



The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Buzz Miller papers

1906-1999

(S) *MGZMD 127

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Summary

Creator: Miller, Buzz

Title: Buzz Miller papers

Date: 1906-1999

Size: 1.46 linear feet (3 boxes, 3 volumes)

Source: Donated by the estate of Buzz Miller, 1999.

Abstract: Buzz Miller was an American dancer who performed primarily in musical theater and ballets. The Buzz Miller papers (1906-1999) document his career as a dancer and choreographer from 1948 through 1980, as well as his personal life and his service in the army in World War II. The collection contains correspondence, scrapbooks, photographs, resumes, contracts, notes, and artwork. The collection includes a large number of personal photographs, showing Miller as well as fellow dancers and choreographers.

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Preferred citation: Buzz Miller papers, (S) *MGZMD 127. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Related Materials:

Buzz Miller collection of playscripts, (S) *MGZMD 125. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts..

Creator History

Buzz Miller was born Vernal Miller in 1923 in Snowflake, Arizona. Miller served with the army during World War II, and was injured in combat in 1944. He began to pursue a dance career after leaving the army in 1947.

Miller began his career touring with the Jack Cole Dancers and with Kay Thompson. He went on to work with choreographers Jerome Robbins, John Butler, and Roland Petit, among others. Miller danced in Broadway shows such as *Two's Company* (1952), *Redhead* (1959), and *Hot Spot* (1963). He performed "Steam Heat," choreographed by Bob Fosse, in *The Pajama Game* in 1954, a performance he reprised in the 1957 film. In 1969, he danced the title role in Katherine Litz's *Dracula*. Miller also worked as a choreographer and, later in his career, taught ballet.

Miller met Alan Groh in 1957. The couple lived together for over 30 years until Groh's death in 1996.

Miller died in 1999 in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The Buzz Miller papers (1906-1999) contain correspondence, scrapbooks, photographs, resumes, contracts, and Miller's notes and artwork.

The correspondence includes a large number of Miller's letters to Alan Groh, and a large number of letters to Miller from his sister, Rosalene Miller (Ronnie). Miller's letters to Groh date to 1958 and 1972. The 1958 letters were written when Miller was at the Festival dei Due Mondi in Italy, where he performed in ballets choreographed by John Butler. The 1972 letters were written when Miller was in Germany as the choreographer for Tito Capobianco's production of *Aida*. Ronnie Miller's letters date to the 1940s and discuss her experiences serving in Women's Army Corps in Iowa and California, as well as her life in Arizona before and after the war. Other correspondence includes a small number of letters Miller wrote to his family, letters from Miller's agent, and short notes from Janet Flanner and Jerome Robbins.

Miller's career is documented primarily through scrapbooks, which contain photographs, clippings, and programs dating from 1948 to 1980. Other materials related to Miller's career include resumes, contracts, and short written reminiscences.

Photograph albums contain images of Miller's family, colleagues, and friends, including Jerome Robbins and Carol Haney. Family photographs date as early as 1907.

The collection also includes a small number of notes from Miller's time in the army, and artwork by Miller and his family members, dating as early as 1906.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence
Photographs
Scrapbooks

Occupations

Dancers

Subjects

Festival of Two Worlds

Musical theater

Names

United States. Army. Women's Army Corps

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-14 Correspondence 1941-1998
- b. 3 f. 1-4 Scrapbook 1948-1959, 1969
 - v. 1 Scrapbook 1949-1980
- b. 2 f. 1-2 Contracts and Resumes 1952-1970s
- b. 2 f. 3 Sheet Music 1948-1970s
- b. 2 f. 4-8 Memorabilia and Theatrical Reminiscences circa 1954-1970s
 - Includes a photograph of Marilyn Monroe (inscribed to Miller), a drawing of Carol Haney, sheet music, and a program for Hot Spot.
 - v. 2 Photograph Album 1907-1950s
 - v. 3 Photograph Album 1950s-1978
- b. 2 f. 9-10 Artwork circa 1906-1940s
- b. 2 f. 11-12 Miscellaneous Notes and Documents 1930s-1949, 1999