

The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the Gus Solomons papers and the Gus Solomons Company/Dance, Inc. records 1950s-2000s (S) *MGZMD 214

Summary

Creator: Solomons, Gus, Jr., 1940-

Title: Gus Solomons papers and the Gus Solomons Company/Dance, Inc. records

Date: 1950s-2000s

Size: 25.25 linear feet (75 boxes, 5 tubes); 1241.1 megabytes (259 computer files)

Source: The Gus Solomons Papers and The Gus Solomons Company/Dance Inc. records were donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1996 and 2020 by Gus Solomons, Jr.

Revision History: Additions processed by Valerie Wingfield.

Abstract: Gus Solomons Jr. is an African-American dancer, choreographer, teacher, and writer. Solomons was a soloist in the dance companies of Donald McKayle, Pearl Lang, Martha Graham and, most notably, Merce Cunningham. Solomons formed his own troupe, The Solomons Company/Dance in 1972. Twenty-four years later in 1996, Solomons founded Paradigm to celebrate mature artists on stage. The collection includes correspondence, Solomons articles, notes and notebooks, photographs, posters, drawings, audio and moving image materials.

Conditions Governing Access:

Inquiries regarding audio and moving image materials in the collection may be directed to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division (dance@nypl.org). Audio and moving image materials will be subject to preservation assessment and migration prior to access.

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Preferred citation: Gus Solomons papers and the Gus Solomons Company/Dance, Inc. records, (S) *MGZMD 214. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Leslie Reyman in 2008.

Separated Materials:

Audio and Moving Image from the original acquisition was separated. Inquiries may be directed to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Creator History

Gus Solomons Jr. (1940-) is an African-American choreographer and dancer of environmental and post-modern dance. His early training in dance began while attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. One of his first teachers was E. Virginia Williams, the founder of the Boston Ballet Company. In 1961, he received his degree in architecture. Solomons moved to New York City and became a soloist in the dance companies of Donald McKayle, Pearl Lang, Martha Graham and, most notably, Merce Cunningham.

In 1969, Solomons formed his own company The Solomons Company/Dance creating over one hundred fifty-five original works as well as dances commissioned by professional companies across North America. His choreography has been performed Off-Broadway, on television and for dual-screen video dance pieces. The Company ceased operations in 1994.

In 1996, Solomons created Paradigm, a new trio company, with Carmen DeLavallade, Dudley Williams and himself. The purpose of creating this company was to celebrate mature artists on stage. Among Solomons' achievements was receiving the 2000 Bessie for Sustained Achievement in Choreography. In March 2001 he was awarded the first annual Robert A. Muh Award from his alma mater, MIT, as a distinguished artist alumnus.

Solomons has contributed to several books on dance and has written for *Ballet News* and *Instep*. He currently reviews and writes for *Dance Magazine*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Village Voice* and the *New York Times*. In addition to teaching, touring, guest-performing and lecturing, Solomons serves frequently as an adjudicator and dance panelist for various state arts councils, artistic advisory boards and foundations, including the National Endowment for the Arts.

Solomons currently resides in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The Gus Solomons papers and Gus Solomons Company/Dance, Inc. records, dating from the 1950s to 2000s, document the career of Gus Solomons (1938 -), choreographer, dancer of environmental and post-modern dance and teacher, and the Gus Solomons Company/Dance, Inc. The collection includes correspondence, notes, notebooks, photographs, printed matter, and audio and moving image materials.

The collection mostly reflects Solomons and the Company's productions in the United States and abroad. As the files indicate, these performances were held at colleges, universities, theatres, and other performance venues. Simultaneously, Solomons would offer workshops in dance and choreography. Related material includes the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) files consisting of evaluation forms for dancers and dance companies that Gus Solomons prepared. The files also indicate that Solomons was the recipient of many residencies at colleges and universities as indicative of being widely recognized in the performing arts.

The Correspondence Files hold letters from fellow artists and friends, business associates and family. These letters include reactions to Solomons or the Company's performances, and general news on current events.

