

VDC Interview Transcript
Subject: Denison University Dance
Informant: Gill Miller, Department Chair

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Michael D. Eisner Center for the Performing Arts
240 West Broadway
Granville, Ohio 43023

Key:

Green highlighting: indicates (other) organizations and individuals that might be useful in mapping connections within and outside of the state.

Blue highlighting: titles of works referenced in interview

CF: Candace Feck

GM: Gill Miller

JC: Jessica Cavender (VDC film team)

MDB: Megan Davis Bushway (VDC film team)

JD: Jane D'Angelo: (Ohio Dance Director)

CF: I'm Candace Feck, and I'm talking with Gill Wright Miller in the newly opened **Michael D. Eisner Center**¹ for the Performing Arts on the campus of Denison University. Today is October 14, 2019.

CF: Congratulations on this beautiful and brand new building!

GM: Thank you, thank you.

useful footage begins at 4:21

CF: Huge, huge! But what's also striking me as huge, and makes it seem impossible to have only an hour conversation — if we even have an hour — is my goodness, the strength of the faculty that we just have met and talked with. Unbelievable, so exciting — so much exciting stuff happening here! But I know that you're one of the primary architects of it — let me just say that, because you and Sandy have kind of worked hand in hand for so long. But wow, phenomenal. It's really impressive.

GM: Yeah, I know. But it's also a turning point, right? So, impressive people, phenomenal colleagues, *no* question about that. But we have a brand new space,² a brand new emphasis on collaboration, a ton of colleagues in music and theater that are right down the hallway. We have had those, what do you call them, “water fountain” conversations already.

CF: Ah, yes — the water cooler...

¹ Eisner, who is on the Board of Trustees at Denison, is a graduate of the school and served as the CEO of Disney.

² The official opening of the Eisner Center where we sit was October 13, the day before this interview.

GM:... water cooler, yeah, right. So, Molly³ brings a different set of skills. She's had a company for 25 years that's really successful, Ojeya⁴ has all this indigenous study [background] as well as the Pacific and African both, mixed, and also is interested in pedagogy and publishing, you know, as well as *dancing*. So it's going to be a whole new world. A whole new world, which I think is really exciting. I'd love to share one of those water cooler [conversations]: I saw Alban Berg's⁵ score, *Lyric Suite*,⁶ coming off of the copy machine and said, "I know that score." And the man standing next to me said, "How do you know that score?" I said, "I danced that piece; it's an Anna Sokolow⁷ piece. I danced that piece in the '70s." And he said, "I played for Anna Sokolow in the '80s in New York City." I said, "You're kidding!" So there's already been a conversation about the six movements in that piece: "Do we have the students that could do it? So those kinds of conversations never would have happened before, so that's a piece of what we can bring in to this new vision.

And then Molly and Ojeya have a *ton* of information that we just haven't had here before. We've had it interspersed, but not on a permanent basis so they can really develop the curriculum in those directions. So I think it's very exciting. It's really *very* exciting.

CF: It's kind of breathtaking in that way of you almost can't breathe, there's so much possibility and excitement and now the ground for it...

GM: Yes, yes.

CF: ...literally!

GM: Yes. And this weekend I was in a meeting with the Bboard of Trustees, and they are *so* excited to support anything we want to get done. We've not been in that position before. Nobody's been negative, but there just has been a lot of support for the sciences and building all kinds of other new buildings and now new majors, (Data Analytics, Global Commerce) — but not so much the arts. But Adam,⁸ our president, is really in favor of highlighting the arts, particularly in an era where the arts are getting cut in different places, so I feel incredibly fortunate.

CF: Yes, for sure, I think you are. Well, in a way, we've arrived at the finale, which is today, this moment, which is also a beginning. But I'm really curious, you've done all this research about the history of this department and, in reading about that, I was interested in the figure of Helen Badenoch⁹...

GM: Oh, yeah. Badenoch, yeah.

³ A reference to one of her colleagues, Molly Shanahan

⁴ A reference to her newest colleague, Ojeya Cruz Banks

⁵ (1885 -1935), an Austrian composer

⁶ Anna Sokolow made this suite of six movements in 1953, set to a string quartet by Berg.

⁷ (1910-2000) an American dancer and choreographer who worked internationally, creating political and theatrical pieces. She worked with major companies, including the Martha Graham Company and Batsheva Dance Company.

⁸ Adam Weinberg, who joined Denison University as its 20th president on July 1, 2013.

⁹ Hired by Helen Barr as the first trained dance faculty in 1925, Badenoch was Denison's first full-time "aesthetic dance" faculty member.

CF: ...So is there something to say about her galvanizing this department into being?

GM: Oh, definitely. So we had a person named **Helen Barr**,¹⁰ who was brought in as the head of **Women's P.E.**¹¹ The second year she was here she brought in Helen Badenoch, so I called them “the two Helens.” It turns out they were a partnership in all kinds of ways. They were family friends, and they turned out to be life partners, and they were both in the same department, et cetera, et cetera. So there was a good reason for Helen Barr to bring in Helen Badenoch, (but it's funny that it's Helen B. in both cases. There's something kind of funny about that.) At any rate, Helen Badenoch came to Denison hired as a modern dancer in the 1920s and brought with her a whole curriculum and program. She'd been going to Europe every summer, studying over there. She knew all of the kinds of things that you and I think of today as part of modern dance and the modern dance curriculum. And what was so amazing to me — in fact, one little poignant detail was that classes were taught in the same way we teach modern dance classes now, with starting on the floor and then doing the more *adagio* kinds of standing work (it's not always “adage” but the center work), and then going across the floor and then ending with a cool-down. She had a formula for it, which is the same formula we still tend to follow. We don't always follow it, but we tend to think a good class is put together with starting on the floor and ending with a warm-down, a cool-down, at the end. So that part was pretty amazing to me, but also she had a real commitment to women and expression and health and biology and sound pedagogical practices, not practices that would make you an extreme artist but rather a healthy artist for your entire life. So many of the philosophies that she espoused here are also the same. And this is a hundred years later. That's kind of amazing to me.

CF: It *is* amazing. I mean, it almost predates what we think of as the first academic program at Wisconsin.¹²

GM: It was at the same time. It was kind of simultaneous, and they *went* to Wisconsin, in fact, and studied there. So there's that overlap — that **Margaret H'Doubler**¹³ overlap is there. Helen Barr did her master's degree at Wisconsin. They all studied together, so they were all working through those things at the same time, yeah.

