

# ARCHIVING THE EPHEMERAL: CATALOGING THE PERFORMING ARTS (AND OTHER PERFORMATIVE THINGS) WITH FRBR

---

REGINA CARRA

ARCHIVE PROJECT METADATA AND CATALOGING COORDINATOR

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

# Archiving Dance at Mark Morris Dance Group (sort of)

---

## Qualities of the Performing Arts

- Art made manifest through action in the moment
- Potential to be recalled or restaged, but subsequent manifestations are different

## Challenge for Archivists

- Limitations of the craft...We cannot (technically) archive performance!
- Institutional, cultural, and artistic need to retain the history of the performing arts

## Role of performing arts archives and archivists

- Bring together all possible documentation (tangible and embodied) to create a comprehensive representation of the artform in an information infrastructure that makes sense



# Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR)

---

“Conceptual model for understanding the structure and relationships of bibliographic and authority records” – Lois Mai Chan, *Cataloging and Classification*

FRBR is broken into three groups of entities:

Group 1: consists of the products of intellectual and artistic endeavor

Group 2: comprises of those entities responsible for the intellectual or artistic content

Group 3: the subjects of intellectual or artistic endeavor (concept, object, event, and place)

\* From the OCLC website - <https://www.oclc.org/research/activities/frbr.html>

# FRBR Group I Entities

---

**Work** - a distinct intellectual or artistic creation

**Expression** – the intellectual or artistic realization of the work

**Manifestation** - the physical embodiment of an expression of a work

**Item** - a single exemplar of a manifestation

Group One relationships:

a **work** *is realized through* one or more **expressions**

each of which *is embodied in* one or more **manifestations**

each of which *is exemplified by* one or more **items**.

\*From OCLC website - <https://www.oclc.org/research/activities/frbr.html>

# FRBR and Performing Arts Archives

---

## FRBR Group 1 Entities

**Work** - a distinct intellectual or artistic creation

**Expression** - the intellectual or artistic realization of the work

**Manifestation** - the physical embodiment of an expression of a work

**Item** - a single example of a manifestation

Group 2 Entities - comprises of those entities responsible for the intellectual or artistic content

\*From OCLC website - <https://www.oclc.org/research/activities/frbr.html>

## FRBR for the Performing Arts

**Work** - a distinct intellectual or artistic creation

**Production** - a version of the work done by a particular company/artist

**Performance/Event** – a single event, physical embodiment of the work

**Asset/Object** – an object in the archive

**Entities** – people responsible for creating and performing the work or producing the asset

# FRBR for the Mark Morris Dance Group Digital Archives

---

Mark Morris creates/choreographs a dance **work**

the **work** is performed at an **event**, which occurs at particular time and **venue**

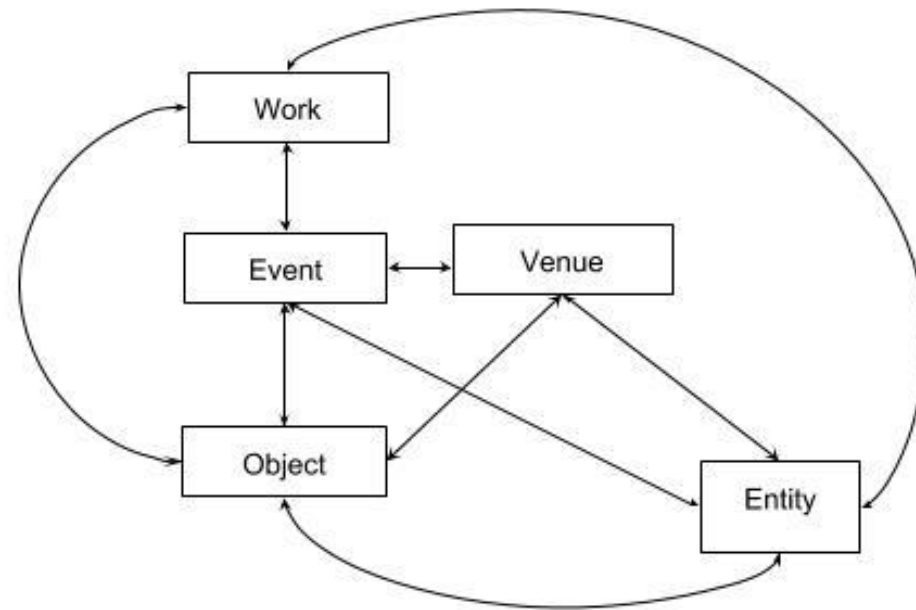
the **event** is represented by analog and digital **objects** in the archive.

**Entities** create, produce, and perform **works** at **events**. They are also represented by the **objects** in the archives.



# MMDG Archives FRBR Metadata Map

Each box represents a record type in the digital archive and each arrow is a possible relationship that can be made between record types.



