

VDC Interview Transcript

Subject: Maggie Patton

Informant: Janet Druen, friend and former company member

Informant: Odette Blum, former colleague and nominator

7.11.19

Total Time: 1:29:41

Vern Riffe Building

Studio 3

77 S. High St.

Columbus, Ohio 43215

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

JD: Druen

OB: Odette Blum

JC: Jessica Cavender (VDC film team)

MDB: Megan Davis Bushway (VDC film team)

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

CF: I'm CF Feck, and I'm talking with Janet Druen in The Vern Riffe Building, Studio Three. Today is July 11, 2019

JD: I go way back with Maggie, Candace.

CF: That's why you're here! And I am sure you have many things you could tell us, but why don't we start with the beginning — how you first met Maggie would, I think, be a great starting point.

JD: I have a very clear visual memory. I came as a graduate student to Ohio State in 1969, that fall. And University Dance Company was rehearsing and Maggie was building **Doris Humphrey's**¹ *Passacaglia* on **UDC**.³ And I remember because it's **Bach**, and the complexity of [that]. She was pregnant with Eric. So Eric was born, I think that fall. And then I was hired. I was on Fellowship and so I was teaching non-majors. And Maggie was the person whom **Helen Alkire**⁴ sent

¹ 1895 – 1958: An important American dancer and choreographer of the early twentieth century, one of the “second generation” of modern dance pioneers who developed a compositional theory based on the idea of fall and recovery, exploring the use of breath and developing movement techniques still taught today. As she published an early book on dance composition, and as many of her works were notated, Humphrey's work continues to be taught, studied and performed.

² Humphrey's *Passacaglia in C Minor* (1938) was one of her large-scale orchestral works to J. S. Bach's *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor*, an organ piece composed early in Bach's career that it is one of his most important and well-known works.

³ UDC is the acronym for the University Dance Company, an elite student performing group of the OSU Department of Dance for many years.

around to see if these two fellowship gals were capable. So, Maggie came in, checked me out, said, "Terrific," and walked away; she had a few issues with the other graduate student, and that's my first image of Maggie.

CF: So, your image is you, aspirational TA and she, checking you out.

JD: Well, watching her build a Doris Humphrey piece on the students — *that's* what I remember. And the musicality and just her temperament, and then being pregnant. At that time, she was the first — you know, no one had done that. No one had been pregnant in the Dance Department, and everyone was just so excited for her. She just *loved* to dance, and her musicality was...! So, then she worked with Evan Whallon⁵, who was the conductor of the Columbus Symphony, loved her, so she did symphony pieces for children's concerts that we were in, and then she was at Chautauqua.⁶ Evan would invite her up to Chautauqua, so we were in operas (there). He would have us in operas as well as the children's programs, and she would be choreographing these little vignettes within the operas or these whole pieces like *Peter and the Wolf*.⁷ And then the other thing was the Ohio Light Opera, where she was working with Jim... I can't remember his name. It'll come up. So she was choreographing Gilbert and Sullivan and stage directing, and then she worked with the opera here. So, the musicality was also one of her strengths.

And the other thing about Maggie is that she *had* to make dances. I think of her, these songwriters that just make, they write, they have to write, they just *do*. And then there was a period of time I remember, I think Tim Callahan, who was one of the dancers in the early company, she was doing one of the pieces and the costuming and he said, because now that she had two children, so she had Eric and Steven, and he said, "You're just watching too many cartoons." It was interesting. All these influences.

CF: But can I go back? Did you say that was '69?

JD: Yes.

⁴ Helen P. Alkire, 1915-2015, founded the widely acclaimed dance program of The Ohio State University in the early 1950s. When the College of the Arts was formed in 1968, she became chair of the Department of Dance, continuing in that role until her retirement in 1983, instituting several degree programs. As founder and chair of the Department of Dance at OSU, Alkire was a formidable influence on the development of dance as an academic discipline in American education, and is herself the subject of one of the features of this collection.

⁵ Evan Arthur Whallon Jr.: 1924-1998 was born in Akron, Indiana, and trained at the Eastman School of Music. He served as conductor and music director of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra from 1956 to 1982.

⁶ Originally founded in 1874 as an educational experiment in out-of-school, vacation learning, The Chautauqua Institution is a not-for-profit, 750-acre educational center beside Chautauqua Lake in southwestern New York State, where approximately 7,500 persons are in residence on any day during a nine-week season, and a total of over 100,000 attend scheduled public events. Over 8,000 students enroll annually in the Chautauqua Summer Schools which offer courses in art, music, dance, theater, writing skills and a wide variety of special interests.

⁷ The well-loved 'symphonic fairy tale for children' composed by Russian Sergei Prokofiev in 1936. Patton choreographed the piece in collaboration with conductor Evan Whallon.

CF: And I thought ADIR⁸ was still in existence...

JD: It was. Oh, it was strictly, University Dance Company was the student company and then I was then taken into ADIR pretty quickly. I don't know, it must have been 1970. And worked with ADIR and Maggie came, I guess back into ADIR and then was out and I was in, and still toured with ADIR. And I don't know where she went. She was teaching at Mansfield. I don't know what she was doing...

CF: Okay.

JD: And then after ADIR folded, Maggie and I had rented Jimmy Rawlins⁹ Studio on North High Street to teach in the summer. So, then we were just talking and we wanted to dance and not compete with the students. That was our only venue — a lot of the faculty in the past had always been a part of University Dance Company. But since ADIR, it sort of set a different precedent. So, we just said, "Yeah, let's do it. We want to dance." And so, Susan Alexander¹⁰ was chair at Denison, a beautiful, wonderful person who had come in to Ohio from California. So, we just started putting out feelers, and there was a gal at Capital. And then some of the Ohio State dancers, and did a concert. Our first concert was in, I have the program, was in December of 1973. Charged a dollar fifty. It was at Capital University and then the company ran — and I kind of categorize it by when my children were born. So, I kept going back and it really was a repertory company. That was what was interesting also. As ADIR had been, and as Utah, there was that trend of repertory company, and bringing in different choreographers to create repertory for the evening, and concerts, programming.

So, then the company really ran until 1984 and David Parsons¹¹ was brought in as the company director, Artistic Director. There was just a big article about him in...

CF: I thought it was the choreographer Robert Small¹² who stepped in, but it was David Parsons?

JD: I'm trying to remember Robert Small...

CF: Okay, he had a company in New York and I read that he tried to run Dancentral¹³ from New York. Is that incorrect?

⁸ American Dance in Repertory was the brain child of Helen Alkire, who believed that OSU should support a professional dance company to enhance the academic and cultural life of the university. Without the financial support of the university, ADIR, directed by Ruth Currier, endured for only five years: 1969-1974.

⁹ Rawlins, 1915 – 1912, was nationally and locally renowned as a dancer and teacher, who founded his studio in Columbus, OH, in 1933. He was also the father of highly acclaimed dancer and company artistic Lynn Dally, an OSU alum (1973).

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Artistic Director of Parsons Dance in New York City, which he founded in 1985.

