



The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

David Libidins photographs

1937-1958

*MGZEB 21-0001

Processed by Emily P. Dunne in 2021.

Summary

Creator: Libidins, David, approximately 1899-1958

Title: David Libidins photographs

Date: 1937-1958

Size: 0.88 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: Gift of Mrs. Lincoln J. Herzeca (niece of Libidins). Received: 1989.

Abstract: David Libidins (1890s-1958) was a dance administrator and manager. The collection dates from 1937 to the late 1950s and contains photographs, negatives and a scrapbook depicting dancers and his family life.

Preferred citation: David Libidins photographs, *MGZEB 21-0001. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: Multiple languages Materials in English and French.

Processing note: Processed by Emily P. Dunne in 2021.

Separated Materials:

David Libidins papers, circa 1936-1958

Creator History

David Savelevich Libidins, born 1890s in Istanbul (then Constantinople), studied voice before serving for the Russian army in World War I. Libidins traveled throughout Europe performing opera and theater. In the early 1930s, Libidins took an administrative position with the Original Ballet Russe. Libidins continued to serve as an administrative director through the 1940s, first for the Ballet Russe de Monte-Carlo, followed by the Ballet Theatre. In 1943, Libidins relocated to the United States and became an independent manager for other performing artists.

David Libidins died in the United States on December 22, 1958.

Scope and Content Note

The David Libidins photographs consist of photographic materials including (primarily) silver gelatin prints, black and white negatives, and a scrapbook created and collected during Libidins' career as a dance administrator and manager, as well as personal and family snapshots. Much of the collection features studio headshots and professional documentation of primarily ballet performances and candid photos of his family and personal life.

The majority of prints and negatives are black and white, but some color prints and transparencies are in the personal collection. The majority of professional prints are 8x10, and personal prints vary from 2x3 to 11x14. The majority of negatives are individually cut, black and white 120 film.

The professional prints in the David Libidins photographs feature headshots of dancers in full costume, demonstrating performance and some stage documentation. A photocopied list denotes some numeration and caption information for the Maurice Seymour photographs. Personal photographs include Libidins' personal life, friendships, and hobbies (including his passion for fishing).

The scrapbook contains personal photographs, primarily prints from the negatives in this collection and some ephemera from his career. Each of the pages had been removed from its binding and were kept in their original order.

Headshots and professional photographs of ballet dancers are from the late 1930s through the 1950s (with the bulk of materials being in the 1940s). Photographs with unidentified dancers or photography studio are grouped together. Some Studio Iris photographs do not have an identifying stamp on the verso, but duplicates confirm they are from the same creator. There are photographs from studios and photographers throughout Europe, including Monte Carlo, Paris and London as well as some studios based in the United States. Most productions are unidentified, but a large part of the Studio Iris and Studio Lipnitzki photographs document the 1939 ballet *Le Rouge et Noir* which set and costume design was created by the visual artist Henri Matisse. Other performances identified include *Bacchanale*, *Les biches*, *Ghost Town*, *Sheherazade*, and *Les Sylphides*. Dancers are rarely identified with the exception of Libidins' wife Anna Scarpova, his friend Igor Youskevitch, Agnes de Mille, Fred Franklin, Igrouchka, Leanora Marra, and Nini Theilade by a note on the verso.

Personal photographs contain Libidins' home and personal life. Often documenting summer vacations, holidays and travel with friends and family. The scrapbook contains mostly prints from the negatives in this series, but also contain photographs of Libidins and Anna Scarpova attending theater openings and greeting dancers. Some pages have programs or ticket stubs from performances affixed.

Arrangement: Professional photographs are arranged alphabetically by photography studio, and personal photographs have separated negatives, but have primarily been kept in their original order.

Key Terms

Subjects

Ballet -- 20th century

Ballet dancers -- Photographs

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Negatives (photographs)
Photographs

Occupations

Theatrical managers.

Names

Libidins, David, approximately 1899-1958
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo

Container List

Professional 1939-1958

- b. 1 f. 1 Barbà, Raoul 1930s-1940s
- b. 1 f. 2 Baron [Stirling Henry Nahum] 1930s-1940s
- b. 1 f. 3 Georges, S 1930s-1940s
- b. 3 f. 1 Joffeé, Ste 1930s-1950s
- b. 1 f. 4 Korman, Murray - National Photo Co. - Reed, John E 1930s-1940s
- b. 1 f. 5-6 Seymour, Maurice 19430-1950s
- b. 1 f. 7 Studio Iris 1930s
- b. 1 f. 8 Studio Lipnitzki 1930s-1940s
- b. 2 f. 1 Valente, Alfredo 1930s-1940s
- b. 2 f. 2 Unidentified photographer 1930s-1940s

Personal 1937-1958

- b. 2 f. 3-4
b. 3 Snapshots 1940s-1950s
- b. 2 f. 5 Snapshots, Negatives 1930s-1940s
- b. 3 Scrapbook 1937-1958