CF: Do you suppose in Europe, was it **Wigman**¹⁴ that she was studying?

GM: Yes, yes.

¹⁰ Barr served for 25 years as the Director of the Department of Physical Education for Women at Denison (1924-49). A trailblazer in the expansion of women's athletics at the college level, Barr not only created the physical education major at Denison but worked tirelessly to advance women's athletics to a position of equality with the men's athletic programs there.

¹¹ Though it often followed a pattern of migrating toward the Fine Arts disciplines over time, Women's P.E. was most often the gateway to dance in academe during the 1920s.

¹² University of Wisconsin-Madison is credited with the first curricular program in 1919 and the first dance major in 1926. Helen Badenoch was hired to create Denison's program in 1925.

¹³ (1889-1982): Margaret H'Doubler combined aesthetics with the study of anatomy and created the nation's first dance major at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1926.

¹⁴ (1886-1973): Considered one of the founders of the modern dance movement, Mary Wigman was a German dancer and choreographer, notable as the pioneer of expressionist dance, dance therapy, and a fierce advocate for movement training without pointe shoes.

CF: Well, so one of the things that I was noticing in the language of your nomination is that “...the department aligned its three faculty positions dedicated to aesthetic dance and other activities, but also while sponsoring these campus events both in aesthetic dance and the learning of dances from around the world.” And talk about a full circle move! Now you have Ojeya, but I’m curious if you would like to talk about what that meant then and what that means now...

GM: I can address it a little bit. One of the things that I want to bring up is the Helen Badenoch thing too, because there as well, although in the same way where **St. Denis**¹⁵ maybe didn't go to all those places and was in a way appropriating those pieces, nevertheless in the historical context, what she was trying to do was broaden our understanding of what dance was, and Helen Badenoch did the same thing. So the curriculum here had Scottish dances and Highland Flings, and all of the array that could be gleaned from mostly South America and Western Europe mostly, but not entirely. So there was a kind of a world dance program in the 1920s here, and in the 1930s. So all right, that laid to rest for a while, while we developed modern and post modern and had the debate between modernism and ballet and all of those kinds of things that happened academically. But by 1998 we were funded to have a World Dance line, and we had somebody here every semester (and sometimes for a year, but always at least for a semester) who came from some other culture, and that person was a native dancer in that culture when they came here. So in 2008, that line got translated into an Africanist tenure-track position. And so we wanted somebody who was teaching some kind of dance that had an Africanist foundation underneath and it could be very direct, or it could have been kind of indirect. And we had a person in that position for a number of years, seven or eight years/six or seven years, and now Ojeya is occupying that tenure-track position.

So I think Denison has always, for a hundred years, always had this idea that dance is not *only* the kind of U.S. modern — **Martha Graham**¹⁶ — dance; it's not only that. It *is* that but it's other things as well. We've always had that commitment. And the university also has had that commitment. And a lot of the partnerships we've had with other disciplines on campus have to do with that breadth, that idea that we have that breadth. There's always a trade off, so what we give up is having multiple teachers of, let's say, post-modernism, in which case we had to give up having a BFA because **NASD**¹⁷ said “well, you don't have enough teachers.” The literature indicates that we don't have enough teachers of the same kind of thing to have that kind of depth. And yeah, I think as a liberal arts college, it's not inappropriate to trade one for the other. I mean, maybe we can build the program into having both, who knows?

¹⁵ (1879-1968): was an early American modern dance pioneer. Her exotic, pseudo-ethnic dance interpretations and her penchant for what she called “music visualization” as a form of choreography opened new possibilities for dancers and stimulated a wave of creative experimentation in modern dance. In 1915, she and her husband, Ted Shawn, founded the influential dance school and company, Denishawn, where they taught and inspired several notable performers, including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman.

¹⁶ (1894-1991) An American modern dancer and choreographer whose name is nearly synonymous with the early modern dance movement, and who believed that movement is the vehicle for giving outer form to inner feeling. Her style, eponymously named “the Graham technique,” reshaped American dance and is still taught worldwide. Graham danced and taught for over seventy years.

¹⁷ The National Association of Schools of Dance, NASD is the primary source of dance accreditation in the U.S. Founded in 1981, NASD is an organization of schools, conservatories, colleges, and universities with approximately 83 accredited institutional members. It establishes national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees and other credentials for dance and dance-related disciplines, and provides assistance to institutions and individuals engaged in artistic, scholarly, educational, and other dance-related endeavors.

But now that we have a new space and new lines and... but I think that we've always had that nod toward inclusion and the idea that dance is multiple things at once: it's not only stage performance, it's not only post-modernism, it's not only modernism. And we've had a ballet program. We don't have a ballet program here now, but we had a ballet program for about 30 years here. But what we've found is ballet is a really wonderful foundation for the kinds of dance forms that the students were interested in. But the students who were attracted to the ballet program here were attracted to it as an extracurricular activity and they weren't all that interested in studying ballet from multiple perspectives, so that was a trade-off that we made as well, in favor of multiple cultural experiences.

CF: Great. Let's see...I thought I was understanding a narrative, reading your nomination form and other materials that I was reviewing, that the moment of Noel Hall¹⁸ coming here was really critical in terms of this turn towards the Africanist position, but that may not be the case.

GM: Well, Gus Solomons¹⁹ was my teacher here at Denison in the '70s long before Noel Hall was here so he wasn't the first, but Noel came for a seven-week artist in residence position. The university found funding, a Vail Minority Artist in Residence, and Noel Hall filled that. He was the first to fill that for seven weeks, and ultimately stayed for seven years. So in many ways yes, there was a little foot in the water earlier in many different kinds of ways. But when Noel arrived, he just seemed to understand what was going on here and the university seemed to understand who he was and what he could contribute, so there was that kind of mutuality that made that work. And he ended up staying for seven years.

So his background was in Martha Graham technique. He danced for Rod Rodgers,²⁰ but he also had a lot of jazz in him that he had studied in Jamaica, and he also had a lot of African work in him from various kinds of places in Africa. So when he got here, he was teaching Graham technique, a modern technique, and then he was also teaching jazz, but the jazz was ... he kept bringing in things that he wanted to bring in. I finally asked him, "Do you want to call this jazz, or do you want to call it something else?" So it started expanding in that kind of way. He didn't know if he was allowed to make a name change, because it's a university. That's not as easy as it seems, right?

