



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Serge Lifar letters to Serge Diaghilev**

1924-1928

(S) \*MGZMD 77

Processed by Henley Haslam.

## Summary

**Creator:** Lifar, Serge, 1905-1986

**Title:** Serge Lifar letters to Serge Diaghilev

**Date:** 1924-1928

**Source:** : Purchase, Sotheby's, 12/30/1991

**Abstract:** Serge Lifar, dancer, choreographer and author, was born in Kiev, Russia in 1905. He studied with Bronislava Nijinska, who brought him to Paris in 1923 where he joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. He became a protege of Diaghilev, was named premiere danseur in 1925, and remained with the company through it's last season in 1929. These letters were written by Lifar to Diaghilev when Lifar was 19 to 23 years old. Sotheby's described the contents of the collection: "The letters are in Russian and are about Lifar's education in Italy, supervised by Diaghilev, and his ballet studies including his lessons with Enrico Cecchetti in Turin, reporting Cecchetti's changes in his arm movements... his problems with his hands, consultations with doctors, his attempts to learn French, his visits to Florence, Fiesole, Milan and... Venice, his impressions on seeing the works of Raphael, Botticelli, Mantegna, and Michelangelo... his relationship with Diaghilev... his opinions of other dancers ... his own performances...(Tricorne)... [and] rehearsals for Zephyr et Flore and The Triumph of Neptune..."

**Alternative Form Available:** Available on microfilm; New York Public Library; call number \*ZBD-565

**Preferred citation:** [Identification of item], Serge Lifar Letters to Serge Diaghilev, \*MGZMD 77, Dance Collection. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Processing note:** Processed by Henley Haslam; machine-readable finding aid created by Catherine Johnson.

## Creator History

Serge Lifar, dancer, choreographer and author, was born in Kiev, Russia in 1905. He studied with Bronislava Nijinska, who brought him to Paris in 1923 where he joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. He became a protege of Diaghilev, was named premiere danseur in 1925, and remained with the company through it's last season in 1929.

## Scope and Content Note

These letters were written by Lifar to Diaghilev when Lifar was 19 to 23 years old. Sotheby's described the contents of the collection: "The letters are in Russian and are about Lifar's education in Italy, supervised by Diaghilev, and his ballet studies including his lessons with Enrico Cecchetti in Turin, reporting Cecchetti's changes in his arm movements... his problems with his hands, consultations with doctors, his attempts to learn French, his visits to Florence, Fiesole, Milan and... Venice, his impressions on seeing the works of Raphael, Botticelli, Mantegna, and Michelangelo... his relationship with Diaghilev... his opinions of other dancers ... his own performances... (*Tricorne*)... [and] rehearsals for *Zephyr et Flore* and *The Triumph of Neptune*..."

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Manuscripts -- Collections

### Names

Lifar, Serge, 1905-1986

Diaghilev, Serge, 1872-1929

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin July 9, 1924 (ALS, 3 l., [3] p.)
- b. 1 f. 1 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin July 16, 1924 (ALS, 2 l., [3] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin July 21, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Venice to Lifar [Turin] July 21, 1924 (Receipt, 1 l.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin Tuesday, [July 22, 1924 - ? (ALS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin Wednesday [July 23, 1924? (ALS, 1., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin July 26, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin Sunday [July 27, 1924 -? (ALS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin August 1, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 2 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin August 8, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [2] p.)
- b. 1 f. 3 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin August 10, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [2] p.)
- b. 1 f. 3 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin August 16, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [2] p.)
- b. 1 f. 3 Lifar to Diaghilev, Turin August 25, 1924 (ALS, 2 l., [1 fold], [6] p)
- b. 1 f. 4 Lifar to Diaghilev, Paris August 27, 1924 [in the morning (ALS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 4 Lifar to Diaghilev, Paris August 27, 1924; in the afternoon] (ALS, 2 l., [3] p.)
- b. 1 f. 4 Lifar to Diaghilev, Paris August 28, 1924 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 5 Maison Doucet to Lifar, Paris September 5, 1924 (Receipt, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 5 James Pile, tailor, to Lifar, Paris September 9, 1924 (Receipt, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 5 Sergei Grigoriev to Lifar, Paris September 10, 1924 (ALS, 1 l., [1] p., env.)
- b. 1 f. 5 Lifar to Diaghilev October 21 1924 (AL, 1 l., [2] p.)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lifar to Diaghilev n.d. (ANS, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lifar to Diaghilev, Nice - Marseille March 25, 1925 (ALS, 1 l., [2] p., env.)
- b. 1 f. 6 J. Chatelet to Diaghilev, Paris March 24, 1925 (Receipt, 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lifar to Diaghilev, Nice April 9, 1925 (ALS, 1 fold, L., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lifar to Diaghilev, London May 9, 1925 (ALS, 1 l., [2] p.)
- Lifar to Diaghilev, London May 10 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lifar to Diaghilev, London June 12 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [1] p)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lifar to Diaghilev June 10, 1925 and June 11, 1925 (Env.)
- b. 1 f. 7 Lifar to Diaghilev 1925 (ALS, 1 l., [2] p)
- b. 1 f. 7 Lifar to Diaghilev, Paris October 8, 1925 (ANS, 1 fold. 1., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 7 Lifar to Diaghilev, Monte Carlo March 22, 1926 (Tlgm, 1 fold. 1., [1] p)
- b. 1 f. 7 Lifar to Diaghilev, Monte Carlo 1926 (ANS, 1 fold 1., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 7 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 15, 1926 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [3] p.)
- b. 1 f. 7 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 18 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p)
- b. 1 f. 8 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 23, 1926 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [3] p.)
- b. 1 f. 8 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 26, 1926 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 8 Lifar to Diaghilev, Monte Carlo January 21, 1927 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 8 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan August 16, 1927 (ALS, 2 l. [1 fold.], [6] p.)
- b. 1 f. 9 Lifar to Diaghilev August 19, 1927 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)

- b. 1 f. 9 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan August 30, 1927 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 9 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 11, 1927 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 9 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 1927 -?] (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [4] p.)
- b. 1 f. 9 Lifar to Diaghilev November 15, 1927 (ALS, 2 fold. 1., [8] p., env.)
- b. 1 f. 10 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 8, 1928 (Tlgm, 1 l., [1] p.,)
- b. 1 f. 10 Lifar to Diaghilev, Milan October 24, 1928 (ALS, 1 fold. 1., [3] p., env)
- b. 1 f. 10 Lifar to Diaghilev, Berlin 1928? (ANS 1 l., [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 10 List of roles and partners 1928 (1 l., [2] p.)
- b. 1 f. 11 Lifar to Diaghilev, London December 27 (AN 1 l., [2] p.)
- b. 1 f. 11 Photograph of Lifar n.d.
- b. 1 f. 11 Drawing of Lifar crying n.d.
- b. 1 f. 11 Plan for house n.d. (1 fold. 1 [1] p.)
- b. 1 f. 11 Plan for prospective Diaghilev's house n.d. (1., [2] p.)