

Carli Spina

Dance research

Online resources

Dance is a topic that can foster many different types of research, reaching from historical topics to scientific ones. This makes it a fascinating topic for librarians, who may find themselves supporting a broad range of researchers and projects while working with dance resources. As with many research topics, there are a number of online resources that can help you to respond to patron requests and guide research about dance. Moreover, as a performing art, many online resources can prove particularly valuable for dance scholarship since they make it possible to find images and videos that offer a unique way for users to learn to dance or research dance topics for academic purposes.

Reference and research resources

- **American Ballet Theatre's Ballet Dictionary.** This reference resource provides clear and concise definitions of the important terms of Ballet. In addition to the definition, each term also has an accompanying audio clip with the correct pronunciation for the term. A good source for authoritative definitions online. *Access:* <https://www.abt.org/explore/learn/ballet-dictionary/>.

- **Dance Education Literature and Research Descriptive Index (DELRdi).** Created and maintained by the National Dance Education Organization, this searchable database indexes dance literature from 1926 to the present, including content from

more than 200 different publications. The content is searchable by citation fields as well as keyword, research methods and techniques, populations served, and more. The site also includes a tutorial to help researchers get started using the database. While full access requires a subscription, the search features for DELRdi citations are freely available online, making this a helpful resource even for those without a subscription. *Access:* https://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=1106&club_id=893257.

- **Dance Notation Bureau (DNB).** This website collects an array of dance notation resources, including online tools for notation, digitized books on the topic, and more. It also has a related YouTube presence, which includes performance recordings and training videos. Included within the resources are a tutorial on the basics of the Labanotation form of dance notation and the DNB Notated Theatrical Dances Catalog, which is a searchable database of the most frequently requested of DNB's large collection of Labanotated dance scores. *Access:* <http://dancenotation.org/catalog/>.

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Discussion list

- **ACRL Arts Dance Librarians Discussion Group Email List.** This email discussion list from ACRL's Dance Librarians Discussion Group offers a means of connecting with dance librarians and other librarians who are interested in, or work with, dance materials. The list is open to all, and the archive is publicly available to nonmembers. *Access:* <https://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/dance>.

Scholarly journals, periodicals, and conference proceedings

- **Conversations Across the Field of Dance Studies.** As an annual online publication from the Dance Studies Association, this peer-reviewed journal focuses on a different theme each year, with content curated by a guest editor. In addition to articles, it frequently includes works in other formats, including reviews, conversations, poems, and more. Some of their issues have been associated with specific conferences or events in the past. *Access:* <https://dancestudiesassociation.org/publications/conversations-across-the-field-of-dance-studies>.

- **Dance Index.** Initially running from 1942 to 1948 and revived in 2017, this journal publishes original scholarly research on a wide range of dance topics. Though the modern run is only available by subscription, free, searchable, full-text access to all issues from the 1940s is available online, making this a useful historical resource about dance scholarship during this period. *Access:* <https://www.eakinspress.com/danceindex/>.

- **Dance Research.** This peer-reviewed, scholarly journal from the Society for Dance Research is published on a biannual basis and features research on all types of dance both contemporary and historical. Though the journal is subscription-based, it offers free access to some articles on its website and makes all of its review content freely available, making it a valuable collection development resource. *Access:* <https://www.eupublishing.com/loi/drs>.

- **Dance Studies Association Conference Proceedings.** Though no longer pub-

lished, the Dance Studies Association provides online access to the proceedings of all conferences from 1982 to 2018, including keynotes, programs, and awards speeches. Many focus on specialized themes such as appropriation and dance dramaturgy. From the 2019 conference on, presenters are instead encouraged to submit their work to *Dance Research* journal. *Access:* <https://dancestudiesassociation.org/publications/conference-proceedings>.

- **The International Journal of Screendance.** This peer-reviewed journal publishes scholarly research and reviews on all topics related to screendance, which refers to dance choreography that is created specifically to be recorded and displayed on the screen. All issues of this journal from volume 9 are published on an open access basis, and these issues and others are freely available online. It is the first journal on this specific topic and is an important resource for scholars of this subset of dance research. *Access:* <https://screendancejournal.org/index>.

- **Journal of Movement Arts Literacy Archive.** Covering the research, pedagogy, and practice of all forms of human movement, including dance, this peer-reviewed journal makes all articles available on an open access basis. It regularly publishes articles about dance/movement notation. *Access:* <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/jmal/>.

Popular magazines

- **Dance International.** Covering dance worldwide, this magazine, which is exclusively web-based as of January 2020, has features, reviews, and more on both classical and contemporary dance topics. The magazine also publishes seasonal reports on dance in major cities around the world with

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a strong Canadian focus due to it being a Canadian-based publication. *Access:* <https://danceinternational.org/>.

- **Dance Magazine.** With an audience of both aspiring and professional dancers, this magazine covers all types of dance. It provides free online access to articles on dance news, career advice, health topics, audition guides, as well as a performance calendar. The magazine also has an active social media presence, including a YouTube channel, where new videos are posted frequently. The magazine's searchable guide to college dance programs is also available on the site. *Access:* <https://www.dancemagazine.com/>.