CF: Right. So let's circle back to your days as an undergraduate here, just for a minute. You mentioned Gus Solomons — but had you come here to study dance?

GM: No.

CF: Talk about that.

¹⁸ Noël Hall was the first to occupy this position at length. His arrival at Denison was as an Artist-in-Residence for 7 weeks in Spring 1981, but Mr. Hall stayed at Denison for seven years.

¹⁹ Dancer and choreographer Gus Solomons began dancing while studying architecture at MIT in 1956. He danced in Donald McKayle's Company, and worked with Pearl Lang and Martha Graham before migrating to the Merce Cunningham Company, where he danced from 1965 - 1968. His career continued with teaching, choreographing and writing dance criticism.

²⁰ Born in Cleveland, OH and raised in Detroit, MI, Rod Rodgers founded his eponymous dance company in 1966, believing that dance images reflected truths about human experience and have the unique ability to touch people on a primal level of "feeling identity." Rodgers had danced with Erick Hawkins, Mary Anthony and Hanya Holm.

GM: Okay. So, I came to Denison as a math and French double major. I loved both of those subjects and they came easily to me, so I figured [I'd take] "the path of least resistance." Actually, I'm going to back up. I want to start all over. I didn't *intend* to go to college, let's start there. My dad was an Olympic gymnast. I was training to be a gymnast and had every intention of foregoing college and going up to study with some masters near Kent State and seeing what I could do as a gymnast. And then I had an injury in my senior year that was really ... that curtailed that entire career, and my dad steered me toward going to college in a very subtle, very parental kind of way, but gentle ... and just turned my head. So I came to Denison as a math and French double major. And in my first semester here, Women's Physical Education was required. I met **Ginny Northrop**,²¹ who was the head of the dance department. She was walking down the line of students who were signing up for the P.E. class they wanted to take and she said, "You're a dancer. You need to take dance." And I said, "Well, no, actually, I've never studied dance." And she said, "You have a dancer's body. You walk like a dancer; you should be a dancer." I was like, "I was thinking *field hockey*." (laughing) And she said, "No, no, no, no. This one's a dancer." And she sort of pulled me out of the line and signed me up for Modern I. I'd never taken it before. I felt really over my head entirely. And by the second semester when we were signing up for sophomore year, I went in to talk to her and said, "I'm not particularly gifted at this." And she said, "You know how to perform. Most people don't know how to do that. You just need a lot of work on your technique." So she encouraged me by saying, "We can teach you these things and they're going to take time. And have faith, and keep working at it. And these other things are harder to teach, and you have those already." So she just convinced me that it was okay, that I could do it. There was a second event that happened that felt really important to me, and that was that the student fellows wrote me a note that said I had been selected to sign up for a composition class. And that was so touching that my own peers who were just a year or two years ahead of me would say, "You have potential, you need to take a composition class." So I did. I signed up for it. And if a faculty had told me that, I would have said "I'm hot into my math and French majors. I don't have time." But when a student that you admired, who was a dancer, was saying, "You could do this, we'll help you," I signed up.

CF: Amazing.

GM: And that was kind of the end of the game. I thought my father was going to have a heart attack — really, I mean, heart failure. He just was like, "Women aren't *in* math and you're *good* at math. You should be doing math!" And I hear that same — it's a 50-year later version — but I hear the same version now. But I really found a passionate home here, so I thought, "I want to keep doing this." I did finish my French major, if it makes any difference.

CF: Were you from Ohio?

GM: Yes. Yep, I was born and raised in Columbus.

²¹ Virginia Northrup (1924 – 2011): trained in the Martha Graham method, Northrop joined the Denison faculty in 1952 as a member of the physical education department. She was instrumental in moving dance from physical education to fine arts, and she crafted the Denison dance major passed in 1971-72, one of the earliest in the country. Northrop had a bachelor's degree from William Smith and a master's from Sarah Lawrence.

CF: Okay. Oh, my gosh, so many things now, swimming through my mind. But Ginny Northrop. So there was Helen, “the Helens” — and the other Helen in Columbus, but I don't know anything about Ginny Northrop.

GM: Ginny Northrop came here in 1950. She came from **Ohio Wesleyan**.²² She was teaching dance at Ohio Wesleyan, and she came here. Helen Barr hired her, as well. And she stayed for a year and then decided she wanted to go get a master's degree in dance. So she left her position here and went to **Sarah Lawrence**,²³ studied with **Bessie Schonberg**²⁴ and **José Limón**,²⁵ and came back here to teach after that. They re-hired her, and she brought all that she had learned from Sarah Lawrence back here and created a curriculum, really, that was quite driven by Bessie Schonberg. And in fact, when this became a major about 20 years later in 1972, it was Bessie Schonberg that the university brought in to figure out whether or not they could support all the kinds of things that Bessie said we needed to have if we're going to have a major here. So this major was created in 1971-72 — that academic year; the first people who graduated, they were grandfathered in and graduated in 1973. There were two, but there were 14 of us in 1974. I mean, it just took off, it really took off.

And Ginny's background was definitely Graham technique. It was definitely that, but she was exposed to Limón in graduate school, and she also was a person who thought however you're dancing, it's still dance. So she didn't make us feel that if you didn't have a “Graham body” that you shouldn't be in the department, and she created a lot of practices that were really inviting. They just invited all different kinds of body types. So I was the recipient of that, the very ... she was the one that said to me, “Yeah, you need a lot of technique. Yeah — I'll give you that, but you also have this other thing. You get on stage and you take it up a notch.” So yeah, Ginny was really ... she also knew how to pick individual students and help them see where their strengths were and guide them into works. So most of the people who graduated with me in my class in 1974 are still dancing and still working in dance. And maybe now they're retired, but most of us are still working, and in dance. It's kind of amazing.

CF: Well, you got a master's and a PhD, but you were back here. Can you talk about that a little bit?

²² Founded in 1842, OWU is a private liberal arts university in Delaware, Ohio, about thirty miles north of Columbus. It is a member of the Ohio Five – a consortium of Ohio liberal arts colleges. OWU offers a major or minor in dance, under the auspices of the Department of Theatre and Dance.

²³ Established in 1926, Sarah Lawrence College is located in Yonkers, NY, SLC offers a BFA and MFA in Dance.

²⁴ (1906 – 1997): Born in Hanover, Germany, Schonberg moved with her American mother to Eugene, OR at the age of 17. In 1929, she moved to New York, where she studied with Martha Graham and briefly danced in her company. Schonberg was a beloved and influential teacher, beginning at Bennington College and garnering national attention for her dance composition classes at Sarah Lawrence College, where she taught from 1938 until her retirement in 1975.

