

# Letters to the Editor

## Book Publishing

I agree with the portion of Marcia B. Siegel's Author's Note appended to her review of *American Pageantry* in *Dance Research Journal* 23/1 (Spring 1991) that encourages teachers to insist that their students own dance books. Her remarks about Princeton Book Company, however, have no factual basis.

We do not "allegedly specialize in dance books" (emphasis added). We do specialize in dance books for a wide audience. Dance constitutes 95% of our business. Dance Horizons books that were out of print when we acquired Dance Horizons from the previous owner, Al Pischl, who was retiring—not being "eaten"—have been reissued, including *The Ballet Called Giselle* by Cyril Beaumont, *Modern Dance Forms and Pre-Classic Dance Forms* by Louis Horst, *The Dance in Theory and The Modern Dance* by John Martin, and *The Language of Ballet* by Thalia Mara.

Dance Horizons was never just a "history series," as Marcia Siegel asserts, and Princeton Book Company has vastly increased the visibility and scope of the Dance Horizons imprint by using it on all our new dance books and videos. Our spring/summer list includes *Anna Sokolow: The Rebelious Spirit* and a reprint of *Lester Horton: Modern Dance Pioneer*, both by Larry Warren. Dance Horizons Videos offers such recent releases as *Mary Wigman 1886-1973*, the award winning *Charles Weidman: On His Own*, *Hanya: Portrait of a Pioneer*, *Il Ballarino: The Art of Renaissance Dance* among other "serious" historical subjects. We have, moreover, published a number of books on dance medicine, which are on the cutting edge of research in this burgeoning area.

With our on-going publishing program of 10-12 new books and 3-6 new videos this year, and with new companies and presses entering the field yearly, I feel positive about the health of dance publishing. Needless to say, there should

be more. Our Dance Book Club needs 26 new titles a year. Therefore, I try whenever I can to be encouraging to both university presses and commercial publishers.

Charles H. Woodford  
Princeton Book Company, Publishers

Dance publishers face a problem that plagues publishers in all of the scholarly disciplines: the market for "serious" books is small. UMI tried to resolve this problem by pricing their books high and keeping print runs small. Even following this strategy, they were unable to make a profit.

While Al Pischl first started Dance Horizons in 1965, it was primarily a reprint house. At that time, it was not too expensive to reprint small quantities of classic titles. When he expanded into more original publications in the 1970s and '80s, he faced higher expenses and again the problems of a limited market. It was only through his dedication—and the fact that he held another full-time job while operating a direct-mail book business—that he was able to underwrite Dance Horizons.

Princeton Book Company is unfairly described by Ms. Siegel as having "devoured" Dance Horizons, when in fact it was an ideal marriage. Princeton was able to bring back into print many of the classic works that had been long unavailable, while continuing the tradition of publishing textbooks, instructional books, and important scholarly works. The publication recently of Larry Warren's biography of Anna Sokolow is an excellent example of a first-rate piece of scholarship being brought out by Dance Horizons/Princeton Book Co.

University presses fill an important niche: they can publish books with smaller markets by searching out grants and special funding opportunities. Duke

University Press has started an excellent dance line, and the Universities of California and Pittsburgh both have been active dance publishers.

Finally, to answer Ms. Siegel's criticism of my new publishing imprint, A Cappella Books, I feel again she misrepresents my publishing program. I am publishing books on dance, music, drama, and the performing arts. I am proud to be reprinting classic works, such as *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance*, even though this is a controversial title that has its staunch critics as well as its vocal defenders. Furthermore, I have published scholarly works such as *The Playford Ball*, a collection of seventeenth-century dances with extensive historical notes, and have forthcoming books on Martha Graham's dance technique and a new work on creative dance by Alma Hawkins.

I mention these titles not to "blow my own horn" but simply to assure CORD members that I am trying to both serve the needs of dance teachers, dance scholars, and the general reading public, while also hopefully making a profit and staying in business! We all can agree with Ms. Siegel that the goal should be a proliferation of publishing, with many opportunities for authors to see their work presented sympathetically by commercial and university presses.

Richard Carlin  
A Cappella Books

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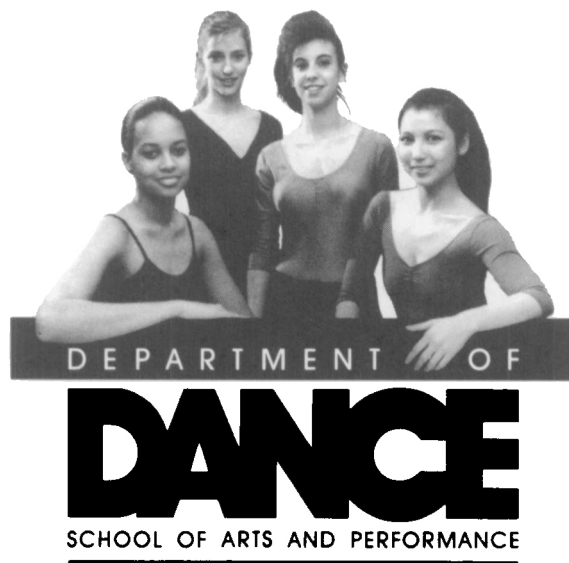
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