¹² Robert Small, for ten years a dancer with the Murray Luis Dance Company, established his own company in New York, during the late 1970s or early 1980s.

¹³ The company, Columbus Ohio's first professional dance company, founded by Maggie Patton in 1973. As the company's artistic director, Maggie created more than seventy major dance works for subscription seasons and regional tours.

JD: I don't remember him at all.

CF: Okay.

JD: I'm sorry, Candace.

CF: No. No, no, please, go ahead.

JD: But David auditioned and I remember auditioning and just deciding I didn't want to, I just wanted... it's that thing about, can I do this and yes, I can — but I don't want to. But the company went on after Maggie and then... gone.

CF: I saw the company.

JD: Oh, did you?

CF: I had just moved to Columbus in '79 to go to grad school, and I saw you perform, I think in 1980, on **Sullivant Stage**,¹⁴ and I remember a piece where there was whispering. You were doing stage whispers and there were lots of hand gestures.

JD: Isn't that interesting! Yeah, it was fun.

It was very... she had a *good* sense of humor. It was just really, really fun, and that's what I had felt, that was my attraction, just personally, to Ohio State. I had met the faculty and the dancers at the big **American Dance Festival**¹⁵ when it was at **Connecticut Women's College**,¹⁶ and I had auditioned at **Juilliard**¹⁷ to transfer out of **Randolph-Macon**,¹⁸ and didn't go. One of the classmates ahead of me had gone and then she had come back and graduated from Randolph-Macon. So, I had tried that

¹⁴ Sullivant Hall is the longstanding academic building that has housed the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University. Sullivant Hall has boasts its own eponymous theater, used primarily for the performance and learning purposes of the department.

¹⁵ Currently a nationally recognized six-week summer dance training program based on the campus of Duke University in Durham, NC, the American Dance Festival has enjoyed a storied relationship to the development of American modern dance since its beginnings in 1934 on the campus of Bennington College in Vermont. In 1939, the program was moved for one year to Mills College in Oakland, California, but returned to Bennington in 1940. Following the American entrance into WWII in December of 1941, the program ceased to exist after the summer of 1942. In 1948, a program based on the Bennington model was established at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut and called the New York University – Connecticut College School of Dance/American Dance Festival. In 1969, newly appointed director Charles Reinhart shortened the name to, simply, the American Dance Festival. After 30 years at the Connecticut College campus, the festival moved to the campus of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina in 1978.

¹⁶ The Connecticut College for Women, now Connecticut College, a co-ed institution, was the site of the second home of the American Dance Festival during the years 1948 - 1977, providing a critical training ground for modern dancers.

¹⁷ A private performing arts conservatory in New York City, established in 1905. Juilliard trains about 850 undergraduate and graduate students in dance, drama, and music, and is widely regarded as one of the world's leading drama, music and dance schools, with some of the most prestigious arts programs.

¹⁸ Located in Lynchburg, Virginia, Randolph-Macon Woman's College was founded in 1891. Now simply Randolph College, the institution houses an undergraduate dance department that offers a BA. or BFA degree, and includes both major and minor programs.

and I was dancing more and Kazuko Hirabayashi¹⁹ was at Randolph-Macon, and she then ended up — Martha Hill²⁰ — took her back in, and she ended up retiring from Juilliard. So, I had a great experience at Randolph-Macon because of Kazuko.

JD: And then when I had a fellowship to go to the American Dance Festival between my junior and senior year, that's when I saw the Ohio State faculty and the dancers from Ohio State, and they were good dancers, and they loved dancing, and there seemed to be this idea about *dancing*, and so that was the tone of the department. So I came and auditioned, and it was a *hard* audition. Really. It was interesting, the gaps in my experience, especially with contemporary. But it was in that sort of... what *carried* it was that idea of how *enjoyable* it can be. I mean it was hard work but the camaraderie and that tight, tight-knit family, and we had *great* after-parties. I mean, really, seriously, and the other thing you need to know is that we planned the food almost before the concert program had been finalized for the after-party, and Maggie was an *incredible* cook. And lots of us are. I am; it's very kinesthetic and we enjoy food and that aesthetic, but Maggie was amazing. So that was also part of our *culture*, and then we would host. We hosted Mark Morris at my house, and then we had Mark Morris, I think at Maggie's, and then we had Twyla with me, and then we would have, after we did the operas — *Carmen*²¹ — we had everybody at my house and I mean, that was also the lifestyle of the company, which was very interesting.

CF: I mean, it was really the first contemporary dance company in Columbus that wasn't associated with the university.

JD: Absolutely. And there was *no* money, Candace. *None*. And we were all teaching *everywhere*. I don't even remember when we got a check, what year it was or how it worked out, and I remember then we had the opportunity to go to the Edinburgh [Festival] Fringe,²² and so Lenny Schottenstein²³ was on the board and she said, "Janet, you need to come with me and we're going to go raise money." So we did, and she took me, that was a very interesting learning experience for me, to see how that worked in Columbus, Ohio. I had never been in *that* scenario, I had always been in the university. So here I was then, in the corporate world of Columbus watching development, and so then, we raised the money and went to Scotland, and it was really fun, and we did two shows. We did the children's show in the afternoon and then we performed our repertory in the evening.

CF: Was that for two weeks?

¹⁹ Kazuko Hirabayashi, 1933-2016, was a Japanese-born modern-dance choreographer who was more widely known as an exceptional teacher and mentor to many leading dancers. She received a Bachelor of Science degree before leaving Japan for the United States to enroll in the Juilliard school, where she studied with Martha Graham, José Limón, and Antony Tudor, and where she eventually joined the faculty.

²⁰ Born in East Palestine, Ohio, Martha Hill (1901-1994) was an icon in the development of American dance education who founded the American Dance Festival in addition to dance departments at Bennington College and the Juilliard School, among many other accomplishments.

²¹ Georges Bizet's canonical opera of 1875.

²² Billed as the world's largest arts festival, the festival started in 1947 as an alternative to the Edinburgh International Festival. The Fringe takes place in August and typically lasts for just over three weeks with thousands of shows held across hundreds of venues in Edinburgh.

²³ A reference to Lenore (Lenny) Green Schottenstein, a member of the very influential Schottenstein family of Columbus, OH, who served as President of the Board of Trustees for Dancentral.

JD: I can't remember. Oh it was a marvelous experience. And my daughter was 11 months old, and she knew, we brought Anthony Ribara back from New York. So Anthony was here, so we rehearsed, and we rehearsed on South 3rd Street — it's what's the Hobby Shop now — the Golden H Hobby Shop. Recreation and Parks owned that building. Also we had to look for studio space, a *huge* challenge, and so we just hopped around. I mean, that was huge! And theaters — so, where do we perform? And we were at Battelle²⁴ and there was no green room, no wings. It was...there was just such a determination and commitment to make this happen, and experience performing. It was that simple.

CF: I read a story about a church on 17th Avenue that you had contracted with. The story goes that there were nails sticking out of the floor and you all were hammering them down to prepare the space for performing, and then the church wouldn't let you do it or something. What was that story?