²⁵ Born in Mexico, José Arcadio Limón (1908-1972) moved to New York City in 1928 after studying for a year as an art major at UCLA. There, he performed with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman before launching his own eponymous company in 1946 with Humphrey as Artistic Director. The Limón Company continues to perform and preserve his works, and the technique he developed is highly regarded and widely taught.

GM: Yeah. So I went from undergrad at Denison to New York to do a **certification**²⁶ in **Labanotation**.²⁷ And intermittently, I had some ... well, I was an artist-in-residence here for a year teaching notation, so I had some connection to dance. But after I got hired to teach in the dance department, then they told me that I had to have a *traditional* master's degree. Certification was well and good for being hired, but you had to have a traditional master's degree *at least*, to retain your job. So I did the **Wesleyan**²⁸ program, which was a master of arts in liberal studies really, with movement studies. And there I studied with **Richard Bull**²⁹ and **Susan Foster**³⁰ and Jackie, what was her last name ... she's at **Brockport**³¹ — **Jacque Davis**,³² and all kinds of people. I mean, **Dorothy Vislocky**³³ ... all kinds of incredible people but also Herb Alpert who was a person that was teaching US history, [a course titled] “Splendor and Squalor,” where dance and opera, ballet and opera began. I mean, it was a very exciting program.

GM: And I had to do that before I came up for tenure, and then I realized that if you didn't have a PhD, really, there was a glass ceiling at the university level. So I went back and got a PhD in women's and gender studies.

CF: And were you always leaving Denison to go do those things?

GM: The master's degree, I did simultaneously. The PhD, I got a two-year leave of absence and then I had to fly back and forth for the third year, and then write my dissertation from here. So I maintained an apartment in New York — that was fun (laughing). But yeah, I mean, I don't know that it's part of this kind of an interview, but there's an interesting story about getting your PhD while you're also a full time faculty member and chairing a department. The university said, "You can't leave for two years and expect to have your job back." And I said, "Well, Ron Winters in Science just did it to be president of the National Science Foundation. So how would that be any different?" And so...I had to do a lot of arguing in favor of the arts much earlier on that I'm now

²⁶ An educational process in learning the elementary and intermediate fundamentals of Labanotation, maintained by the Dance Notation Bureau in New York (with another primary site housed at The Ohio State University). Students become certified through study and testing.

²⁷ A notation system for recording and analyzing human movement that was derived from the work of Rudolf Laban in 1928. Many dance scores continue to be produced using this system worldwide.

²⁸ A reference to the dance program at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, distinct from Ohio Wesleyan University, mentioned earlier in this interview.

²⁹ Richard Niles Bull (1931-1998) was a dancer, choreographer and educator, known for his work in structured improvisation.

³⁰ An American choreographer, dancer and noted dance scholar in the area of Dance Studies. In authoring many books, Susan Leigh Foster led the way for looking at dance through various theoretical lenses. In 2002, she published a notable book about Richard Bull: *Dances That Describe Themselves*. She is distinguished professor in the department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance at UCLA.

³¹ A reference to The College at Brockport, part of the SUNY (State University of New York) system, which has a longstanding and highly regarded dance program, once chaired by Richard Bull. SUNY Brockport offers undergraduate and graduate degrees.

³² Professor Emerita at SUNY Brockport, where she worked from 1969 – 2012, and served as chairperson. Retired from The College at Brockport after her 43 year teaching and administrative career, she continues as dance project director through the New York State DanceForce, among other engagements.

³³ Dorothy Vislocky-Steigerwald (d. 2013) was a founding member of the Alwin Nikolais Dance Company (1952-1962), and went on to forge a career as an influential educator and mentor, among other accomplishments, founding the undergraduate dance program at Hunter College in New York.

not in a position to do, because now they support the arts. But yeah, there were a lot of years in there where they were like, “No, you can't do that.” So no one in the fine arts division, no one in the whole division, could become a full professor, for example. Nobody said that *officially*, but no one was a full professor. In 2008, when Peggy Schwartz³⁴ came in to do an outside review — she's from the University of Massachusetts — she wrote the Pearl Primus³⁴ book³⁵ with her husband, Murray.³⁴ And when they came in they said, “Well, how come no one is a full professor?” And they said, “Oh well, we hadn't even noticed that that was the case.” So, you know, there were just subtle hidden nuanced moments that were not as supportive as they could be, and that has shifted little by little by little by little. In the 40 or 50 years I've been here, I've seen it shift a great deal.

CF: Well, did you ever think as an undergrad, coming for French and Math, but discovered dance. You then went off to study notation. Were you always thinking you were coming back to Denison?

GM: No.

CF: So, but it almost sounds like that now, of course, because you're saying “I took a year off here and there to do this and that,” but ...

GM: Yeah, no. Oh, gosh, this really shouldn't be on tape.

CF: Well, yeah, it should.

GM: No.

CF: Anyway we can edit, we can edit.

GM: Okay. So, I'll make it brief: the true story is I had my first child when I was 21. I was an undergraduate student. I got married when I was a sophomore, I had my first child when I was a senior and my intention, having to do with the gymnastics injury that I had sustained — my intention was to be a wife and mother. Done. Now, this is the '70s, right? It was the 1970s, so what can I say? That was the nature of the beast. And I figured my contribution to the arts would probably be in sitting on boards and developing audiences — and all the kinds of language that I'm sure you're familiar with. That was my hope and wish and dream. And I was pretty well connected in Columbus to people who can afford to fund those kinds of things, so I thought “Well, that's going to be my role.” Particularly, and I want to say for the third time, *particularly* having sustained such a serious injury when I was a senior in high school and thinking that I'm not going to be able to do these things. Life just didn't turn out that way! First of all, I felt too passionate about dance, that's one. Secondly, I started thinking “Well, how do people that have sustained injuries dance? How do *they* do that? How does that happen?”

³⁴ Born in Trinidad, Pearl Eileen Primus (1919 – 1994) was an American dancer, choreographer and anthropologist, who played a vital role in the introduction of African dance to American audiences. Early in her career she saw the need to promote African dance as an art form worthy of study and performance.

³⁵ Authors of *The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus* (2012), Peggy Schwartz is professor emeritus of dance and former director of the dance program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Murray Schwartz is former dean of humanities and fine arts at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He teaches literature at Emerson College.

