

Q: I know. It's really great. I love it! So, this takes me into the next question. Do you consider your involvement in dance to be your profession, your career, your work, your passion, your calling? All of the above?

MN: Probably all of the above. When I studied dance, a hundred years ago, it was ballet, tap, and acrobatics. It was clear that I was not built to be a dancer. And what I thought was the most beautiful dancing, and what I wanted to be was what I saw, which was ballet... the photographs of Maria Tallchief...the Ballets Russes when they came on a tour to the town where I grew up. That was the kind of dance I really wanted to do at the time. And, of course, I couldn't. It wasn't going to work. And while I studied for it and took a couple of summers to study in New York, by the time I was a teenager, it was clear that I had to make a decision. Mind you, I had no other images of what dance could be. I had never seen something like José Limón or Doris Humphrey. I might have made a different choice had I understood that there were other kinds of dancing. I just didn't know about them.

So I stopped cold turkey in high school and went to college. And decided that *that* was what I was supposed to do. But I still think today that my brains might really be in my feet, with my tap dancing. But back then, I didn't want to become a tap dancer, that wasn't it.

Q: Well, it's never too late!

MN & Q: *[laughter]*

[pause]

Q: How did you first get introduced to dance and what have been some of the landmark events in your dance life? Who were and are some of the major influences and inspirations in your life?

MN: When I stopped dance cold turkey and went to college, I did find an entire other universe. I don't think I could have done

both. If I still had been dancing, I think I would have been totally absorbed by it. So how to put words to whatever that is, I don't know. But I know that by stopping cold turkey, I then looked at the rest of the world and found other mentors, other achievers in other fields.

Q: Who were they?

MN: Usually just businesspeople, friends...you know, occasionally you'd come across a teacher who was special...there was an English professor back at the University of Michigan who taught Chaucer. If I had to characterize them, they were people with high integrity and intensity of focus and excitement about what they were doing. That is the common thread in the people that I've met who've inspired me. The library field was simply a way a woman could sustain employment. So that is why *that* was attractive to me. So I studied that right out of college. Not thinking that there was any dance in that. But then, when there was work at the New York Public Library, already loving New York and knowing that I wanted to try to work in libraries, I came here. I didn't know where that would lead me. Imagine my surprise when I found out that at the New York Public Library, there was a special place for dance. That was *really* amazing! From this particular library, it's possible to look at the entire dance field around the world and to see what's needed, and to understand some trends and then to try to help when you can. So, I came full circle back to dance and I'm really privileged to be here and to serve in any way I can. Does that answer your question?

Q: Well...when you first started your dance training, was that at a local studio?

MN: Yes. This is what parents did for children then. They exposed them to piano lessons if they could, and they exposed them to dance lessons. I'm sure my mother wanted me to walk gracefully. Little did she know that I really liked using the large muscles of my body. I still do.

Q: And what were some of the major challenges you faced along your journey? What were some of the choices you had to make? Were there difficult choices? Were there some exceptionally good ones? Are there choices you would have made differently?

[*pause*]

MN: Because this is a hard question to answer, I want to tell you that recently I think of the world in terms of what marketing people call Generation Y and Generation X. I'm a boomer. Anyone over forty years old is a boomer. But from about twenty-five to forty is Generation X and under twenty-five is this Generation Y coming along. Your book is probably reaching out to the Generation Yers. Here's what I have learned, having gotten to where the boomers are now...the obstacles never go away. And it doesn't matter what they are. The more you do, the more the obstacles come. One simply learns to deal with them. If you are going down a road and you know where you're going, you're not so aware of the potholes. If you're going down a road and you're looking at all the obstacles, the potholes, all of them, that's all you'll see. And you'll stay there working on all the potholes and you won't get down the road. So it's a trick, really, to keep your vision, whatever that is. And where does vision come from? That's a hard question to answer. I don't know.