- **Pointe Magazine.** Devoted solely to ballet, *Pointe Magazine* posts an array of content on their website for free, which ranges from detailed advice about technique to the latest news on performances by important ballet companies. The site has sections devoted to technique, health, career, and audition listings. *Access:* <https://www.pointemagazine.com/>.

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Video content

- **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater YouTube Channel.** This YouTube channel from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater features a mix of performance clips, behind the scenes footage, and interviews. *Access:* <https://www.youtube.com/user/AileyOrganization/>.

- **Bhutan Dance Project.** Created as a collaboration between Core of Culture and the New York Public Library, this digital collection of videos aims to preserve the Kingdom of Bhutan's dance traditions. Videos depict dance performances and events recorded in Bhutan and the associated metadata offers additional details about the people, places, and events in the videos. *Access:* <https://digitalcollections.nysl.org/collections/bhutan-dance-project-core-of-culture#/>.

- **If Cities Could Dance.** This series from KQED Arts & Culture lets the audience

“step into the shoes of dancers from across the country who dare to imagine what it would look like if their city could dance.” Each short episode offers a glimpse into dance in one particular city in the United States. Two seasons are currently available for free online with a third on the way. *Access:* <https://www.wgbh.org/if-cities-could-dance>.

- **Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive.** Jacob's Pillow is a dance education and performance center in the Berkshires region in Western Massachusetts, which hosts an annual dance festival. Preservation and education are core pieces of their mission, which has led them to create a number of impressive online resources. This site collects and makes searchable videos of performances going back to the 1930s. In addition, the site has curated playlists of videos on particular topics and multimedia essays on themes within dance that are created by guest curators. There is also a fun Guess Game feature, which allows users to test their dance knowledge. *Access:* <https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/>.

- **Numeridance.** Available in both French and English, this site collects more than 3,500 videos related to dance. It features performances, interviews, and documentaries with an educational focus. It has specific content aimed at children and young students in the Tadaam! Section, which is intended for use by teachers. All styles and types of dance are included. *Access:* <https://www.numeridance.tv/>.

Historical resources and archival collections

- **An American Ballroom Companion: Dance Instruction Manuals, ca. 1490 to 1920.** This digitized collection from the Library of Congress features more than 200 ballroom or social dance manuals, starting with one that was published prior to 1500. In addition to these instruction manuals, the collection includes notated music, etiquette books, and 75 videos with examples of social dances, as well as a bibliography of additional resources on the topic. *Access:*

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/dance-instruction-manuals-from-1490-to-1920/about-this-collection/>.

- **Dance Heritage Video Archive.**

Originally begun as the Dance Heritage Coalition's Dance Preservation and Digitization Project, this archive of dance performance videos is now available through the University of Southern California Digital Library. A significant number of the more than 1,000 videos are available to view online, though some do have access restrictions. The focus of the collection is on preserving "culturally significant recordings that document global and U.S. dance traditions, creative work by outstanding choreographers and performers, and performances that helped to advance the art form." *Access:* <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15799coll105>.

- **Dance Oral History Project.**

Created and run by the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at the New York Public Library, the Dance Oral History Project has been recording interviews with an array of dancers, choreographers, and those working in close connection with them in an effort to record the history of dance and offer researchers access to important primary information. Though the full content is not available online, excerpts from many interviews are available online. *Access:* <https://www.nypl.org/oral-history-project-dance>.

- **Jacob's Pillow Archive.**

The archive of Jacob's Pillow includes a wide range of materials from correspondence to hundreds of costume pieces, all of which is searchable online. Though not all items have been digitized, a significant number of photographs, posters, letters, and performance programs have been and are available for online browsing and searching. *Access:* <https://archives.jacobspillow.org/>.

- **Merce Cunningham Trust.**

This site centers on the works and philosophy of Merce Cunningham, an American choreographer and dancer. It collects historical information about his works, writings, and collaborators, in-

cluding full text of many writings. It also provides access to dance capsules of 86 of Cunningham's works, which aim to digitally preserve these works. The related YouTube channel also features interviews, rehearsals, and performances. *Access:* <https://www.mercecunningham.org/>.

- **Pioneers of Chinese Dance.**

Created in 2014 by the University of Michigan Asia Library with support from the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies, Center for World Performance Studies, and Institute for Research on Women and Gender, this digital collection provides access to 1,500 photographs of 20th-century Chinese dancers. Most of the items come directly from the dancers themselves. The detailed metadata for items "include biographical narratives and information gathered from historical sources and oral history interviews." *Access:* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dance1c>.

Professional associations

- **Dance Studies Association.**

Created in 2017 from the merger of the Congress on Research in Dance and the Society of Dance History Scholars, the Dance Studies Association is a membership association of scholars, educators, and practitioners of dance. It publishes a number of academic resources, including the Studies in Dance History book series, the Dance Research Journal, and other resources noted above. It also hosts conferences and publishes job opportunities, CFPs, and a curated list of external resources covering all aspects of dance studies. *Access:* <https://dancestudiesassociation.org/>.

- **International Association for Dance**

Medicine & Science. Bringing both medical and dance professionals together, this association offers a number of useful resources, including the Bulletin for Teachers, which brings scientific research to bear on dance education and performance topics, and Resource Papers on a number of related topics. It also features job postings and curated content for students and teachers. *Access:* <http://www.iadms.org/> *ZZ*