GM: I taught up at **Kenyon**³⁶ first, and then I went to New York City and worked at the **Dance Notation Bureau**³⁷ and then I started teaching for them. And then I was in Columbus for a funeral when someone told me that the dance department at Denison was in a bit of a shambles and the person who had been on the faculty here had decided to leave in April before the semester was even over, having to do with some events in her personal life that made that a reasonable choice for her — but not so reasonable for the program, and would I be willing to come and maintain things and try to get things straightened out. And I did have those skills. I had those organizational skills, I had the vision, I knew Denison inside and outside, I knew who the players were. I knew how to put that together, so I said, "Yes."

GM: And Denison had hired someone from Ohio State actually, who ended up taking a year's leave of absence — or, sorry, a year's delay on her contract while she waited to see whether or not her husband was going to get tenure where he was. She ended up deciding to join him instead of come here, so suddenly they had a year that they needed someone to get things straightened around. So I did that, straightened things around. And they conducted a search during that year and midway through the year, they asked if I would be willing to step down from the committee and submit an application, and I said, "No." I said, "You have no other dancers on this committee. Where I have something to contribute is in looking at all of these applicants and figuring out what would work here and what wouldn't work here. No, I need to be right here on this committee."

GM: And then I took a group of students to New York for the month and we worked with **Ray Cook**³⁸ in notation, and set a piece and did all kinds of things there. And while I was there, the provost called and asked me if he *were* to offer me the job, would I take it? And I was just feisty enough to say, "Well, I don't know. I guess you'd have to make that offer to know what the answer to that would be." And he said, "Stop playing with me. I'm offering you the job." I said, "It didn't sound like it. What you said was, 'If I were to offer it...'" you know, like, we had to have this little conversation. So he said, "Okay, I'm offering you the job." So then I said, "Well, I have to speak with my husband about that." Because at that point, we were ready to move to Washington, D.C. for his job. But fortunately, I guess — I mean I do feel fortunate — he said, "Well, I think you should take it. I think I should give up my international law job and I think you should take this job at Denison." So that's how I ended up here.

CF: Oh, my gosh.

³⁶ Kenyon College, a private liberal arts college in Gambier, Ohio, about thirty miles northeast of Denison. Kenyon is a member of the Five Colleges of Ohio consortium, established in 1996 for ongoing collaboration between the five institutions: Kenyon College, Denison University, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University and College of Wooster. The dance program at *Oberlin College* is a featured site in the VDC Collection, as is *Maggie Patton*, who was responsible for much of the development of the dance program at Kenyon College.

³⁷ Known by its acronym, DNB, the Dance Notation Bureau is a non-profit organization founded to preserve choreographic works through notating dance scores in Labanotation and collaborating with dance companies to stage reconstructions of those works. The DNB is based in New York City, along with The DNB Extension at OSU in Columbus.

³⁸ Born in Australia, dancer and choreographer Ray Cook arrived in New York in 1961, becoming a prominent Labanotator and author of many books about the subject. He is professor emeritus at Vassar College.

GM: I know.

CF: Now, would you mind just for the record I guess, and for my trying to fill in holes, so Ginny stayed for some time, and then I know Susan Alexander³⁹ was here.

GM: Yeah. So Ginny was here, Ginny Northrop was here my freshman, sophomore and junior year. Susan Alexander came my sophomore year, so they overlapped. Susan was here my sophomore and junior and senior years. Susan continued to be here, but I finished. And Susan was from Mills College,⁴⁰ she was a Cunningham⁴¹-trained dancer and she ended up, in fact, in her life setting Cunningham works for Merce at various places. But she was the one that trained me in Cunningham technique, which I absolutely fell in love with. Graham was beautiful to look at, but it didn't work with my body. I don't have a long torso, and it just didn't work on my body very well — and anybody could see that; I wasn't the only one that could see that.

GM: But Cunningham technique is *very intellectual*. I'm sorry to say that in quite that deliberate a way, but it *is* — it's very intellectual. It's about gaining control over the motor pathways, right? And putting together movement that you weren't expecting to put together: arms and heads and legs in different configurations. And remember, I was a math major! It worked for me *beautifully*; it was just beautiful. So the combination of Cunningham technique and Notation, which Angelika Gerbes⁴² taught me here to begin with — I was in heaven. What can I tell you? So by the time I finished college, I was wishing undergraduate school would be about three years longer. You know, when you finally wrap yourself around something...

But I also want to say that Susan Alexander did me the *biggest* favor at that ... Denison is famous for saying our faculty is just outstanding and students make relationships one-on-one with faculty members that are lifetime relationships. Susan Alexander, in my senior year I had to take a dance history class and we had options for our final exam. We could take an exam that was timed — a two-hour exam. We could write three book reports — we could pick three biographies or autobiographies and write book reports on them. Or we get to answer 10 take-home questions that were essays that kind of put together all kinds of material that we'd been learning. And I chose the third one, thinking it would be the easiest of the three. I now know better!

³⁹ Currently residing in Santa Barbara, CA, Alexander has had a long career in dance as a performer and teacher, including at the Paris Conservatory of Music and Dance, the Paris Opera Ballet, and as a member of the faculty of the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio, among many other accomplishments in the field. She served as Chair of the Denison University Department of Dance in the 1970s.

⁴⁰ Founded in 1941, the Mills Dance Department in Oakland, CA offers one of the oldest ongoing dance programs in the country. The Department of Dance there offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Mills has graduated several prominent artists, among them Trisha Brown. It was also the site of the famed American Dance Festival for one year, 1939-1940.

⁴¹ Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) a prominent and groundbreaking American dancer and choreographer who remained at the forefront of American modern dance for more than 50 years. His seven-decade career was distinguished by constant innovation in which he expanded the frontiers of contemporary art, visual arts, performing arts, and music. He began his eponymous company in 1953, and created hundreds of works.

⁴² A dance historian and professor of dance at OSU in Columbus, OH, for many years, who also served on the faculties of the University of Iowa and Denison University. As it happens, Gerbes earned her MA in Dance at Mills College (see fn. 39).