I think the challenges people have, give them an exercise. So, maybe there are physical challenges, maybe there are personal challenges, in family structures and so on. In a way, they really don't matter. What matters is what you do confronted with those challenges and how you manage them. Whether you stay focused on what you are trying to do, whatever that is, or not. And that's almost a daily mental search, to go, "Okay, what is it? What am I supposed to do now? Why am I breathing? What am I good at? What do I enjoy doing?" That always gives you a clue about what you are supposed to be doing. Does it always work? No, it doesn't always work. I think that people do need a team of people around them, to help them go where they're supposed to go. They need some trusted advisers. That team changes as you grow. And you do grow. So, it's hard to answer these questions.

Q: Are there concrete examples from your life of obstacles that you faced?

MN: In an overall way, I wanted to dance. Wasn't meant to. Don't have the body for it. And now, I'm probably doing something more significant for more people than I'm even aware of. I'm aware of the people I'm dealing with transaction-by-transaction here in the library, but I know that what we are doing overall is impacting other people that I've never even seen. *That's* probably what I'm supposed to be doing, because dancing was different than I thought it would be. So, there's an obstacle that, you know, in spite of myself, I'm still in the dance field in ways that I never would have been able to understand or imagine.

Q: And obstacles as a dance curator?

MN: Obstacles as a dance curator? Hmm...I'm in a large, highly structured organization. This is good and this is bad. My personal style is that I like to work fast. I was brought up that way. That's what our family dinner conversation was like. A ping-pong game. No one ever finished a sentence. [*laughter*] Now I come to see in the rest of the world, that's rude. So that's been an obstacle and I still work with that.

Q: So, what are some of the major ideas you would want to relate to dancers who are struggling to survive and thrive in the dance world? What would you like to tell them?

MN: I would encourage them to never, ever give up on what they want to do. There's a cartoon that someone sent me about ten years ago. It was from an acquaintance in Philadelphia who saw that those of us in the library work long hours at a terrific pace. There's not very much pay and we are constantly busy. The cartoon is of this large bird. I think it's a stork. Its bill is tilted upward and it's trying to swallow a frog. The frog's back legs are hanging out of the stork's mouth and its front legs are around the stork's throat, firmly wringing its neck and preventing the stork from swallowing the frog.

As long as the frog holds on, the stork can never swallow it. And at the bottom it says, “Never, ever give up.” That’s what Winston Churchill said at commencement addresses, I think, during or after World War II. “Never, ever, ever give up.” So it’s true if you know what you want to do and you know it’s the right thing to do. You have to really grab on to that.

The encouragement for me can come from lots of places. Here I am in a library. So encouragement can come from books, or you see other people who have done it. You see other stories. For example, here on my bookshelf is a story of a man named Dale Fern. He was a very bright student in a farming family in the midwestern United States. As a high school senior, he was offered a college scholarship. His family was very proud of him and very much wanted him to go to college. However, he had seen in his high school *library*, *Dance Magazine*. And in *Dance Magazine*, there was a picture of Olga Spessitseva. He had never seen anything so beautiful in his life. He wanted to meet this person. So, against his family’s wishes, he came to New York City instead of going to college. He had heard that people in New York City would know where this creature was on earth. So he came to New York City and he started asking people, “Where is Olga Spessitseva?” Everyone was very evasive, but he never gave up.

He took dance class after dance class, as people do when they come to New York. At every studio he went to, he asked all the students, he asked the teachers, he asked the people who ran the schools about Olga Spessitseva. Finally, through his persistence, people began to understand that he was serious about finding her. He collected every photograph, every old article he could find of Olga Spessitseva. Well, he ultimately found out that she was in a mental hospital in upstate New York.

When he made the first visit, he had been told to take, I believe it was, oranges, chocolate, and stockings. Not stretch, but silk stockings. Which he did. When he got there, she was quite disheveled. It was a state institution and she was quite withdrawn. He didn’t know what to do because he couldn’t communicate with her. So the next visit, he brought a Russian priest, because he thought



Courtesy of Madeleine Nichols

Madeleine in a tap dance recital photo

the Russian connection would help. And, of course, it did, because no one had been able to understand her and no one understood her ballet background.