JD: No, well! Sam Szymanski owned the building. No, it's not Sam — wrong Szymanski. There are two brothers. Erase that. Yes, it was Bob Szymanski, owned the building and it was a great space because no posts, suspended wooden floor, and so we went in and restored the space with our husbands and friends. I mean, it was *hard*, hard work. I don't remember about the [nails], I just remember about painting and cleaning up and doing a lot of work. And then he decided to rent it to a church. And we weren't compensated or anything, so we lost the space. The theater space and then I can remember, Maggie and I would just go around town looking for space! So, The Southern Theater,²⁵ we looked at and I think WNCI, who was in it, and WRD radio station was there and they had built a concrete wall across the back so we couldn't use... and of course the theater was just not safe. So we couldn't use that, but we would just go around looking *everywhere*. And we performed at Thurber²⁶ sometimes, over on the river, and then we toured schools. We did a lot of children's programs, dancing in lunchrooms (she laughs), on concrete floors...

CF: And that was the Artists in the Schools²⁷ program?

JD: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

²⁴ Battelle Memorial Institute, an international research institution founded in 1929, is one of the largest employers in Columbus, OH. Its headquarters, on King Avenue, is a massive complex devoted to the idea and mission that science and research can solve problems in business and society as a whole. It has nonprofit status, organized for charitable, scientific and education purposes. Apparently, within its campus there is also a small theater.

²⁵ The Southern Theatre is an historic theater located on East Main Street in downtown Columbus, Ohio, opened on September 21, 1896 and is the oldest surviving theater in Central Ohio and one of the oldest in the state of Ohio. It is currently owned and operated as a home for live concerts, plays and opera by CAPA (the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts), which also manages several other venues in Columbus.

²⁶ A 600-seat capacity proscenium arch theatre named for James Thurber. The theatre opened in 1972, and is part of the Department of Theatre, currently housed in the Drake Performance Center building alongside the Olentangy River.

²⁷ The Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) established the GCAC/City of Columbus Grants Program in 1973 to offer financial support to the city's artists and arts organizations. One of its programs, which has since been passed to other state agencies, is the Artist-in-the-Schools program, bringing a host of artists from many fields to work with students in the schools.

CF: What do you remember about how Maggie gathered together her first company? I have a list of company members, but of course there was an influx of other people as the years went on. Naturally, people left, people came in, but how did that first company come together, as far as you can recall?

JD: It was just people we knew. I have the program and the people in it. I mean, I can read that.

CF: My question is not about the specific names, but about how it came together.

JD: We knew the Ohio State dancers and once we made the decision... and then, Susan Alexander, so it was just contacts. So there were these faculty people, and then Dale²⁸ was at Capital, and it's a small world, that's how it happened. And Tim Mower and Tim Callahan were two of the men and they were, you know, it was just Ohio State.

CF: And you stayed, you stayed through the company's existence except for that last year. When Maggie left, you left?

JD: And then, well, no I stayed after Maggie. Oh, yes. I stayed after Maggie and then, but it didn't, David never, it didn't work. I mean, and maybe you're right. Maybe that wasn't him but I don't remember. Maybe Barb — Barbie — and maybe somebody else would remember better. And Susan Alexander may have already gone to New York, I can't remember. But and then, David Parsons just knew that it wouldn't work, and I had already backed away from him. Once I had auditioned and just kind of said, "Okay, well I can still do it. Now I'm walking away." But Maggie, I think she felt like she lost control, artistic control with the board and money, and may have been burned out. I don't know. I really don't know.

CF: I see.

JD: We never really *talked*, I mean, I knew it and we talked about it but it wasn't something that was... She was angry. *Very angry*. And probably hurt, but more anger — anger, overing that hurt — because this was her baby, but that happens a lot with these creatives.

CF: How did everybody keep afloat since it certainly wasn't from ticket sales or whatever you had to pay to rent spaces that you would find on an individual basis.

JD: Oh, we had a school. I forgot! Yes, we had a school. So, we would teach classes. So, we were the modern teachers outside of the university in Columbus and it's interesting who pops up into my life now, who was in that studio, who was in Columbus and had been a dancer and wanted to take contemporary modern classes. So we ran the, we taught, and it started with us teaching at Jimmy Rollins, so there was all this nucleus that you had to, and we all had other jobs. *I did anyway, I always* had another job, which was terrific for being in Columbus, Ohio. And having that much opportunity because of so much dance in academia. You know, I think about that a *lot*, and how that changed the dance profession.

²⁸ Dale Scholl was born in Indiana, where she grew up dancing in her mother's dance studio. A member of the first Dancentral Company, she moved to California in 1977, where she developed the dance program at California State University, Sacramento. Scholl also formed her own company, Dale Scholl's Dance/Art, which celebrated its 22nd season in 2003.

CF: Say more about that.

JD: Oh, it just almost brings tears to my eyes when I think about these founding mothers who brought dance into the university systems. And see, I was able to work with two, **Eleanor Stroopa** at Randolph-Macon and Helen Alkire at Ohio State. And both of those women got Masters degrees at Columbia and came back: Stroopa came back to Lynchburg to Randolph-Macon, where she had gone to undergraduate school and where she was born and raised. Helen came back to Columbus, Ohio. And to see them figure out a *way* to bring this art form to an academic situation. So one is a very small liberal arts school, all women, and then Helen is at this huge university, and they both started in Physical Education and were able to create something so important that still gives *such* opportunity for this art form when really in this country, that's what I think brings tears to my eyes, in this country, we just don't respect the arts, especially dance. It's such a *step-child* in the art world and so hard to get funding for, and there are very, very few dancers who have figured out how to thrive and survive.

Twyla Tharp,²⁹ brilliant businesswoman. **Paul Taylor**,³⁰ **Merce Cunningham**.³¹ And they didn't necessarily have a **Lincoln Kirstein**,³² like **Balanchine**.³³ So, to have that *strength* to perpetuate this art form and create this American vitality in these American dance forms, and I'm just so grateful it's still going on. I mean, the New York dancers who then come back to academic situation to get another degree and then perpetuate the art form however they can, with another path. So, I just think that has been such a gift and it was such a gift for me, personally.

And then this nurturing that happened at Ohio State *and* Randolph-Macon, is just very, very impressive. I mean, in Ohio State — if I had gone to New York, and I had that chance — I could go, Kazuko had a company, I could go to New York to work with Kazuko — and I came here. Fellowship, great. “Alright, you're going to get an MFA.” Helen never got, she didn't get the MFA,³⁴ but I majored in Dance History, which was brilliant. I loved it. And you could get teaching jobs, and then here, Helen had all this money to bring in all these incredible artists who were in residency at

²⁹ an important American dancer, choreographer, and author who lives and works in New York City. In 1966 she formed her company, Twyla Tharp Dance, but her career has extended into numerous genres and types of venues.

³⁰ 1930 – 2018: an American dancer and choreographer who was among the last living members of the “third generation” of America's modern dance artists. He founded the Paul Taylor Dance Company in 1954 in New York City.

³¹ 1919-2009: an American dancer and choreographer who was at the forefront of American modern dance for more than 50 years and had a profound influence on modern dance.