GM: So I worked on that for weeks, and could get nowhere with it, *nowhere*. And I finally went in to Susan's office in tears and said, "I can't do this. I just can't do it." So she set up a two-hour time slot. I went out to her house, sat at her dining room table. She read, with a timer, eight questions, 15 minutes for each one. She read the question out loud and then I had to talk it through. And she said a few things like, "Why did that happen? Who did that? How do you know that's true?" — Those kinds of questions, but didn't give me any information, and at the end of two hours she said, "You don't have any problem knowing the information. You just have a problem on how to organize it, how to get it down on paper, what are all the pieces." She just really *assessed* me as a student of knowledge that really set me in good stead for my graduate work. She really, really helped me. So, Susan taught me Cunningham technique which I fell in love with, but she also taught me how to *think* and that that messiness, that non-linear part, is part of the process and should be honored — I shouldn't try *not* to do that. But then there's another step *after* that, and she taught me that, when I was a senior in college. It sounds a little late; maybe I should have learned it in high school. But bless her heart for really saying "No, no, no. You've got the information, now here's the next thing you need to do with that."

CF: She empowered you!

GM: Yes! And it made the rest of schooling really easy, frankly. It made my master's degree and my PhD both really easy.

CF: Marvelous. So, after Susan, was it you, as Chair?

GM: Yeah.

CF: Oh, my gosh!

GM: Yeah. Well, there was a person in between. **Anne Andersen** was here — Anne Andersen and Susan Alexander overlapped. And Anne was here about six years total. She didn't get tenure. She moved from here to **Virginia Commonwealth⁴³** and chaired the dance department there. Anne overlapped with **Janet Singer**-Bjerke. Janet Singer was the person who came in for just a couple of years and ended up leaving before the school year was over. So there were a couple more people in there, but not long term. So Ginny was here about 25 years, and then Susan was here for only six years, really, because she got tenure. So she was on payroll for a couple more years, but she actually never came back after leaving for a sabbatical. So I was just really fortunate to have Susan when I was here — really, really lucky. And then Anne was here for six years, and Janet was here for just two or three, two and a half.

CF: And those are the years when you were getting your other degrees accomplished?

GM: No, I did both of those after I came back to teach here.

CF: What were you doing in those years between...

GM: Having children.

⁴³ Located in Richmond, VA, the VCU Department of Dance and Choreography offers two undergraduate degrees (one in conjunction with Richmond Ballet), and a dance minor.

CF: Having children. Four children, right?

GM: Yeah, four children, yes. Having babies. That's not quite true. So, I had my first child when I was a senior, I had my second child two years later. I had my third child five years after that, and at that point I had come back here to teach.⁴⁴ So I had gone to the Dance Notation Bureau in between and become certified in that, and reconstructing at the ... I can't remember... Elementary and Intermediate [certification], I think, was in undergraduate, but then I did the advanced training there and the reconstruction training there, and set works for the Dance Notation Bureau.

Yeah, lots of overlapping — lots and lots of overlapping in my life. It's always been, I've always been a multi-tasker. I don't know. I mean, I grew up in a large family. There was lots going on all the time. I have a large family, I've always had a career, I've never been without doing multiple things at one time. And my real passion is buying and renovating houses with my own two hands. So that's another ... I've done 23 houses. I put myself through college renovating houses, and I'm still doing that. I'm always looking for yet another house to renovate.

CF: If only I had known that about two months ago.

GM: I could come help...

CF: Yeah, watch out! Well, okay. Golly, this has just ...

GM: Can I just say one more thing about that?

CF: Please.

GM: This overlapping thing, this multi tasking, this multiple projects on your plate at once — every one of them is a *hands-on* kind of thing. All of them are embodied. The thing that ties all these things together, raising my children, dancing, reconstructing dances, reconstructing houses, it's all hands-on stuff. My mother was blind from birth, and I think I learned as a very young child that touching and working and playing with things — like *physically*, physically working with things, is how you knew the world. It was an epistemology that was rampant in our household. So I think that those things don't always feel like I have a lot on my plate. They often feel like it's play after play after play after play after play. It just feels like that. If I had to sit down and read long, long essays... if I had to do philosophy, I don't think I'd be able to. It would just be too boring. Not the content — the content's not boring; the *activity* of sitting still that long would be outside of what I could do.

CF: Well, could we go back to the Bessie Schoenberg moment for a moment, and could you articulate what it is that she brought here to the program, and then talk about how that is still a part of who you are as a department?

GM: Well, the first thing she brought was a kind of legitimacy to dance. She was so brilliant and could speak to the administrators in this university so fluidly that they couldn't turn her down. They were awestruck by her from the start. So that was really helpful, because Ginny Northrop didn't have that particular skill. She was wonderful in the studio, but she couldn't quite get things organized

⁴⁴ Miller's third child was 8 months old when she began her first full-time year as Chair of Dance at Denison.

in a way that an economist (who was the head of the committee) could understand. And she kind of resented the fact that she was perceiving herself as being inadequate, in some way; I think that message was being delivered at the time. But Bessie didn't have that at all, not at all. She was very clear about what needed to happen and why they needed to do it and what the significance was, and she made that very clear to them and they walked out of the room saying, "We have to do this! We have to." So that was one.

But the second thing is far more practical. She *outlined* what the curriculum ought to be, and she said that we needed to have two full-time faculty who were doing *these* kinds of things, that we need to have practice and theory both going on here, and we had to have a resident musician, period. And we could build the program from there, but we *had* to have live music and we *had* to have guest artists coming in and out and bringing in whatever was new, and two permanent people — that was the minimum. And that's what they did, immediately. So it's really interesting to read the letters back and forth between the provost, the committee that's making the decision and Bessie — because she just does not mince words. She just laid it all out there for them and they took it: lock, stock and barrel. They did exactly what she said they should do.

CF: Wow.

GM: I know. And by the way, Ginny had been asking for that exact same thing for a while, but didn't have as convincing, kind of, self agency about her.

CF: She lacked the authority that Bessie had...

GM: Right.

CF: So in that way, that's ... I mean, you're only really one faculty line more than that now, right? Three? Is it three of you who are permanent?

GM: It is three of us who are permanent. Yeah, and we have a fund for artists-in-residence so yes, and we have a resident musician. The resident musician is not full-time— his position is part-time, it's 70% time. So we have three full time permanent positions and a pocket of money for artists in residence and a resident musician. So yes, it's pretty close to what it was.

CF: And some adjuncts?

GM: Hmm-mm (negative).

CF: So Michael's position⁴⁶ ...