He kept up these visits regularly. I believe he went up every Sunday or every other Sunday on a train to see her and slowly but surely, she began to come out of her shell. The place where she was began to work with her more and understood then that the Russian

language was important. Well, the Tolstoy House finally took her in. One of the things she did in her old age was to make these very beautiful dolls—these figures. One of them was Nijinsky in his famous *Giselle* costume. She gave that to Dale Fern and that's now here in the library, with the photographs that Dale Fern collected in loose-leaf notebooks. Are they rare vintage photographs? No. Are they put together by someone with passion? Yes! And they tell you more about Olga Spessitseva than all the books in the world would.

So, that's a story of a person who never gave up. He was never made to dance. He made his living in New York as an actor. He's not famous. You don't know his name, but the story...

Q: Wow! [*pause*] And if you had to pick a few reasons why you are still in this field, what would they be? What is it about your dance life that keeps you going?

MN: Oh, it's the people...it's the people. Dancers are particular. Artists, in general, are the most special people on earth. They've been given talent, insight, abilities, and a vision that the rest of us don't have. They see things in a way that the rest of us mere mortals don't. They help us see better, they help us understand the world we live in differently. Often, they have a difficult time because they're not comfortable with the rather *brutal* way that the rest of the world works. They find that offensive. They're probably correct. But it's the only way the rest of us seem to be able to manage at this point. So, I love working with the artists. That's very exciting. Every once in a while, they come needing something. And if you can feed that need, then they go on to create something. One of the special things about working in any library, not just this library, is that your work is intended to help other people succeed. So, how do you measure your work? You measure it by their success. That's it. That's all you have your eye on. That's fun!

Q: Do you see any significant trends in any aspect of the dance field, either in training, in attitudes of people both in and out of the field, or in subject matter that artists are dealing with?

MN: There are some trends. People are working on projects over a longer period of time than they used to. Teachers are working individually with students more closely than they used to. That's interesting.

Q: Taking a longer time with projects, similar to what Graham used to do?

MN: Possibly...but, similar or not, people are working on their projects over a period of years. Another trend that's obvious, is that we're moving into a digital world...

Q: We're in it.

MN: We're in it and we can't even see it. Even Generation Y can't see it. There are trends within Generation X and Generation Y that are truly enlightening for me. My hunch is that the reason dance is going to be sustained (for those that are interested in it) is that it has to do with more than just "B for ballet" or "T for tap," or whatever style your dance is. It has to do with relationships and communication, and in a digital world, that becomes the economy. That becomes the way it works. That becomes the *energy* of it. Dancers obviously, as a part of their art, understand retaining energy and expanding and letting the energy go. That is the physics of the universe and that is the electronic world we are living in.

Everyone reading your book is going to be living in a time where we're in two worlds. We're still in this chemical world of photographs and all the tangible things. But we're also making it into this digital world. This transition is tremendously exciting. Young people now, Generation X and Y, have relationships that are lasting over periods of time, in a close way, far more than the baby boomers. The Internet, e-mail, is helping them do that. They are keeping their friendships. Fewer career jobs exist in today's world. Dancers may already be accustomed to that situation. [*chuckle*] That doesn't mean that it's good for the dance field, but it is simply a fact of life now. The forty-year plan, where you went to work and

you were there forever, is really on the way out. In fact, it is highly unusual. With the communication among young people using the Internet, the relationships are tremendously important. They are helping each other get jobs. They are helping each other find where they should go next. That's pretty exciting and wonderful. And I think that's going to be an asset to the dance field. Dancers are going to be way ahead of other people because this has been the terrain for dancers from the very beginning.

Q: And also the obvious, which is now we can document.