³² 1907 – 1996: an American writer, impresario, art connoisseur, philanthropist, and cultural figure in New York City, noted especially as co-founder of the New York City Ballet, developing and sustaining the company with his organizing ability and fundraising for more than four decades, and serving as the company's general director from 1946 to 1989.

³³ 1904 – 1983: Russian/American ballet choreographer, who is accepted as one of the most influential and prolific 20th-century choreographers. Styled as the “Father of American ballet,” he co-founded the New York City Ballet and remained its Artistic Director for more than 35 years. He left a legacy of 465 works, performed by NYCB and numerous other ballet companies around the world.

³⁴ Druen refers here to the fact that in her years at Ohio State, in spite of Alkire's efforts, the highest degree offered by the Dance Department was the MA. Alkire's immediate successor, Vickie Blaine (who is also a featured subject (OSU) in this collection, was able to add the MFA, long considered the terminal degree in Dance, in the 1980s.

Ohio State! And so the repertory that I was exposed to and the vocabularies I was exposed to, and Labanotation.

So this Liberal Arts in dance, and the dance history piece — that's the other piece that Helen did that was brilliant, and I see it now, and when I was back in the early oughts and doing that wellness consulting [at OSU], and I'm watching and I'm really seeing the opportunities that the freshmen were introduced to in terms of the coursework that they were exposed to, and even then the academic teaching programming that came into the dance department, to *learn* how to teach. Mine was just experiential, because I had been teaching since I was so young. And then to bring a professional company; when I landed there, there was a professional company in residence. And notation was there. I think **Odette Blum**³⁵ came in after I was there awhile.

It was really such a rich, rich environment that I *never* would've had in New York. I would've been working, auditioning, taking class. Now, I would've been in a company, but it would've been so singularly focused that I wouldn't... so that's the gift, and then with Maggie, we got to perpetuate it because we had guest choreographers, and then being in all those other media, I mean to work in *Carmen* and all the opera work and **Wagner**,³⁶ on a raked stage in Chautauqua? I mean, so she just... and it was that musical and that connection with Evan. He *loved* Maggie and the dancing and bringing that in, and he was trying to build opera in Columbus. So, it fit.

CF: It seems like an obvious question and you've already touched on it, but I'd like to ask you to talk directly about something. So, you came, as I am understanding you, and you experienced the OSU faculty and the dancers at the American Dance Festival and you chose to come here instead of staying in New York. Now, besides the powerhouse that Helen was building, I would like you to talk about what the dance landscape was *really* like here. I mean, you've seen it all. You saw the nothingness almost, that you had to feed into. Maggie had to make a company.

JD: You mean the landscape in the city?

CF: The dance landscape.

JD: In the city?

CF: Mm-hmm.

JD: I taught at **Allan Miles** [studio],³⁷ that was part of my vita in the first program. So that was, he was running the little **Columbus Ballet Company** — it was Columbus Ballet, whatever it was.

³⁵ After many years dancing in Europe and New York, where she also became a professional dance notator, Blum joined the faculty of the Ohio State University in 1970 as a member of the Dance Notation Bureau Extension teaching notation and repertory until her retirement in 1995.

³⁶ A reference to Richard Wagner (1813-1883), renowned German composer, theatre director, polemicist, and conductor, chiefly known for his large-scale operas and "music dramas."

³⁷ 1929 – 2018: According to his obituary, Miles came to Columbus, Ohio, after studying and working in numerous other cities and universities, in 1968, working for Ditzzy Nagy Dance Studio as well as the Garrett School of Dance. He served as artistic director for what became the Columbus Theater Ballet Association, formerly Christopher Ballet, from 1972-1975. For some unspecified period of time and in an unspecified

Anyway, and then Farquhar³⁸ had a ballet school that was pretty good and... that was it. And there was no contemporary.

CF: And no places to perform.

JD: No. No.

CF: Did those come along as you continued — eleven years, let's say, with Dancentral. No? Still no places to perform, all the way through?

JD: So, Fort Hayes³⁹ was built, so we could rehearse there. Carolyn Fannin became faculty there and she was an original company member but again, she came in, she was an undergraduate student I think at Ohio State, but she came in then, I can't remember, I'd have to read again if she was in the first program or not. And then we had Denison⁴⁰ because of Susan [Alexander], so we could go over there and perform in that theater, but not a lot. And we used Capital,⁴¹ the first theater we used because of Dale being there and no. Because the Southern wasn't finished and Thurber was... and no, what was the contemporary? Battelle did *something*. Battelle had a theater, that's what happened, but again, it had no pit, no green room, no wing. It *was* Battelle, in the Battelle complex. So we found that theater and it was probably through just again, you know, the Columbus business world and just connecting dots.

CF: Well, the idea I'm getting from listening to you is that passion was the thru line. I mean, Maggie just got her absolute determination and passion to dance and to make dance...

JD: To *make* dances.

CF: And to make things happen. But all of you...

JD: Oh, yes.

CF: It was passion! It wasn't money...

JD: Oh no, no, no, no. No.

CF: Not that it even is *now*, but I mean...

place, he also operated his own school, The Allan Miles Ballet Academy. He was also active as a Labanotaor, authoring several workbooks on the subject.

³⁸ Duard C. Farquhar: 1935 – 2017, a ballet teacher who taught in Columbus, OH.

³⁹ A reference to Fort Hayes Arts and Academic High School in Columbus, OH, which must have been newly established during this period.

⁴⁰ A reference to the dance program at Denison University, located in Granville, OH. The dance program at Denison is the subject of another feature in the VDC collection.

⁴¹ A reference to Capital University, a private four-year undergraduate institution and graduate school located in the capital city of Columbus, Ohio.

JD: No, no, no, no. And I was *so* committed. It was so exciting! And I learned so much. And I was just like sous chef. I mean I was there. So, when there were voids, like I could fill in the development piece with Lenny [Schottenstein]. We wanted to do it so badly, and Susan Alexander was the same way, and you know, she went on. She's still teaching.

CF: I know.

JD: She's just an amazing woman. So, we were just so fortunate that that circle happened. And **John Mensinger**⁴² worked with us and went on to be with Mark Morris. We had so much fun. He went to Chautauqua. We just lived and breathed it.

CF: Can you talk about, you mentioned, of course, the Festival Fringe but just sort of maybe a highlight of the years with the company or a few highlights and perhaps, low points, just to get a flavor of the ups and downs of it.

JD: Well, personally, the *saddest* part for me was when Maggie...uh, wouldn't keep going. I was *disappointed*, very disappointed in *her*, personally, but I don't know what was going on, but that was the hardest piece for me. The highlights...

CF: Let's just stop for one second because of the noise.

32:37 – 34:10: There is a long internal discussion here that is not apropos to the interview, concerning noise levels, the entrance of Odette Blum, etc.

