



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Lola Menzeli and Senia Solomonoff papers

1873-1954 [bulk 1910s-1940]

(S) *MGZMD 417

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Summary

Creator: Menzeli, Lola, 1898-1951

Title: Lola Menzeli and Senia Solomonoff papers

Date: 1873-1954 [bulk 1910s-1940]

Size: 2.34 linear feet (5 boxes, 3 volumes)

Source: Donated by Marya and Oscar Stein, 2012.

Abstract: Lola Menzeli and her husband Senia Solomonoff were ballet dancers and teachers. The Lola Menzeli and Senia Solomonoff papers (1873-1954, bulk 1910s-1940) contain scrapbooks, photographs, and other papers documenting their careers. The collection includes scrapbooks concerning Menzeli's career on the vaudeville circuit in the 1910s; Menzeli and Solomonoff's world tour in the 1920s; and the Festival of States in St. Petersburg, Florida, which Solomonoff directed from 1933 to 1935. The collection also contains materials related to Menzeli's patented invention of heeled toe shoes, and a scrapbook about Menzeli's teacher, Elizabetta Menzeli.

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Creator History

Lola Menzeli (1898-1951) was the stage name of ballet dancer Julia Lola Solomonoff, née Hamburger. Menzeli frequently performed with her husband, dancer and director Senia Solomonoff (d. 1954).

Menzeli was a student of Elizabetta Menzeli, from whom she took her stage name. In her early career, Menzeli danced under the name Lola Girlie. She toured the vaudeville circuit during the 1910s, where her dance partners included Ivan Bankoff and Maurice Diamond. She first partnered with Solomonoff in 1920. In the ensuing decade, the two toured the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Menzeli and Solomonoff lived and taught in cities across the United States. They established a dance school in Atlanta, Georgia in 1932. From 1933 to 1935, Solomonoff directed the Festival of States in St. Petersburg, Florida, where he and Menzeli both performed. He was guest director for the Works Progress Administration Federal Theatre Project in Tampa in 1937.

Menzeli died in Chicago in 1951. Solomonoff died three years later in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The Lola Menzeli and Senia Solomonoff papers (1873-1954, bulk 1910s-1940) contain scrapbooks, photographs, and other papers documenting Menzeli and Solomonoff's dancing and teaching careers.

Scrapbooks make up the bulk of the collection, and date from 1873 to 1939. The scrapbooks contain clippings, programs, posters, correspondence, contracts, and photographs. Subjects of the scrapbooks include Menzeli's career in vaudeville in the 1910s; Menzeli and Solomonoff's world tour in the 1920s; and the Festival of States Pageants of 1933, 1934, and 1935. There is a large scrapbook about Elizabetta Menzeli's dancing and teaching career, which dates from 1873 to the 1920s. There is one small scrapbook dedicated to Solomonoff's work with the Federal Theatre Project in Florida, and one small scrapbook about the play *Lindbergh*, performed in Paris in 1929, in which Menzeli appeared as the principal dancer. There are also loose clippings, fliers, programs, correspondence, and contracts, dating from 1913 to 1954.

The collection contains materials concerning Menzeli's invention of high-heeled toe shoes, which were sold by the E. Landi dance shoe company as the Menzeli Heeled Toe Slipper. The materials include designs, advertisements for the shoe, copies of Menzeli's contract with E. Landi, and documentation of her patents from the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain.

The collection contains a small amount of material related to Menzeli's ballet textbook, *From Teacher to Student*, published in 1946. Materials include mock-ups, galleys, and correspondence.

Photographs in the collection are primarily promotional images of Menzeli and Solomonoff, both together and individually. There are also photographs of Menzeli and Solomonoff meeting dancer La Argentina in 1932, signed photographs of Yvonne Printemps and Lew Fields, and a photograph of Solomonoff meeting Babe Ruth.

Key Terms

Occupations

Ballet dancers
Dance teachers

Subjects

Vaudeville

Names

Menzeli, Elizabetta
Solomonoff, Senia

Container List

Scrapbooks

In chronological order.

- b. 3 f. 1-12 Elizabetha Menzeli 1873-1920s
- b. 4 f. 1 Elizabetha Menzeli circa 1900s-1912
 - v. 1 1915-1917
 - v. 2 World Tour 1920-1929
- b. 5 f. 1-3 1922-1933
- b. 4 f. 2-4 *Lindbergh* 1926-1929
 - v. 3 Festival of States--St. Petersburg, Florida 1933-1935
- b. 4 f. 5-6 1933-1939
- b. 2 f. 10 Federal Theatre Project--Tampa, Florida 1937
- b. 2 f. 4-7 Clippings, Fliers, and Programs 1915-1954
- b. 4 f. 10 Clippings and Fliers 1920-1929
- b. 2 f. 8-9 Contracts and Correspondence 1913-1930
- b. 1 f. 1-10 Photographs 1906-1940
 - Includes photographs of La Argentina and other celebrities.
- b. 4 f. 7-9 Photographs circa 1910s-1920s, 1953
- b. 1 f. 11-14 Menzeli Heeled Toe Slipper 1925-1928
- b. 2 f. 1-3 *From Teacher to Student: Ballet Textbook* 1946, 1952
- b. 4 f. 11 *From Teacher to Student: Ballet Textbook* 1946
 - Book cover only.