MN: Now we can document. And here, I have to sigh. You asked me about a challenge before. We are not documenting nearly as much as we should be. I still remain quite frustrated by that imbalance of quantity as well as quality. I thought ten or fifteen years ago that this library would not be needed in the documenting of performance. *Wow* was I wrong! Not only are we needed, sometimes we are the only one doing it! Presenters have not filled the need. The formal companies themselves have not filled the need regularly either. They're trying, but some of them don't have enough money to buy new tape stock. Or they are using equipment that's obsolete. Everyone is using equipment that's obsolete at this moment. But we're close to breaking through with some standards for that. So that's going to come along, but it's still a very big obstacle.

This past century, though, joyfully, is the first century where we were able to see the real thing. Photography gave us the ability to photograph the dancer and the body. So, the image has not gone through the painter's hand or an engraver's hand. We've got those from prior centuries. Those works convey powerful information to us, those pieces of art as it were. But with the chemicals and the photographs from this last century, that's given us a whole new lead on dance and what people see. Starting in the twentieth century, people saw photographs. Then people saw Fred Astaire dancing on film. Further into the century, even more people saw dancing on television. We don't see much dance on television now, but we do get to see dancing on MTV. That's not bad. We need more.

We need different styles of dancing available and I think that the economics need to be worked on just a little bit more. That is around the corner.

Q: When you say “obsolete,” what do you consider not obsolete for those artists filming their works today. Is everyone switching to DVD and digital video cameras?

MN: The technical people who are providing us with information and equipment are saying the same thing over and over. “Do not put all your eggs in one basket. Do not transfer everything into digital right now. It’s too early.” Yes, banks have all of their information in electronic form. Yes, the music industry is now almost entirely in electronic form and is learning how to preserve that. But, there is not enough information yet for moving bodies and images in digital formats.

The New York Public Library is one of the founding members of the Dance Heritage Coalition. This is a very small entity. It is simply a group of people and institutions who see some of the problems of dance preservation and are dedicated to high-standard solutions. It’s just a project-to-project venture and it’s always within a hairsbreadth of going out of existence. But believe me, if you can get eight people from eight different kinds of institutions to agree that this is a serious problem, and to agree upon how we need to resolve it, then you have some progress. Slowly, we’ve been able to get some of these things at least identified. One of the most recent projects of the coalition is a test with analog videotape to see how it transfers to digital images and to see if that can be preserved and compressed in a way so as not to lose information. The difficulty of seeing a camera pan across a sunny grassy lawn, for example, is that all of the information that the analog picks up is not always caught in the digital. There is a scientific firm that has done some testing on recent footage from the Dance Division. It involves visuals of Gregory Hines tap dancing in white trousers. The fast movement of his trousers was hard for the digital format to capture from the tape. These are the kinds of tests that they’ve done and I do think they have found something now that exists in the marketplace that

mathematically does not lose any of the information. That's what we're looking for and I think we've found it.

These are the kinds of exciting things that are happening. They don't always happen on our timeline. We want the answer to the question now and there is not a good answer today, August 2004. But if we can all get the word out and be expecting those requirements of our equipment and our systems, and keep an open architecture to our digital world, replacing these little analog boxes that are magical in themselves, we're going to be fine. We're going to be ahead of other fields.

It's the same way in the area of copyright. There was a gentleman here yesterday from the World Intellectual Property Organization.¹ He is working to raise consciousness about the importance of choreography and copyright. This is great for dance! I don't know where it will go. It will not go quickly. But it will proceed. It's a wonderful thing.

Q: It's an ongoing process then?

MN: I think it is inevitable to be quite honest with you. I actually think that we are part of an enormous tidal wave for dance. It will not be turned back.

Q: Well, that's great to hear! [*pause*] Do you have a wish or a dream for dance in the future, either personally or overall?

MN: I do. I wish dance were more accessible. That is, in the lives of every person on earth. If you live outside of the United States, most cultures do have dance as part of their everyday world. It's part of their culture. It's part of the way life is celebrated. But increasingly in the West, dance has become something separate, something only for the highly skilled, something only for certain bodies. That was my experience, for example. It is not in the vision of the day-to-day path. It is not in the sight line for most people. What is there on television today? There is MTV on television, but that's all. That's a limited scope of dance compared to, say, if you turn to Mexican culture.

