

**Special Note:** Millicent Hodson plans to provide a more detailed overview of her presentation in Dec. 2004. Once we receive it, we'll post it on this site.

**Summary of the 2004 Selma Jeanne Cohen Lecture  
Delivered by Millicent Hodson, Dance Historian and Choreographer, Ballets Old & New, London  
at the Fulbright Association 27th Annual Conference  
October 7, 2004, The Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens, Greece**

**Nijinsky's Bloomsbury Ballet, Jeux**

In 1996 the curtain went up at the Verona Ballet on a richly referenced production of *Jeux*, which I reconstructed with Kenneth Archer after the 1913 choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky and designs by Leon Bakst. The reconstructed *Jeux* was performed to acclaim and soon scheduled for restagings with the Royal Ballet, London, in 2000, and the Rome Opera Ballet and Jeffrey Ballet of Chicago in 2001.

For years I had tried to track down a manuscript score with notes by Nijinsky, but only recently has it surfaced in a public archive. Now at last I can compare Nijinsky's annotated intentions with the results recorded by others in 1913. And I can reconsider the choreographic decisions I made for the reconstruction. My lecture is about the whole process of recovering the "lost" ballet—a kind of dance archaeology—and how the recent discovery of Nijinsky's notes affects what has been staged. I will screen extracts of the *Jeux* reconstruction as well as a video dialogue about the discovery with Deborah Bull, whom I directed in *Jeux* both at the Royal Ballet and Rome Opera.

The lecture concerns dance and history, an annual bequest from the American scholar Selma Jeanne Cohen, to broaden understanding of dance and history. Cohen's name is synonymous with making dance history relevant to the cultural milieu of the United States. When she decided to found what is now a thriving organization, the Dance History Scholars, I somehow ended up on the committee and hosted a meeting at my studio in New York (because there was enough floor space for us all). There I first had a conversation with this remarkable woman. She encouraged my research on Nijinsky and later saw my reconstruction of his *Rite of Spring* and other productions. Selma Jeanne Cohen valued the idea of transforming research into performance. I am honored to receive the award with her name and believe she would appreciate the "dance detective" work on *Jeux* in my lecture for the Fulbright conference.

So the lecture concerns dance as one kind of history. The point of the lecture is that history is not a fixed entity. It changes with what is available to be known, a reality not just for natural historians but for all who search, and sometimes find, new proofs of the past, whether in science, the humanities or the arts. T. S. Eliot wrote in the 1920's an essay entitled "Tradition and the Individual Talent" which proposed that literary tradition changes with the creation of every new work. History marks change.

In the course of researching *Jeux*, leafing through a partly filled scrapbook of the era at the Theatre Museum, London, I decided to look at every page, empty or full. To my amazement, at the back, I found a magazine drawing of Nijinsky in an important leap from the ballet, described by critics but not known to be illustrated. Just recently I had a more dramatic experience of history changing with new data. For years I had tried to track down a manuscript score with notes by Nijinsky. Only now has it surfaced in a public archive. So at last I can compare Nijinsky's annotated intentions with the results recorded by others in 1913. And I can reconsider the choreographic decisions I made for the reconstruction.

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For more information on the Selma Jeanne Cohen Lecture, visit <http://www.fulbright.org/cohenfund>.

HUITIÈME SAISON DES BALLETS RUSSES



M<sup>lle</sup> SCHOLLAR, M. NIJINSKY et M<sup>lle</sup> KARSAVINA dans une scène du ballet "JEUX"

From the souvenir  
program Paris 1913

All the ballets illustrated on these pages have been given during Sir Joseph Beecham's Russian season at Drury Lane, June-July, 1913.



From the scrapbook  
Theatre Museum, London