JD: So, I think the loss of American Dance in Repertory, for me, because Maggie wasn't involved in touring that last [tour], and to see that go and **Ruth Currier**⁴³ move back to New York, and Helen dissolving the company, just not having a professional company in residence, was a huge void for me, personally. And then to connect with Maggie when I hadn't really, I don't know why or how, anyway, but we got connected and maybe had never lost connection, I can't remember, and teaching that summer, and just deciding, sure, what do we have to lose? That was just, to be able to just do that, and *start* something, and then we got a non-profit. I mean, we created a non-profit. I had never done that and I have used that skill starting two more non-profits! So it was incredible, the opportunities of working in that venue and then being able to transfer it to so many other things later, just in my personal experience, so I'm so grateful that I had to learn all that.

And it probably felt harder to Maggie than me. I just *believed*, and so I think my role, I'm an optimist, and she's *not* an optimist, and not trusting. And I'm much more trusting, just different temperaments. So I was *always* able to bolster her, and I don't want to take too much credit at all because she was very strong, but this idea of *yes*, I was just always right there and brainstorming with her to make things happen and then she was just very gifted, and driven. But it was great. And that

⁴² 1957 - 1994: Born in Euclid, Ohio, Mensinger trained in dance at The Ohio State University and New York University before becoming a principal dancer with the Mark Morris Dance Group, from 1982 to 1991.

⁴³ Born in Ashland, OH, Ruth Currier (1926-2011) was an American dancer choreographer, and dance teacher. Among many other accomplishments, she was a principal dancer with the José Limón Dance Company from the late 1940s into the 1960s. She later served as that company's director following Limón's death from 1972 to 1978.

vision and then to just keep going, and it was *hard*, it was hard to find staffing to support us because there's this whole business piece and then this advertising piece and publicity costs money, studio space, theater, tech people.

CF: So, I'm understanding that there was *so much* of course, involved, because it's a little business. It's a non-profit business but a business nonetheless, so many pieces that were empowering to learn and to experience and get that sort of experiential training and there's carry-through for that, but what about just the highs and, you said one of the lows was just that Maggie gave up, and actually I think I know this, that Helen losing ADIR was a terrible loss for Helen. That was her dream.

JD: I know.

CF: That she couldn't make it work at the university, so that was a loss for Maggie and for you.

JD: Well, I think it also had to do with the Artistic Director. Let's just say that.

CF: Okay.

JD: Seriously. It was very dysfunctional. I was there. That was very, very hard. Especially the last tour. It was so dysfunctional. I can't even... it was the wrong leadership, totally wrong.

CF: Makes all the difference. But then...

JD: And she was rather protected.

CF: But then, it seems the timing of Maggie's giving up or just throwing in the towel, or ending her association with Dancentral, that the timing was she went right into Kenyon⁴⁴ to start really building that department. The teaching at Kenyon, as I understand it, before Maggie, before '73, was that they offered dance classes but they didn't have a *bona fide* department. Is that right, as you recall?

JD: I was the first hired dance person and I was hired by the football coach and the head of Theater, James [Sullivan], and he had been at Sweet Briar and knew Helen Alkire at Sweet Briar. They had been on the faculty there in Virginia, and they were the two with whom I interviewed because football had money and the Theater Department wanted the Dance component. So I was there for a couple of years, I can't remember if it was two years? And then Anna Leo came in, who was a student at Ohio State, and then Maggie came in and she really didn't have a job so she came in — and then again, I think the other opportunity for her was education for her sons. Seriously. Right?

CF: It's not a small thing.

JD: That's exactly right.

CF: So perhaps, those of you who had given your life's blood to keep Dancentral going — on air and energy — felt somewhat betrayed, even if you understood her decisions, it sounds like you really were let down.

⁴⁴ Reference to the Dance program at Kenyon College in Gambier, OH.

JD: I mean, I *understood*. Well, it's just grieving; it was just grieving. I had compassion for her decision and watching what she was going through and, you know, it doesn't happen instantly... and if she's not really feeling supported, and it's not a situation that is, I don't know — *inspiring*, or that's not the right word, but she just didn't think it was going to nurture her and her creativity, I think maybe. I don't know, but she was ready.

CF: And maybe everyone else wasn't.

JD: Right. It's okay, and the board was still supportive because they brought in other Artistic Directors and so, there was enough to *try* to keep it going but I didn't want to then create another company, which is *exactly* what was going to have to happen with David, right? I didn't have the energy to do that anymore. So, then when David, I think, didn't feel like Columbus was a fit — because it was *tough* — and you think New York is hard, but I think he found out that Columbus was harder, and that he had a safety net in New York that he didn't have here, because again, as we've talked about it — studio space. And we were auditioning at that time and recruiting through Fort Hayes and those studios, if we could get them. So we were really operating there to a certain degree and then, we had been in studios here [The Riffe Center] I think, at one point. I can't remember the timing when Riffe Center Studios were available. Anyway, it all gets to be blurry.

CF: As somebody who has stayed in Columbus really since you matriculated here, would you feel that you could comment on the *impact* of Maggie Patton and perhaps Dancentral, because the lasting part of it, the legacy, has shaped the dance scene as we know it now. I know you're not exactly an objective observer— you were part of it— but time has gone by and you've seen a number of dance efforts come and go...

JD: Mmm-hmm...(affirmative)

CF: And I think you can look at the landscape with some perspective, so I wonder if you might comment on that.

JD: Is there *anything* now?

CF: Well, these young women [the VDC film crew] are involved in various things, for example, there is the SeaBus company that Megan is involved with, and other companies that come and go.

JD: They still come and go, but it's still very hard.

CF: There are certainly some *spaces*.

JD: Yes, and I guess the contribution was building an audience and transferring contemporary modern dance from the university to the city. *That's* what happened. And then with Susan [Van Pelt] coming next, and then the younger dancers coming out of Ohio State and continuing to create and build and work, who want to stay here and work here.

CF: Would you be able to flesh out how you intentionally built that audience? What efforts, I mean, was it the dancers in the schools, was it lecture/dems, how did it happen, as you recall? I mean that is a *huge* contribution and I'm curious about the nuts and bolts of it, as you can remember.

We are obliged to pause here due to noise from the A/C in the building

Odette Blum has arrived and we discuss her joining our conversation.

CF: I expect that Odette will be able to speak more to Maggie's time as a colleague on the dance faculty at OSU, whereas, your experiences with her are largely related to the company.

JD: Maggie did not have good experience with Helen [Akire]. You know, and so Helen wouldn't hire her. And then she didn't last in ADIR, and I think it's because she wasn't cast. I was fortunate enough to be cast a lot.

There is another pause as we deal with sound problems again, and OB enters.

CF: Welcome, Odette.

OB: I really don't have that much to say...

CF: You nominated Maggie...

OB: Oh yes, I just remembered that I nominated her, and I thought I should have looked at that before I came here, to remember what I'd said...

CF: Mainly, you talked about her career and impact on dance in central Ohio.

I wonder if we can begin with how you first got to know her, how you met her?

OB: Oh, you know, when I joined the Department in 1970, she was on the faculty. But she left within a year or so....She was starting Dancentral, and so I never *really* got to know her, other than "Hello, how are you, see you at faculty meetings," and so on.

CF: Well, you must have really been impressed by her trajectory, enough so to nominate her for this collection.