For so many other cultures, dance is part of their heritage. Dance is the way the heritage is carried forward. In the United States, if we look at specific cultures that have immigrated into the United States (and they are everywhere), one of the ways that older generations have passed on their specific cultural heritage to their new family members is through dance. So, it's going on, but it's not in the mainstream. It's not in our shopping malls, it is not on the highways, it's not on our television, and it's not on the radio. Will we ever get to holograms? You know, where we just turn on our coffee table and there's a three-dimensional moving thing happening? That will be dance. That will be the art form. To have dance as part of the natural part of everyone's life. I would very much like to see that. So anything that goes in that general direction has my support.

Often, I watch with a great smile Generation Xers sitting for hours at their computers, many of them turning for recreation and social communication to swing dance. I mean, that's just one example. That's terrific!

Q: Any other thoughts, anything that you still want to say?

MN: Well, I wanted to turn around and ask you a question. Are there any similarities that you see with the other people you've been interviewing? Or are there any gaps and questions that you think are in the minds of Generation Y? You are one of the people who have been steadily listening and thinking about them.

Q: Well, there have been overwhelming similarities in the responses to a number of these questions. For example, when I've asked about all of your involvement in dance, everyone has responded that, yes, it is a passion. Everyone has mentioned that their mentors, all of them, had that similar intensity of focus. That's been across the board. It's obvious in the way you have all been talking about what you are doing. And when I ask, "Do you have anything to tell a younger generation?" everyone's been saying, "Don't give up. Don't give up. Don't give up!" And that's tremendously encouraging to hear.

And then, in terms of challenges (and I think this is the product of people who “succeed,” in our sense of what success means), you have all been less focused on those. This group is not looking at or hasn’t dwelled on, as you said earlier, “each pothole.” They’re part of the deal; they’re not the deal themselves. And although everyone has been acknowledging money, or the lack of funds, you all say, “Yeah, money’s a drag.” But it seems as if everyone looks beyond that.

MN: It’s not about money.

Q: It’s not about money. Money is a factor, but it’s not about money.

MN: If it’s important to do, the money will come. That is a very frightening way for most people to think. And this may be part of an American framework, because we are economically aware. The free economy of the United States is one of the wonders of mankind. As frustrated as we might get from day to day with the economics and politics or any of the things that are in fact distressing, the fact that we’re so conscious of the enterprise, may have us caught in valuing things according to dollars. Thinking that the dollars are what we need in order to do what we want to do.

I think artistically one must work constantly to follow that passion. To concentrate and to validate the passion. That’s what the library can do for dancers. It can validate that very special interest they have. I have seen it time and time again. Two days from now, I will be welcoming about sixty incoming freshmen who are in a dance program at Manhattanville College. Well, what I remember from last year, having done this for the first time, is that virtually the entire incoming class was not from the metropolitan region. They were coming from all across the United States. In showing some materials, I was encouraged to see that all of the young men knew who Alvin Ailey was, and Nijinsky. That’s not easy to come by in our culture. And then I saw the looks on their faces as they saw the kinds of books on the open shelves here, books that you can take out. When you see the encouragement they get from all

of those dance books, all of those dance photographs, looking at a review of Doris Humphrey, for example, and imagining how she must have felt when she saw the review of her new work, all of these are validations of feelings they're having!

There's a biography of Isadora Duncan. It's called *Your Isadora*.² And very often dancers find in that book some similarities of thinking. The same thing happens with all the books on Vaslav Nijinsky. His diary, which was edited by his wife (her editing has come into criticism in recent years), and the later biographies and English translations of his diary, provide inspiration. When they see the struggle and the way in which he perceived the world, they completely sympathize with it. They find a kindred spirit there. Then they realize, "Oh, okay, I understand this." The rest of the world just often finds this really odd. But artistic people don't. It's important to validate those artistic feelings so that artists, dancers in particular, don't feel alone. Whenever that feeling, like "I'm all by myself," comes along, it's time to go find...

