



# The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

## **Bernadine Jennings papers**

1969-2005

(S) \*MGZMD 326

The collection was arranged by the Dance Division. This order was maintained and the collection was processed in 2013. Electronic records were processed by Robyn Hjermstadin 2016.

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Jennings, Bernadine

**Title:** Bernadine Jennings papers

**Date:** 1969-2005

**Size:** 17.47 linear feet (42 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Bernadine Jennings, 2005.

**Abstract:** Bernadine Jennings was the founder and executive director of Dance Giant Steps, Inc. Founded in 1979, this not-for-profit organization promoted professional dance artists and companies. This was mostly through the organization's publication "Attitude: The Dancers' Magazine," published quarterly. The collection, dated 1969 to 2005, mostly holds publicity material about the dance companies that resided or held dance performances in New York City. Represented in the collection are classical ballet, folkloric and ethnic dances, and modern dance. African-American dance companies are strongly represented in the collection. The files feature correspondence, photographs, press kits, publications, slides, and several drawings.

### **Conditions Governing Access:**

Library policy of photography and photocopying will apply. Inquiries regarding audio/visual materials in the collection may be directed to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division ([dance@nypl.org](mailto:dance@nypl.org)). Audio/visual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

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**Preferred citation:** Bernadine Jennings papers, (S) \*MGZMD 326. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2013. The collection was arranged by the Dance Division. This order was maintained and the collection was processed in 2013. Electronic records were

processed by Robyn Hjermsstadin 2016.

## **Creator History**

Bernadine Jennings was the founder and executive director of Dance Giant Steps, Inc. Founded in 1979, this not-for-profit organization promoted professional dance artists and companies. Early in her career, she was a contributing editor to "The Feet," a 1970s monthly magazine focused on dance within the African-American community. During this period, Jennings worked under Carole Johnson. Johnson would eventually establish two dance companies in Australia. After thirty years, Jennings resigned her position as executive director. In 2001, Jennings re-established Dance Giant Steps, Inc. as a dance studio in Houston, Texas.

## **Custodial History**

The collection was donated by Bernadine Jennings in 2005.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Bernadine Jennings papers, dated 1969 to 2005, contain material collected by Jennings during her tenure at Dance Giant Steps, Inc. The bulk of the collection is printed matter reflecting the dance companies (national and international, experimental and traditional) that performed in New York City. The printed matter provided Jennings with timely information about the dance companies that she wrote about in Attitude Magazine. The collection holds a significant amount of material representative of African-American dance troupes.

The files hold many press kits with promotional material on dance programs along with handbills, photographs, media reviews, press releases, postcards and some dance publications.

Most of the photographs were removed from the press kits by the Dance Division and arranged by type of dance style.

The remaining material is a small amount of resumes, correspondence and sketches. The correspondence was mostly incoming to Jennings as editor of the magazine Attitudes. The letters include comments on the articles, general news, and invitations to dance events. There are some costume design sketches from the experimental opera "A Chinaman's Chance."

The bulk of the printed matter focuses on three types of dance: ballet, folk and ethnic and modern. Companies represented include the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, Asian American Dance Theatre, Les Ballets Africains, Bolshoi Ballet, Carlota Santana Flamenco Vivo, Complexions, Dance Africa, Dance Brazil, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Eleo Pomare Dance Company, Feld Ballet, H.T. Chen & Dancers, Houston Ballet, Koninklijk Ballet van Vlaanderen, Lines Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Co., New York City Ballet, and Philadanco!

**Arrangement:** The collection was organized by document type. Within this the files are alphabetical by file title.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American dance -- History -- 20th century  
Dance companies

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Correspondence  
Promotional materials  
Publicity photographs