GM: Well, that's a particular situation right now. Michael ... was assigned to Women's and Gender Studies for three years and then on sabbatical, so Michael was hired to replace me while I was up the hill doing a different kind of work. My PhD is in women's and gender studies and I was teaching up

⁴⁶ A reference to Michael J. Morris, PhD, who teaches as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Denison, and works as a choreographer, performer, scholar, and educator working across and between dance studies, performance studies, gender studies, and sexuality studies.

there and directing that program for three years. And then I was on sabbatical last year, so Michael was just replacing me. So it *feels* like we have one extra person, but that's a circumstance issue, yeah.

CF: I see...

GM: And we also have Molly ... Sandy's retiring and Molly took the position that was Sandy's line, but we overlap those things here often. So that's what we call a "bridge hire." So right now, we have five people who are in dance, and a resident musician, and artist-in-residence, but that's atypical. That's not permanent. Permanent is what you said before: three full time tenured (or tenure track) positions, a resident musician, and funding for shorter term artists-in-residence.

CF: Well, the bridge position is brilliant.

GM: Yeah.

CF: It makes sense!

GM: Yeah. And it also gives the person who's retiring the opportunity to do a few things that person wants to do that aren't really essential in the curriculum if that's what that person wants to do, things that are non-essential. So I mean, it's given Sandy a great opportunity to teach these Denison seminars and do some other things and work collaboratively with other people. It's all *positive* to be able to do that, but it costs money.

We find out that we have about five minutes remaining...

CF: Well, we can stay a little bit... I don't know how my colleagues back here feel. So let me try to grapple with that. Tell me how you look at the program now after spanning some 50 years at Denison as student, as professor, as chair. In your view, what place does Denison hold in the state in dance, since that's our project really...

GM: Well, do you mean in dance, or Denison as an institution?

CF: No, I do mean Denison dance.

GM: Okay. So Denison is very clear that it's a liberal arts college — very clear. Adam Weinberg, our president, is using the language, "What is it that we have to offer for a student who would otherwise be going to a conservatory but they would prefer a liberal arts education?" That's the way it's being framed by the institution. In dance, I feel that we have an opportunity to teach not just movement studies, but also what we, in the moment, are calling dance studies — movement practices, dance studies, I'm not sure that that's the right language because every one of our courses blends both of those things, but our eye is toward thinking about not just what is this movement but where does it come from, what does it feel like, what is it doing, how is it expressing something in particular and what is that, so it's a larger picture than just training the body to move. But it's not *without* training the body to move.

So I think that a long time ago, people were teaching dance history quite separate from movement practices. We really have *never* done that; we've always overlapped them quite a bit, and now even

more so. I think now we're on to the next rung of the ladder, which is to say how does understanding movement practices — both *embodied* understanding and understanding cognitively — how does that merge with other kinds of things in the culture, particularly music and theater because they're in the same building, and that's a vision that we're working on right now, but also in terms of other practices. So I'm thinking right now, for example, of the last ... the students now were born in 2000, give or take, right? So this is all 21st century. All of our students are 21st century students. There is no more 20th century going on here, I have to say. Right?

In the dance department, I'm thinking about what is the relationship of an 18 year old who's had a cellphone, had technology, had computers, had television monitors in their lives *every single day*, all of the time, and they communicate with people through their thumbs, how do I use dance to help propel that person — a) back into his or her own body, and then b) in relationship with other people. What does that look like? And dance holds a unique place to be able to address that really directly in our courses. So it seems to me that a conservatory is about training the body to be an expressive artist, in a very narrow understanding of that. I don't mean every conservatory is alike, but what you're headed toward is the best of the best in a physical sense.

But what liberal arts is about is who are you in this world that you're living in, and how do the things that are surrounding you connect to each other and to you, and then what is your obligation on moral ground to the rest of the world? You are in a privileged position. You have an education. What should you be doing with that, and how can you be doing it? And because we're so disembodied right now, dance is in a really, really great position to be able to address those kinds of things very directly. So that's what I think we have to offer. And I also think that a small school has a lot more flexibility than a large school. We have fewer rules and regulations. We have less red tape to jump through. If you want to do something, just let somebody know that. That's about it.

I mean, the thing that we were talking about a minute ago, the “bridge hires,” Denison just thinks that's a healthy practice. It's just healthy! So we do it, right? And if I walked up the hill and said, "I need these kinds of things in my classroom to make it a healthier classroom," the university would say, "Okay, let's figure out how we can get that for you." No one would say, "Well, why? We can't do that. I mean, there are 15 other people ahead of you in line that also want things. Why is what you want the most important?" We just don't get talked to like that around here. We speak with each other about what's the health, what's the health issue, the mental health, physical health of the student body right now in the world, and then how can we participate in making that a little better.

So I think that we're in quite a privileged seat to be at Denison and to be in dance and to be in the 21st century. When I add those together, I feel like liberal arts, the liberal arts study of any kind of embodied, deep practice is really the name of the game.

CF: Yes. This is so great. It shouldn't be revelatory, but it is. In your nomination form, you spoke about the latest curricular shift and you just now gestured toward it — deep, contemporary, embodied, somatic practices and writing. So talk to me about how that's even a shift, and how that came about and what your vision is for the future.

GM: Yeah. I think it's a shift because when Sandy and I marked through about 25 years, there was a sense that we're an arts department, isolated, and had to make decisions just the two of us. I mean, we often had a third colleague, but a person who wasn't here permanently. And so we were over and

over again making decisions about dance, dance, dance, dance — and really without the benefit of the communication that comes from being in a building where we're sharing. At Denison, the arts are downhill and the rest of the Denison academic quad is up the hill, so when I was in women's and gender studies, that's not the case. You walked down the hallways and you're with philosophy and economics and anthropology, sociology right underneath us, you were always constantly having those conversations with other people with whom you may be doing projects or maybe not, but you're still *seeing* what's going on. We didn't have that opportunity in dance when we were over in the other building.

So the shift I think has to do with really permeable membranes; those cell membranes are much more permeable, so we can stay isolated down on our side of the hallway if we want to, but it doesn't seem like a very reasonable or practical thing to happen. And our offices are integrated, so we have to walk by each other and we share the same central spaces, we share a lot of the same classroom spaces. So I think just by the way the building is built, just by the architecture of the building, there's a shift going on in our curriculum. Then the other thing is we have two permanent tenured/tenure-track people who both have health and well being issues connected to their practices having to do with trauma, recovering from trauma, the differences in cultural expression from one place to another — all of that is now, like, *built in* to the fabric of those of us who are teaching here, so I think those somatic practices are really going to come out of the shadow and get to be emphasized in all of the work that we do. So, I mean, I will admit to you though easily, that's sort of a guess. We haven't worked together for very long.