Q: Your tribe.

MN: Yes, your tribe, exactly. That's a wonderful way to describe it. It can be done very easily online.

Q: One of the things that's been frustrating for me in choosing only seven people for this book is that there are so many other people that haven't been heard from and so many other ways to be in the dance world that we haven't touched upon.

MN: Yes, you should keep a basket of ideas for this. Throw into a basket the names of people, whenever you think of them, the questions you wish you could ask this person or that person. Because I'm confident that there's a way that *that* interview can take place, whether you are the one doing it or not. It is important for dance to do this. Dance is a verbal art form. It's more than that, but it is passed from person to person. The words in dance are tremendously important. I happen to think that eventually people will be studying choreographers to see how choreographers communicate to get

other human beings to enact the vision of the choreographer. Business schools have been studying the wrong people when they want to know about communication and team building. They need to study how choreographers do this. There's a huge variety.

We're in a time of such exciting flux; we have the capacity now to do things that we didn't have before. What if, for example, your readers were able to keep this going, by asking similar questions and new questions of other artists and people in the dance field of other generations? There are so many ways.

Q: Yes, well, dancers are accessible. Call them up. They'll talk. They'll most likely be flattered.

MN: They are accessible and not only are they flattered, they have information to give. You asked about future dreams earlier. One of the things I want to do is to increase the role of the dancer beyond that of an unpaid goodwill ambassador. Yesterday, a wonderful, highly respected, experienced, magnificent, contemporary dancer was mentioning that she felt that in touring many countries of the world, she was often an ambassador from one culture to another culture. Because while she is American, she was invited to other countries because they saw something in her work they wanted. She then in turn saw and learned from their work. I would like to see her *recognized* for her work as a goodwill ambassador. But I would like her paid for all that she does.

So, occasionally, when these interviews come up, and some wonderful gem of an artist who is healthy now and has credibility for what he or she does, well...that *ambassador* status could generate a book and residual rights for the artist.

And I want the dancers who are touring, I want them paid top dollar. I believe that there are ways to get this to work out. The copyright leaders of the world are wrestling with how you maintain economic action with copyright protection. This is a worldwide electronic situation; it's being worked out in the recording industry among others. But, as the gentleman from the World Intellectual Property Organization pointed out, those are all old models. Well,

here's dance coming along and we didn't get caught in any of the old models. We were left out. Might this be our moment for new models?

So throw your thoughts in the basket and I'm quite confident that Generation X and Generation Y have ideas that will go way beyond what we're thinking. Pick a topic, almost any topic in dance, and it's pretty much wide open and full of lessons.

Q: And that's exciting. I mean, you can't say that about many other fields, that there are so many topics to chose from.

MN: Exactly. And what I really like about that is that dance is evolving on multiple levels, so that young dance students can pick a topic beyond the very well known and they can add to the observational knowledge. They can collect what exists. They can save what is going to be lost. And they can think ahead to what might be. We are developing academic thinkers. We are a little behind some other countries in our thinking process. But we are going to have some amazing thinkers who can assess and understand better the smaller topics, some things that are new, plus the broad overarching ones. And they're really going to be doing a great job. I see it changing. We're going to develop the philosophers of dance. We don't have them yet. There have certainly been a few along the way. But, by and large, until now we've had observational information that people have been trying to collect and assess. Going forward, this is changing...and that's really exciting!

Q: Madeleine, this is great...I think we can call it a wrap.

MN: We finally did it!

NOTES

1. The World Intellectual Property Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, was established in 1967 to promote the effective use and protection of intellectual property throughout the world.

2. *Your Isadora: The Love Story of Isadora Duncan and Gordon Craig*, edited with a connecting text by Francis Steegmuller. New York: Vintage Books, 1976, © 1974.