### **Occupations**

Directors

## Container List

- Announcements
  - b. 1 f. 1-11 A-Z 1980s-2000s
  - b. 42 f. 1-2 Announcements 1970s-2000s
- b. 1 f. 12-13 General Correspondence 1971-2005
  - Drawings--Dance
    - b. 2 f. 1 Assorted Dance Illustrations undated
    - b. 42 f. 5 Costume Design. A Chinaman's Chance 1989
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  - Publications
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    - b. 42 f. 6 New York City Department of Cultural Affairs 1986
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  - Press Kits and Related Materials 1972-2005
    - b. 3 f. 7-13 First Flamenco Festival - Aaron Davis Hall 1990-2005
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    - b. 8 f. 1-9 Ballet Long Island - Black Choreographers 1973-2002
    - b. 9 f. 1-8 Black Dance Festival - Chinese American Arts 1972-2004
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    - b. 11 f. 1-10 Creach/Koester - Dance NYC 1983-2005
    - b. 12 f. 1-9 Dance Theater Workshop - Dancing For Life 1980-2005
    - b. 13 f. 1-8 Dancing on a Line - Douglas Dunn 1975-2001
    - b. 14 f. 1-10 East/West Ballet Company - Feit 1983-2005
    - b. 15 f. 1-9 Feld Ballet - Georgian State Dance Co 1973-2005
    - b. 16 f. 1-9 Ghana Dance Ensemble - Hamburg Ballet 1973-2004
    - b. 17 f. 1-10 Hanayagi - Izulu Dance Theatre 1978-2003
    - b. 18 f. 1-11 Jackson - Joyce 1977-2005
    - b. 19 f. 1-14 Jubilation! - La Mama Experimental Theater Club 1974-2003
    - b. 20 f. 1-12 Labyrinth Dance Theater - Maimouna Keita African Dance Co 1980-2005
    - b. 21 f. 1-10 Maloney - Martha Graham School 1973-2000
    - b. 22 f. 1-13 Mary Anthony Dance Theatre - Myung 1980-2004
    - b. 23 f. 1-9 Naharin - New York Theatre Ballet 1974-2005
    - b. 24 f. 1-10 Next Wave - Parsons 1980-2004
    - b. 25 f. 1-11 Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre - Reitz 1984-2004

Press Kits and Related Materials (cont.)

- b. 26 f. 1-12 Rennie Harris - Sankai Juku 1980-2004
- b. 27 f. 1-17 Sara and Jerry Pearson Dance Co. - Streb, Elizabeth 1972-2004
- b. 28 f. 1-13 Stuart Pimsler - Trisha Brown Co 1976-2005
- b. 29 f. 1-16 Trockadero Gloxina Ballet Co. - World Music Institute 1980-2004
- b. 30 f. 1-4 Yangtze Repertory Theatre - Zulu 1982-1999

Photographs

- b. 30 f. 5-17 Ballet: Acanthus Ballet - Dance Galaxy 1980s-1990s, undated
- b. 31 f. 1-19 Ballet: Dance Theater of Harlem - Princeton Ballet 1980s-1990s, undated
- b. 32 f. 1-4 Ballet: Royal Ballet - Zurich Ballet 1980s-1990s, undated
- b. 32 f. 5-6 Ballet. Miscellaneous; Unidentified 1980s-1990s, undated
- b. 32 f. 7-16 Modern Dance: Alvin Ailey - Catterson 1980s-1990s, undated
- b. 33 f. 1-11 Modern Dance: Charles Moore Dance Theatre - Flatiron Works, Inc 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 34 f. 1-16 Modern Dance: Fly-By-Night Dance Theatre - Kuhnke 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 35 f. 1-11 Modern Dance: Lars Lubovitch - Modern Dance. Choreographers 1980s-2000s, undated
- er. 1 Modern Dance: Limón Dance Company circa 2004  
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- b. 36 f. 1-14 Modern Dance: Choreographers/Performers 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 37 f. 1-12 Modern Dance: Nagrin - Rush 1980s-2000s, undated
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- b. 42 f. 3 Modern Dance: Merce Cunningham Dance Co 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 39 f. 5-14 Folk & Ethnic: A - Minangkabau 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 40 f. 1-8 Folk & Ethnic: Mongolian Music - Wilson; Unidentified 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 42 f. 4 Folk & Ethnic: International African - American Ballet 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 40 f. 9-14 Other Dance Formats: Altogether Different - Jazz 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 41 f. 1-7 Other Dance Formats: Jelly's Last Jam - Miscellaneous 1980s-2000s, undated
- b. 41 f. 8-11 Folk, Ethnic Modern. Miscellaneous undated (slides)