CF: Right, of course not.

GM: This is Molly's first semester although she's been here as a guest artist, was here all last year, and this is Ojeya's second semester. So I mean, we have the work to do still in front of us, but we know what we're interested in, so I think that the shift is inevitable. There will be a shift. We're in a new space. Listen, we're above ground, let's start there, right?⁴⁷

CF: Yeah, that's okay.

GM: We're not in the basement anymore, so, right?

CF: Now, but what about the writing piece?

GM: Okay. So the writing piece is really fascinating to me. First of all, writing is really important to the university. The university was noticing, they weren't making any predictions about all the students being on their cellphones, but they were clearly making predictions about the students not being as good a writer as they used to be. So we've been working on writing here at Denison for a while. The question then became how do we integrate writing into the curriculum in the dance department, and where does it sit in terms of its importance. So it's not that we don't *ever* ask students to do any writing, but they're not the same long, Rogerian academic argumentation essays that we do in other fields.

⁴⁷ In the previous building, Denison's dance department had the main office and a large studio on a first floor, but the second studio, dressing rooms, and all faculty and student offices were below ground level.

So the question became how can writing be integrated into all of the disciplines here so that it's not seen as the purview of the English Department, but rather it's a responsibility of *all* of us. So for us, I think I would say, cryptically, that we feel like “well, embodiment is the most important thing to us” and they're saying “well, writing is the most important thing to the university, to academe.” So we're the happy recipients of doing both of those things. “All right, so let's work on writing and embodiment at the same time.” And so that piece was really borne out of Denison's emphasis on upping the ante on the writing. That having been said, when I did my PhD at NYU, my teaching assistantship was in writing. I was teaching writing. I was teaching writing *in* the English Department, in the Expository Writing Department. So I had extensive training in teaching writing to students already and so it was easy for me to say, “Oh, yay, here's another piece that I'm interested in, and particularly embodied writing and somatic writing, and a way for the university to understand writing to be not just about an arm's length academic argument but indeed, coming from the soma.”

So it was a beautiful merging that was, in a way, coincidental to the timing, but also I think it's important for students to figure out how to express themselves — and embodiment is one way, and through written expression in various forms, all kinds of forms, not just in academic argument, is another one. And I think if we can make those go hand in hand, I think our students are the better for it. I think we do a lot of our writing from an embodied stance, but we just don't recognize that.

CF: I agree a hundred percent, yeah. Couldn't agree more with all of that.

I'm going to try to wrap it up, but what about *your* future? And the future of the department? Can you talk about that for a bit?

GM: Nope! (she laughs).

CF: I mean, what is your vision, going forward? You're here now, in this amazing new space, you've got shifts, a lot going on, and...

GM: Well, this is my thought: my thinking is that on a very practical level, I'd like to get Molly and Ojeya through the hoops that one goes through when one is on a tenure-track, and get them both tenured and get them here permanently. I think they're both absolutely worth it, I think their work is worth it, I think their personalities are worth it. I think in every way you might cut the pie, they just should be here. They should be here forever, and they should be working with our students forever. So, that's my first thought and on the record. I'd like to say that I have the most incredible colleagues! If I can get them through those tenure hoops, then I'd like to retire and go build houses. I don't know what the future of the department will *actually* look like, but I think that's a vision we're trying to craft in the next year or two or three. I'm positive it will have a lot of somatic work in it, I'm positive it will have a lot of performance work in it. I see that Ojeya does a lot with film, and it would be lovely to incorporate that and work with the cinema department or cinema students in ways that might be able to embellish that or amplify that in some way or another. We haven't set that in motion yet, but I can see that that's a possibility.

I'm really excited about the possibility of working with music and working with theatre in various kinds of ways and different kinds of projects, and they're right here, and we're all looking for what's the next collaboration that we can do there. So, I think that because we finally have a facility, I think we'll be able to do a lot more performance than we were able to do before. We now have the

support of the theatre, but also the support of the theatre staff, so I'm talking about the people that build sets and do the lights and do the costumes, and all of that work is now available to us; it was not available to us before. So we hired people to do those things, but that was an isolated hire for this and an isolated hire for that, but now we actually have the possibility of incorporating that into our thinking from the get-go. So that means we'll have students also who want to work across those disciplines, and so I can imagine that performance is really going to take off and that individual piece about what is this performance about is going to, on a personal level, on that somatic level is going to take off as well. And that's a guess! We'll see where it goes and how it goes.

CF: Of course.

GM: But I know that already the president has said that the week-end, the opening, talking with the board was so successful and the board is so excited and they want to know where we're going next, so we've already scheduled our next lunch to start talking about what is that vision and where do we want to go. Because when you have the board of trustees saying, "Yes, yes, yes! Go, go, go! How exciting! I mean, it doesn't get any more exciting than that.

CF: Amazing.

GM: I'm really feeling right now like the sky's the limit and you know, in which direction would we like to put our efforts, and I hope it's not unilateral — hope we have multiple tracks that start building up.

CF: It's wonderful to hear! I'm so thrilled for you, and for Ohio and for Granville. It's wonderful — I can't wait to see what happens!

GM: Yeah! Yeah. It's exciting. It's really exciting! I mean, we saw a piece that Sandy did this week-end in here, *Stark Fields*, it was performed in Doane Dance⁴⁸ last year, it was redone for this space this week-end, for the board of trustees to be able to see it. And it's the same dance! The difference in this space and that space — and I *love* that space! I don't have any reservations about that space — but to see the same dance danced in two different spaces and how different it felt! — It was mostly about the lighting that was so incredibly different. Because the floor's a different color, the walls are a different color. I mean it was *just mesmerizing*, it was so *beautiful*! So, I mean, we haven't been in a position where we had two or three choices: "What is this piece and where would you like to do it?" We haven't had that before. We've done site-specific work, things that are outside, but that has been available to us and is still available to us. But I'm talking about *this* kind of performing space — we haven't had this before. So I can imagine that that's going to be a real springboard for letting our imaginations go crazy and let creativity run wild — and see what happens!

CF: I'm certain of it. I'm really happy for you and for this community.

GM: Oh, thanks, Candace.

⁴⁸ Doane Dance was built in 1905, and now in conjunction with the Eisner Center, is home to the Dance Department at Denison University. Originally a gymnasium, the building had been home to art studios before it was renovated to house the dance department, starting in 1975.

CF: Thank you so much.

GM: Thank you!