

# Rhoda Winter Russell:

## An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Russell, Rhoda Winter, 1930-2019
<b>Title:</b>	Rhoda Winter Russell Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	circa 1932-2010 (bulk 1942-1959)
<b>Extent:</b>	6 document boxes, 1 oversize box (osb), 1 oversize folder (osf) (2.52 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The papers of dance educator and movement therapist Rhoda Winter Russell contain fliers, brochures, clippings, theater programs, and photographs collected by Russell and pertaining to dancers, choreographers, and dance companies that were active in the 1940s and 1950s, including Mary Wigman and Alwin Nikolais, with whom Russell studied, and the Henry Street Playhouse Dance Company.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Performing Arts Collection PA-00209
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research. An advance appointment is required to view photographic negatives in the Reading Room.

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gifts and purchases, 2012-2013 (12-05-015-P, 13-04-004-P, 13-07-012-G, 13-07-013-G)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Helen Baer, 2012-13; Grace Hansen, 2016
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Dance educator and movement therapist Rhoda Winter Russell (born 1930) studied with Mary Wigman in the 1950s. She grew up in Philadelphia, taking dances classes with Marion Cuyjet and Syvilla Fort, and also at Ballet Arts in New York. Her training continued at the University of Wisconsin where she studied with Margaret D'Houbler. After graduation she studied with Mary Wigman in Berlin and attended Wigman's International Holiday Course in Montreux, Switzerland, in 1952. She obtained a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin, taught dance at Ohio Wesleyan University, and became an assistant in Hanya Holm's School of Dance in New York. She continued her studies with Alwin Nikolais at the Henry Street Playhouse in New York. In 1956 she assisted Margret Dietz at the Connecticut College School of Dance.

Her career in movement therapy began around 1956, when she married the psychologist Albert Ellis (they divorced in 1958). Her second marriage ended with the death of her husband, Dr. Murray Russell, in 1958, at which time she took a position in movement therapy at the Philadelphia State Hospital, working with the mentally ill. She retired from movement therapy in 1994. Starting in the 1980s, she served as a judge for dog shows. She died July 26, 2019 in Austin, Texas.

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## Sources:

Seitz, Jonelle, "Dance of the Century," *The Austin Chronicle*, 10 August 2012.

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## Scope and Contents

The bulk of the Rhoda Winter Russell papers, circa 1932-2010 (bulk 1942-1959), consists of fliers, brochures, clippings, theater programs, and photographs collected by Russell and pertaining to dancers, choreographers, and dance companies that were active in the 1940s and 1950s. The papers are arranged into four series: I. Dance Files, circa 1932-2009, undated; II. Photographs, 1952-circa 1956, undated; III. Correspondence, 1936-1959, undated; IV. Movement Therapy and Personal Papers, 1951-2010. Mary Wigman, Alwin Nikolais, and the Henry Street Playhouse Dance Company are well represented throughout the collection.

Series I. Dance Files is divided into three subseries: A. Dancers, Choreographers, and Dance Companies; B. Venues and Producing Organizations; C. Printed Material and Album. Material within each subseries is arranged alphabetically by subject. Many of the programs and fliers are for performances in New York between 1955 and 1957, and in Philadelphia in the 1940s.

Series II. Photographs includes black and white prints and negatives depicting classes taught by Mary Wigman, Harald Kreutzberg, and others at the International Holiday Courses in Montreux in 1952. This series also contains a photograph of Adolf Hitler with a dog, as well as a set of negatives and printouts of ships in a harbor.

Series III. Correspondence is arranged alphabetically and most notably contains letters from Mary Wigman to Russell.

Most of Series IV. Personal Papers pertains to Russell's career in movement therapy.

### **Provenance**

The collection was acquired from Russell by purchase and gift in 2012 and 2013. The photograph of Adolf Hitler and the accompanying negatives were previously in the possession of Russell's uncle Earl Winter (also known as Earl Winters), a U.S. military officer based in Heidelberg who was in charge of postal exchanges in northern Italy and Germany after World War II.

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### **Related Material**

Additional holdings for Mary Wigman are located in the Ransom Center Dance Collection.

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### **Separated Material**

Russell's programs for theater and music performances are uncataloged. Books received with the collection were transferred to the Ransom Center Book Collection. Dance periodicals were transferred to Performing Arts Dance Periodicals.

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### **Index Terms**

#### **People**

Kreutzberg, Harald, 1902-1968.

Nikolais, Alwin.

Russell, Rhoda Winter.

Wigman, Mary, 1886-1973.

#### **Organizations**

Henry Street Playhouse Dance Company.

#### **Subjects**

Dance -- United States -- 20th century.

Movement therapy.

**Document Types**

Brochures.

Fliers (printed matter).

Clippings (information artifacts).

Photographs.

Letters (correspondence).

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**Series I. Dance Files, circa 1932-2009, undated**

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