OB: Oh yes, uh-huh (affirmative). Definitely. She began the first modern dance company in Ohio, and it was a good one. It was very well put together, and she just did a good job of it. I certainly thought it was something special.

CF: And then from there...in your nomination, you mentioned her work, for example, with **Ohio Light Opera**⁴⁵...

OB: Yes, she worked there, and then she went to Kenyon and turned that into a very fine department. I don't think she started it — there was already something there, a dance area, perhaps. But she made something special out of it.

⁴⁵ The Ohio Light Opera is a professional opera company based in Wooster, Ohio that performs the light opera repertory, including Gilbert and Sullivan, American, British and continental operettas, and other musical theatre works, especially of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

CF: If you were to think about her impact on dance in central Ohio...

OB: Well, I would say that she made this very fine company, and she had interesting people, she tried to bring in interesting choreographers. She made a very good company, with interesting work that one could see — other than ballet, there wasn't much around in Columbus when I came. There wasn't much ballet, either! (She laughs.) I mean, the BalletMet had classes, and I remember Allan Miles was teaching the classes there, but there wasn't really a company. Really, Maggie's was maybe the first professional dance company in Columbus, Ohio.

CF: I recall when I came in 1979, seeing the company perform at **Sullivant Hall**.

OB: Oh yes, they would have been well-established by then. Helen had wanted the Dance Department to have a company. They called it American Dance in Repertory. Of course, she never got the money from the higher-ups, because they didn't think it was necessary. So that fell apart. So Maggie was really the one who got modern dance as a professional company going in central Ohio.

CF: Janet was discussing some of the challenges Maggie faced in doing that, because there were no spaces for performance.

OB: Yes, uh-huh. I don't remember where they performed!

CF: Wherever they could!

OB: Right.

CF: Not that making-do was unusual for dance... Perhaps we should bring Janet back in to join us.

They greet each other.

CF: You two can feed on each other's memories.

OB: I was telling her, I don't have any memories! I hope you have lots of them. Well, you danced with her! Were you in the very first company, when she got it going?

JD: Yes. She and I started it together, at **Jimmy Rawlins Dance Studio**⁴⁶, teaching dance one summer

OB: Right! That's the studio — Jimmy Rollins.

JD: ADIR had folded and I didn't have a professional outlet.

OB: Mm-hmm.

⁴⁶ James E. (Jimmy) Rawlins (1915 – 2012), a prominent dance teacher in Columbus, OH, founded his eponymous dance studio in the Clintonville neighborhood in 1933, and ran it until 2006. A beloved personage in the city, he is also the father of highly acclaimed daughter, Lynn Dally, founder of the Jazz/Tap Ensemble, based in LA.

Some adjustments with sound and space need to be arranged.

Some casual conversation about preparations for the upcoming ICKL conference in Mexico City ensues.

JD: I have to come back to one thing. I think when I saw Maggie doing *Passacaglia*, Ruth Currier was there. And Ruth had been in the piece, right? So I think possibly Maggie was possibly there in *rehearsal*. And Maggie had maybe been in the piece, so she had that physical experience of it — she was not a Labanotator at all. That was not her skill.

OB: No.

JD: No, it was the musicality and the desire to choreograph and direct.

OB: That's right — Ruth was still in the department...

JD: Oh, yes.

CF: Ruth was the Director of ADIR...

JD: Yes, she was with ADIR.

CF: Could either of you comment on Maggie's career after Dancentral? What took place at Ohio Light Opera? At Kenyon?

JD: (To OB): Did you go up and see those performances?

OB: At Kenyon?

JD: No, they were at Wooster.

OB: Oh, I think I might have, but very rarely...yeah, she did those for years.

JD: Oh, it was *great!* So she established *that* relationship with him [Jim Sullivan], and it was like her relationship with Evan Whalen. Evan had moved, left the city, was no longer the conductor here. And then Maggie had started — she couldn't help herself! She was always *doing*.

OB: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

JD: So, she was up there, in Theatre, and of course, all of that musicality again. That's why it started with Bach and *Passacaglia* — because of her musicality, and connection with music. Just...*playing* with music. And then going up to Wooster and doing that for so long. That was really fun. And then trying — the Ohio Light Opera was not as easy for her, and then she did a little bit of the Opera here [in Columbus].

OB: Wasn't there Light Opera here?

JD: Well, yes. They had opera and then they tried to do a light Opera — there was some funding for that. But then, the Executive Director did not have strengths in that. There were certain conductors that were easier for her to work with, and more supportive.

OB: More flexible, probably, in working with dance people.

JD: Exactly. And *excited* about it — it takes that, *wanting* to have this be part of the programming, enriching it. Sometimes it was there and sometimes it wasn't.

OB: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

JD: And then she started working with Columbus School for Girls. She was doing a little bit of theater work there with Nan Hadley, a friend of mine who was the art teacher there...

CF: Perhaps instead of going to the end of Maggie's career and too-short life, we could go to the beginning. She was at the **University of Illinois**,⁴⁷ isn't that right? Before she came to OSU? Where did she get all of her dance and musical training? Do you know what her background was?

JD: Well, the cute story about her is that her best friend wanted to be a dancer. She had studied in a little town — I'll think of that in a minute, too — probably. Her best friend was going to nursing school, and Maggie just thought "That's so ridiculous!: She was so disappointed in her girlfriend, and Maggie wanted to dance, and she must have studied music — piano. And at the university, she was exposed because there was a strong music program there.

OB: At the University of Illinois?

JD: Very strong. And I don't know that part of her life very well, but there she was, this dancer, and she had stayed connected with her best friend, and this best friend, of course is making a fortune, running some hospital nursing program and Maggie was like, "Oh, did I make the wrong decision here? *This* is a lot harder than what's happened to my girlfriend, and we thought nursing was hard!" So that was cute. And it wasn't her family so much: her mother was very supportive, and her father owned a bar in this small town. Centralia, Illinois...

OB: Did she study in the Dance Department at OSU at all?

JD: Yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes! And then worked in theatre — was over with the Fellows in Theatre at Thurber, a lot.

CF: I think she was involved with the **Expanded Arts** program at that time...

JD: Was she? Probably. Yes, because that was in the late 60s. I came in 1969, that Fall.
(To OB): You started in the Fall of 1970, right?

⁴⁷ The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a public land-grant university, was founded in 1867. Its dance program, though smaller in enrollment, is considered a benchmark program to that of The Ohio State University.

OB: Right.

A lot of conversation about names and possible sources here...

CF: Well, I think something that's becoming clear in all this is that nobody has actually pieced together an accurate history of Maggie Patton. There's a lot of misinformation, in fact.

JD: Wait, there's something though...who was it? Maybe...who was the director of Thurber?

CF: Oh, are you thinking of Don Vickers⁴⁸?

JD: Yes! Don Vickers...

CF: I believe he supported a book⁴⁹ written by Jenai Cutcher about dance in Ohio. It included a brief chapter about Maggie.

JD: Okay. Right.

CF: But you're refuting several of the things in there, so I'm just not sure.

JD: I'm not surprised.

OB: Her husband must know quite a bit.

JD: Well that's...