Credit:  
Regina Carra, 2018

# Mark Morris Dance Group Digital Archives Back-end Homepage

Clock

02:57 pm

Links

Project website: <http://www.collectiveaccess.org>

Documentation: <http://docs.collectiveaccess.org>

Forum: <http://support.collectiveaccess.org>

Your Watched Items

- [MM02.1987.008] Iowa Center for the Arts performance calendar - 1987  
[Recent Changes >](#)
- [1992\_06] Excursion to Grenada: A Calypso Ballet  
[Recent Changes >](#)
- [2008\_02] Excursions  
[Recent Changes >](#)
- [1975\_01] Ženska  
[Recent Changes >](#)

Counts


There are **1310** of **1568** occurrences

Object

- Entity
- Collection
- Event
- Venue
- Work

Edit dashboard >

Random Object



"Mythologies" - 1989

Photographer:  
Danièle Pierre





RESULTS (53/209)

Editing Work:

Falling Down Stairs (1997\_01)



Created

1 year, 2 months ago by CollectiveAccess Administrator

Last changed

12 days, 4 hours ago by Regina Carra

[24 related objects](#)

BASIC INFO

RELATED ENTITIES

RELATIONSHIPS & SUBJECTS

SUMMARY

LOG

Work Category

- Ballet   
  Evening-length work pre-MMDG   
  MMDG Repertory Study   
  non-MMDG Television Production

Title

Falling Down Stairs

Alternate titles

Type

[+ add alternate title](#)

Identifier

1997\_01

Description

Description



RESULTS (53/209)

Editing Work:

Falling Down Stairs (1997\_01)



Created

1 year, 2 months ago by CollectiveAccess Administrator

Last changed

12 days, 4 hours ago by Regina Carra

[24 related objects](#)

BASIC INFO

RELATED ENTITIES

RELATIONSHIPS & SUBJECTS

SUMMARY

LOG

Music



Music

Cello Suite No.3 in C major, BWV 1009 (Johann Sebastian Bach, 1717-1723)

Instrumentation/Voice Type(s)

Cello

Number of Dancers



15

Premiere Dates



Date

March 6 1997



Company

Mark Morris Dance Group



[+ Add Premiere Dates](#)

Running time



21 minutes



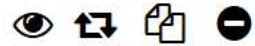
Internal Notes



RESULTS (5/11)

Editing Work:

Falling Down Stairs (1997\_01)



Created

1 year, 3 months ago by CollectiveAccess Administrator

Last changed

16 days, 20 hours ago by Regina Carra

[24 related objects](#)

BASIC INFO

RELATED ENTITIES

RELATIONSHIPS & SUBJECTS

SUMMARY

LOG

Related events

Sort by

[Cal Performances \(Berkeley, CA\) - March 6-8, 1997](#) (was premiered at)

[Mark Morris Dance Group 20th Anniversary Performances \(Brooklyn, NY\) - March 6-25, 2001](#) (is related to)

["Mark Morris Dance Group and Yo-Yo Ma," Celebrity Series of Boston \(Boston, MA\) - February 25-28, 1999](#) (is related to)

["Mark Morris Dance Group and Yo-Yo-Ma," Brooklyn Academy of Music \(Brooklyn, NY\) - March 30, 1999](#) (is related to)

["Mark Morris Dance Group and Yo-Yo Ma," Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University \(Columbus, OH\) - April 3, 1999](#) (is related to)

["Mark Morris Dance Group and Yo-Yo Ma," Center for the Arts, George Mason University \(Fairfax, VA\) - April 6-7, 1999](#) (is related to)

["Mark Morris Dance Group and Yo-Yo Ma," Irvine Barclay Theatre \(Irvine, CA\) - April 9-11, 1999](#) (is related to)

[McCarter Theatre Center \(Princeton, NJ\) - April 17, 2001](#) (is related to)

[New Jersey Performing Arts Center \(Newark, NJ\) - April 27-29, 2001](#) (is related to)

[Music Direct Group, Limited \(Falmouth, MA\) - June 4, 2002](#) (is related to)

# The Good and Bad

---

## Values of this model for MMDG:

- Multiple access points
- Provides space for us to record artistic and institutional knowledge
- Allows us to answer a lot of the questions that staff have about the dance company's history
  - Ex. How many times has the dance company performed in Washington D.C.? (9 times)

## Drawbacks:

- Only Collective Access (?)...
- A lot of cataloging!

# Moving Forward

---

FRBR-Collective Access user community likely to grow in the dance archives community

Question:

Could this FRBR-ish strategy, adopted for the performing arts, be used to describe other collections?

- Yes, for the right collection
- Consider: performance as things that we do, ritualize and act upon
- Strategy offers opportunity to more intensely represent a fonds
  - Showcase the objects and the functions and events that created them

Thank you!

---

Regina Carra

Archive Project Metadata and Cataloging Coordinator  
Mark Morris Dance Group

Email:

Work: [regina.carra@mmdg.org](mailto:regina.carra@mmdg.org)