Rhoda Winter Russell:
An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Russell, Rhoda Winter, 1930-
Title: Rhoda Winter Russell Papers
Dates: circa 1932-2010 (bulk 1942-1959)
Extent: 6 document boxes, 1 oversize box (osb), 1 oversize folder (osf)(2.52 linear feet)
Abstract: 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.
Call Number: Performing Arts Collection PA-00209
Language: English
Access: Open for research. An advance appointment is required to view photographic negatives in the Reading Room.

Administrative Information

Processed by: Helen Baer, 2012-13 and Grace Hansen, 2016
Repository: The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center
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 Weslayan 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 on movement therapy at the Philadelphia State Hospital, working with the mentally ill. She retired from movement therapy in 1994. Since the 1980s she has been a judge for dog shows.

Sources:


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.

**Related Material**

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

**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.

**Index Terms**

**People**


Nikolais, Alwin.

Russell, Rhoda Winter.


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

Subseries A. Dancers, Choreographers, and Dance Companies, circa 1932-2009, undated

- Actors and Dancers Repertory Theatre, undated
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- Ailey, Alvin, 1972
  Container 1.2
- Akesson, Birgit, 1954, undated
  Container 1.3
- Amaya, Carmen, undated
  Container 1.4
- Amaya, Carmen, and Antonio Triana, 1942
  Container 1.5
- Mary Anthony Dance Theatre, undated
  Container 1.6
- Antonio and His Spanish Ballet Company, 1955
  Container 1.7
- Azuma Kabuki Dancers and Musicians, 1954
  Container 1.8
- Balanchine, George, 1985
  Container 1.9
- Ballet Americana, 1958
  Container 1.10
- Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, 1942-1954, undated
  Container 1.11
- Ballet Theatre, 1942-1954, undated
  Container 1.12
- Ballets de Marigny, 1952
  Container 1.13
- Les Ballets de Paris (Roland Petit), 1949-1954, undated
  Container 1.14
- Beatty, Talley, 1948, undated
  Container 1.15
- Beddow, Margery, undated
  Container 1.16
- Bettis, Valerie, 1956
  Container 1.17
- Bolshoi Ballet, 1959
  Container 1.18
- Borde, Percival, with guest artist Pearl Primus, undated
  Container 1.19
- Burton, Irving, 1956
  Container 1.20
- Butler, John, 1952
  Container 1.21
Collins, Janet, 1954

Cullberg, Birgit, 1961

Cunningham, Merce, 1957-2009, undated

Dafora, Asadata, undated

Dancers of Bali, 1952, undated

Dayton Theatre Dance Group, with Meredith Dallas and Dorothy Laming, 1955

Deering, Jane, 1942

D’Houbler, Margaret, 1953, undated

Dietz, Margret, 1953, undated

Dunham, Katherine, 1944-1955, undated

Enters, Angna, 1956

Escudero, 1955

Essen, Medha von, 1952

Flade, Tina, circa 1981

Frankel, Emily, and Mark Ryder, undated

Garth, Midi, 1956

Graham, Martha, 1947-1990, undated

Gray, Harriette Ann, 1954

Greco, José, 1951-1954, undated

Hadassah, with Joseph Gifford and company, 1956

Halprin, Anna, 1962

Hawkins, Erick, circa 1957

Holder, Geoffrey, 1956-1957

Holder, Geoffrey, and Louis Johnson, 1955
Holm, Hanya, 1946-1966
Horst, Louis, 1961
Johnson, Louis, undated
Jooss Ballet, 1946
Kabuki Theatre, 1954
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Kreutzberg, Harald, 1947-1951, undated
Lang, Pearl, 1956
Leath, A. A., undated
Lebrun, Rico, undated
Leeder, Sigurd, 1956
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Limón, José, and the Julliard Dance Theater, 1956, undated
Linn, Bambi, and Rod Alexander, undated
Lippincott, Gertrude, 1950
London Festival Ballet, 1955
Louis, Murray, 1964, undated
Marceau, Marcel, 1955-1958
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Mariscano, Merle, 1958
Massine, Leonid, undated
Mettler, Barbara, late 1940s
Nagrin, Daniel, 1966

Russell, Rhoda Winter, 1930-
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Wigman, Mary

Biographical sketch and notes by Russell, undated

Clippings, 1956-1975

German Dance Art by Mary Wigman, translated by Carl Reissner, 1935, undated typescript

Mary Wigman Studio, fliers and brochure, 1950-1959

Souvenir program for American tour presented by Sol Hurok, circa 1932

Ximenez and Vargas, circa 1958

Yugoslav National Folk Ballet, undated

Subseries B. Venues and Producing Organizations, 1945-1997, undated

American Dance Festival, undated

Ballet for America, 1946

Bennington College, 1955


Dance Notation Bureau, 1972

Germantown YWCA (Philadelphia, Penn.), 1948

Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, 1950-1953

Julliard School of Music, Department of Dance, 1951

Laban Institute of Movement Studies/ Labanotation, 1951-1979

New Dance Group Festival Series, 1945

Philadelphia College Dance Council, 1949

School of Performing Arts (New York, N.Y.), 1957
Students’ Dance Recitals, 1953  Container 5.13

Swiss Association of Professional Dancers and Gymnasts, International Holiday Courses, 1952-1956  Container 5.14


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University of Pennsylvania, 1951-1953  Container 5.17

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The "Y" Dance Center, 1956-1958, undated  Container 5.21

Subseries C. Printed Material and Album, 1943-2003, undated

Autograph album signed by dancers, 1943, undated  Container 6.1

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Jobs and Futures for Dance Majors, reprinted from Mademoiselle, 1950 Container 6.3
Series II. Photographs, 1952-circa 1956, undated

13 negatives of ships in a harbor, undated

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B&W print of Hitler, undated

International Holiday Courses in Montreux

Class photographs, 11 B&W prints of Margaret Erlanger, Joan Grant, Harald Kreutzberg, Ellen Moore, Rosalia Mereno[?], Mary Wigman, Rhoda Winter, and others, [1952]

Personal photographs, 16 B&W prints of teachers and fellows students including Margret Dietz, Rosalia Chladek, Nahami Abbell, and Ellen Moore, 1952-circa 1956, undated

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Head shot, 1 B&W print, undated

In Berlin[?], 3 B&W prints, undated
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Unidentified, 1956  Container 6.13

Photocopy of original box of correspondence with Russell’s notes, undated  Container 6.14
Series IV. Movement Therapy and Personal Papers, 1951-2010

Dog training article titled Modern Dance and the Mastino in Center Stage, 2010

Headley-Whitney Museum, brochure, undated

Movement therapy
  Association for Humanistic Psychology, conference program and clipping regarding Russell’s presentation, 1983
  C. G. Jung Educational Center of Houston, flier, 1980
  Institute for Experimental Learning and Development, flier for Russell workshop, early 1960s
  Motion and Emotion, article by Russell in Dance Magazine, 1958

Philadelphia State Hospital
  Clippings, 1970-1971
  Movement Therapy Discipline, Philadelphia State Hospital, manual/procedural document, 1977
  Resumes, 1974-circa 1980

University of Wisconsin term paper and grade report, 1951

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