CF: Well sure. Yes, I'm sure her husband does.

OB: You haven't talked to him yet?

CF: No, no...

OB: Is he willing to talk?

CF: I don't know. I think we should find that out.

OB: Oh yeah. I think so.

CF: Yes. Well, like everything that has the word "dance" in it, we have a small budget...

OB: Oh no.

JD: Oh.

⁴⁸ Don Vickers served as the Director of Thurber House in Columbus Ohio from 1985 – 2001, and has been active in a variety of arts and dance projects in the city and state.

⁴⁹ *Columbus Moves: A Brief History of Contemporary Dance*, was self-published in 2012.

CF: And so we can't interview everybody we want for each person, but maybe that would be a good...

OB: Oh I think that would be a very good source...

JD: Well, just asking for the materials.

CF: I think some of the materials are archived at OSU.

OB: There's a box full.

JD: Oh, so then they did get the box to OSU?

OB: Well if it was a box, there's one box, anyway...

JD: Wow.

OB: I noticed that on the...

JD: ...inventory.

OB: Yeah, well I just checked it out this morning. I thought I'd just see if she left any, if there was anything there, and then there was this box.

CF: Would either of you, as dancers, care to characterize Maggie's movement style?

JD: She was very rhythmical. *Strong* rhythm capability. Very *fast*, sprightly. And so the contrast for me was I'm long and legato, adagio. And she was like a little sprite. And you know, Balinda⁵⁰ did her solo,⁵¹ learned that piece. So did Pam (I think she is talking here about a memorial performance). I would not have been the body to do it. The other thing that I think that is important to say is that, you know, a strong choreographer can use these instruments that are before them, and take advantage of their strengths.

CF: She was like a conductor, then...

JD: She used her resources well.

CF: (To MDB and JC): Does either of you have a question for either of these women about Maggie Patton?

MDB: Well, I wanted for the record, you were talking about balancing a job that you were grateful for while being in the company. But can you say for the record, what your job was?

JD: Oh, it was teaching.

⁵⁰ Balinda Craig-Quijada arrived at Kenyon College, where she remains on the faculty, in 2000 as the Director of Dance.

⁵¹ *You Can't Dress Me Up, But You Can Take Me Anywhere*, 1982.

MDB: And where?

JD: Teaching dance. I taught at Ohio State regularly, and then I taught at... I took a job teaching dance as soon as I got my degree and then Shirley Wimmer⁵² went on sabbatical.

CF: That was at OU, then?

JD: At OU. I was hired to replace Shirley Wimmer as the dance history teacher at OU and she was on sabbatical with Buckminster Fuller; she was chair of the department at the time. So that was my first job. That was quite a challenge because I felt sad for the students because this incredible woman, who was the chair of the department, is not there and then they have this Ohio State person, but it really turned out to be great. I loved it and I think they did, too. And I really raised the bar for them because of my education at Ohio State, and Shirley Wimmer. So I made them write term papers, I made them say, you have to articulate this art form, and you have to be able to talk about it and know it. And it was fun and I could take them in the studio and then I could do Twyla, and I could do Doris Humphrey, and teach them those different styles of choreographers. So that was great.

So that was first. It was great. It was really wonderful. Then I think Kenyon may have been next and I'm still at OSU with ADIR and maybe I can't remember teaching a little bit. And I can remember being the freshman concert advisor and Bebe Miller⁵³ was my student, actually. Oh, she was so spunky, little thing, she told off Louise Guthman⁵⁴ about how to light her piece and I was so proud of her. I knew it then, got spark. And then I taught at, and Kenyon went on I think for a couple of, and I loved that cause it was a small liberal arts school. It was really great experience.

More discussion about the sound...

CF: So, lots of teaching.

JD: Yeah, Ohio Wesleyan, Otterbein...

CF: Well, and as we said, Dancentral.

JD: Oh right, yes Dancentral. Taught there. Yep. So taught, rehearsed, performed.

CF: Did Maggie ever talk about her choreographic influences, did she ever mention whom she admired?

⁵² Shirley Wimmer was Chair of Dance at Ohio University in Athens, OH. There is more about Wimmer in the Gladys Bailin interview that is a part of this collection.

⁵³ Bebe Miller, who got her MA at OSU in the 1970s, is an internationally recognized dancer, choreographer and teacher, who maintains her eponymous company.

⁵⁴ Louise Guthman (1928 – 2017) was a noted and pioneering lighting designer for dance, who taught for many years at OSU from 1974 to 1988, and was noted for holding and voicing firm opinions!

JD: No. You know who she really liked is Louis Horst,⁵⁵ that experience, because she had gone to the American Dance Festival apparently that one summer, I don't know how often. So there was that link, Ohio State getting faculty and that's how I saw, I didn't see Maggie that summer that I was at the American Dance Festival. But I saw other faculty, but she talks about doing Horst. And so I think that Humphrey/Limon experience also, more than Graham.

JD: And then I think Twyla had, I mean just being able to see so much choreo, different work. And I think Merce probably, she was so musical and she wasn't a Paul dancer either, Paul Taylor. I don't think she got to work with him at all, as I, and she just had her own vocab. What's so great about contemporary choreographers is they build that language on their body.

CF: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

JD: And she did, it was her body. And now she was good at someone with my body and giving me material and using that, or having choreographers coming in and using my skills.

JD: She was happiest when she could, I mean, that solo she created that then carried on, with Pam⁵⁶ and then Balinda.

CF: I guess I have a sort of a final question. She didn't have a long time from her diagnosis to her death, as I understand it. And I wonder, do you know if she had a sense of her own impact? Did she realize what she had achieved or...

JD: She was working to write her story. Yes. That was important to her. I watched her with Don and, yes, I don't know that it was that. No, I don't know what she knew, but I know she wanted to tell her story and to have it stay alive, and be part of the history in Columbus.

CF: Yes.

JD: So that, yes.

CF: Well it's certainly alive in terms of the many people that worked with her and knew her and have gone on.

JD: So many different venues, that's what I want to be her story, is that adaptability, and it started at Ohio State by working with the theater, but those strong theater faculty at the time, very strong at the end of the 60s and I can't remember the names of the faculty people, but she admired them so much and she would do that summer stock work. And her musicality, so she could go and in work in these different venues from opera, to light opera, to Gilbert and Sullivan, to modern dance, and cartoons.

⁵⁵ Louis Horst (1884 – 1964) was a legendary composer and accompanist, teacher and author, among his many accomplishments. In addition to his work for Denishawn and Martha Graham, Horst mentored many young dancers and choreographers, exerting wide influence over the early modern movement, with his strong personal criteria for effective dance composition.

⁵⁶ A reference to her former Dancentral colleague, Pam Bishop.

CF: Is there anything either one of you would like to say that hasn't been asked or hasn't come up, about Maggie, for the record? A story? A memory that you haven't shared? I mean you've shared a lot. So it's just a question before we turn everything off.

Odette: No not really.

CF: Well thank you for nominating her. I'm really glad to have her...

JD: That's amazing Odette. That's... really, thank you.

OB: My memory's so terrible.

JD: Don't feel alone. But it was also that she was married and had children to balance that, you talk about work performing.

CF: I had some experience with that!

JD: And I do too. I mean, I made that choice also. And then the other gift just very quickly, is I have a child, daughter, I could come back into the company and keep going. And there were — you'll see Barbara, if you interview Barbara, talk to her and some of the younger dancers... Annie. Who would take up my role and I could come back in and then I had a second child, and could do the same thing again.

So, and she had done that. So I think that idea, it was new in Columbus. Also to have that role model and Vickie⁵⁷ with her, with Martha⁵⁸. And so Vickie, I mean, I watched Vickie at the university when I was there as the graduate student and Vickie had Martha I think around that time, or at least when I was with ADIR and teaching. So this was new and it's just been so hard for those founding mothers. I don't think they could do that, nor that they had the desire either. But I just... and Ruth, and Lucy, I mean the faculty! And you came. Oh, I loved your story.

OB: Oh my gosh.

JD: Odette came — may I just tell the story?

CF: Please.

JD: (To OB): If you don't mind.

CF: (also to OB): And you can correct it!

JD: Yes, if I'm incorrect. So, Odette comes and now this is my second year at Ohio State as a graduate student, and she comes to the department and her background is fascinating to me. Coming from Eastern Europe, to England, and then being a notator, and landing in — these people

⁵⁷ A reference to Vickie Blaine (1934 – 2016), second chair of the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University, choreographer and highly acclaimed dance composition teacher. Blaine is one of the key subjects in the VDC collection that looks at the early development of the OSU department of Dance.

⁵⁸ A reference to Vickie Blaine's daughter, Martha Blaine Kaylor.

come landing in Columbus! It was such a gift who showed up, and then she chooses Ohio. She wants to adopt a child and she can do this as a single woman in Ohio. So these are my mentors. You are my mentors. And I was so touched by that courage and to do this, and that was who came to Ohio State.

OB: Well that's the reason I came to Ohio State is that I could adopt a child here. In New York, it was very difficult for a single woman to adopt a child. Here it was not so much, I mean I was the second one to do it. I can't remember the name of the woman who was the first, but I was the second.

CF: Goodness. Amazing.

OB: My lawyer nearly had a heart attack when it came to going to the judge to get the fine because he was afraid that judge might say no.

JD: But that you found an attorney that would help you do that also.

OB: Oh yeah, I had a good attorney, but he was really no fun when we went because he's researched everything and there had been nothing about single mothers adopting, and he had no idea how this judge was going to deal with...

JD: Sure.

OB: My, with the final adoption [inaudible 00:23:04].

CF: Strong women!

JD: Amazing isn't it, but she had this picture also. And so when I learned that and it just was very, very enriching at that time. (To OB): Were you part of the riots?

OB: Part of the what?

JD: The riots! Or was that my first year? I think that was my first year. That's...

OB: That was '69. In fact, I remember Helen calling me and saying, "Don't worry" — She was afraid I would decide not to come after the riots.

JD: No, it was spring of '70.

OB: Oh, spring. That's right.

JD: Right, because you came in the fall.

OB: See, that's right. And she called me and said, "That's all right, it hasn't affected us. And it's, you know, it's whatever, whatever" — you know. Well I hadn't planned to change anyway, but... She was afraid I would just...

JD: How wild it was here in the Midwest!

CF: That was a very serious time. Best of times, worst of times...

JD: Helen was furious with her faculty. Oh, are you kidding? Oh, she was furious.

CF: Say more about that.

JD: She did not support the riots and her faculty, and closing down. I mean you, she'd worked so hard to build this program and then classes — they're going to shut the school down! And she was great friends with **Woody Hayes**.⁵⁹ She had taught his football players, because he had brought her in because of her skill in movement. And so she had gone over and worked with the football players as a dance instructor somehow. I mean I remember this. Oh she was... and I'm just watching, and I didn't want it to close down. I wanted a degree and I had a window, so I was upset and shocked, but some of the faculty were part of it, the sit-ins, and oh she was furious!

And then Woody Hayes is out on the Oval trying to stop it all. And he had no power. No, that was really interesting to watch. Oh she did not, she did not like that happening. And it wasn't that those weren't her values. But... and then we had the army on the parking lot behind us. And then we had, I can't remember if it was **Peter Saul**⁶⁰ or somebody or **Viola [Farber]**⁶¹ — somebody in from New York and we're in the studios and there are these guys, the national guards marching outside our windows of the laundry building and these people from New York are like, "Oh my goodness!" Can you, I mean, of all things, the dance department and the national guard?

CF: Strange bedfellows!

JD: So that was pretty enriching, actually.

CF: Not boring!

JD: Never, ever, ever, ever. No, I could not say that. (To OB): So, you saw Maggie, did you? But you didn't overlap at the university very long then? While she was faculty there?

OB: I think she was only faculty there for about a year.

JD: Right, right, right.

OB: My first year, maybe.

JD: Right. She'd had... she'd had Eric I think, and then must've come back a bit.

CF: It seems she was in and out a little bit.

⁵⁹ (1913 – 1987) A legendary football coach at The Ohio State University, known for his colorful, and sometimes volatile personality on and off the field.

⁶⁰ A member of the Merce Cunningham Company (1965-1967), Peter Saul also chaired the Department of Dance at Cornell University for many years, among other accomplishments

⁶¹ Viola Farber (1931 – 1998), a founding member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, also founded her own eponymous company.

OB: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

JD: And then she could never get back in. Vickie brought her back in to do a piece for University Dance Company and Maggie — I was disappointed, another second disappointment, a real low point for me to watch. She couldn't rise to that occasion, either. And I don't know if it was, her negative experiences previously at the university that tainted her confidence, but it didn't go well at all. She was mounting a piece on [the company], and that was a weakness. And then when the company, she couldn't sustain it with the company. So...

CF: Well...

JD: But there was much more good.

CF: Oh of course, I mean we all have our...

JD: So there were times to try to get that cooperation again and we did come back for and perform probably when you saw us, we had to...

CF: 1980

JD: ...be brought back in...for some sort of a festival or conference that was going on. Yes.

CF: You were marvelous.

JD: It was fun.

CF: It's a great memory.

JD: Thank you. It was great to be back and that was our only shot — seriously, our only shot. That's the only time we came back. And then after that, Maggie had tried, Vickie had tried to bring her back and it didn't go well. You know, I don't...

CF: Well, thank you both for sharing what you can share. Your recollections are invaluable because we don't have Maggie to talk to. And the people who remember her and what she did, and nominate her, and reflect on her, are what we have. It's very important to us, and we're so glad to have your stories and your records.

CF: (To JD): You have a lot of information about dance in Columbus that I'd love to know more about.

JD: I'm so grateful you care. Thank you.

CF: Yes, we all do. Very much so.

JD: But that's very touching. (to OB): And the fact that you would [nominate her], because you didn't overlap with Maggie, personally.

OB: No.

JD: So for you to have that objective perspective, that's significant, Odette. Very significant. Thank you.

Maggie would be so grateful. She would — she... she would be so grateful.

CF: Well, it is well-deserved.