The Alphabetical Files hold material on Solomons performances from his early years including the Merce Cunningham Dance Company; solo performances; and Paradigm. These files also include documentation on the Solomons Company/Dance productions including *Fatstick*, *Gut Boys*, *Red Squalls I*, and *Red Squalls II*.

The Teaching and Residencies files include information about where Solomons taught dance and choreography. It reflects Solomons as a respected and in-demand teacher and lecturer at universities and colleges throughout the United States and abroad. Researchers should also examine the Alphabetical files for additional teaching opportunities offered to Solomons.

The Writings have extensive notes created by Solomons for his choreography work for the productions. Solomons writings also reflect that he was a critic for several leading publications including *Dance*, and *The Village Voice*. There are also examples of crossword puzzles that he created for publications.

The Photographs mostly reflect Gus Solomons Jr. and the Solomons Company/Dance. Solomons was documented throughout his career as an artist and choreographer. The black and white photographs capture Solomons' solo performances, studio rehearsals, and the productions of the Solomons Company/Dance. Many of the photographs are credited to the photographers who sent batches of pictures for his approval before being used for publicity. While not as extensive as the Solomons Company/Dance, there are photographs taken of the productions of Paradigm. Another group of photographs are color snapshots taken by Solomons during his travels for work. These photographs are mostly city sights, fellow artists, and local events.

The Family Photographs and Papers document Solomons' family. These photographs include pictures of Gus Solomons as a young child and teenager, his parents and other relatives, and family related documents.

The collection holds some posters and drawings by Solomons.

Audio and Moving Image Materials hold videos, sound recordings and film that extensively documents the Gus Solomons Company/Dance through productions, and studio rehearsals. There are materials for Paradigm, interviews of Solomons, and workshops that he conducted. There is also a podcast by Paradigm.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged into the following groups: Correspondence; Alphabetical Files; Teaching and Residencies; Writings; Photographs; Family Photographs and Papers; Audio and Moving Image Material.

Key Terms

Subjects African American Choreographers African American dancers Choreographers -- United States -- 20th century Dance -- 20th century Dance -- Photographs Dance -- Study and teaching (Higher) -- New York (State) -- New York Dance companies -- United States Dance schools -- New York (State) -- New York Dance teachers -- Training of Modern dance -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence Dance programs

Occupations

Dancers.

Names

Solomons, Gus, Jr., 1940-Paradigm (Dance company) Solomons Company/Dance

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b. 22 f. 21	Dance Uptown 1969
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b. 26 f. 1-12	Merce Cunningham and Dance Company 1965-1969 Folder 4 holds Solomons' journal from the Company's European tour, dated 1966.
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b. 35 f. 12	Hits and Runs Summer Workshops 1979 The workshops were held at the Solomons studio.
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b. 38 f. 11 Aspen Grove

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b. 50 f. 7	The Snow Queen
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	Posters
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t. 3	Solomons Company/Dance 1995 Hamilton Performing Art Series.
	Photographs
	The photographer is credited where indicated.
b. 52 f. 1-20 b. 53 f. 1-9	Solomons, Guy 1970s-2000s
D. 55 I. 1-9	The photographs are arranged chronologically.
	Gus Solomons Company/Dance 1960s-2000s The productions are arranged alphabetically.
b. 53 f. 10	Air
b. 53 f. 11	Androcles
b. 53 f. 12	Aspen Grove 1988
b. 53 f. 13-14	Atlanta (Several Productions) 1974, 1977
b. 53 f. 15	Bladewalker 1984
b. 53 f. 16-18	Bone Jam 1978
b. 53 f. 19	Boogie 1977
b. 53 f. 20	Boneyard 1988
b. 53 f. 21	Boston (Several Productions)
b. 54 f. 1-2	Brill-0 1973
b. 54 f. 4	Chryptych
b. 54 f. 4	Con/Text 1986
b. 54 f. 5-7	Cubiculo 1972, 1976
b. 54 f. 8	Dance Workshop, Kutztown State College 1973
b. 54 f. 9	Delacorte 1974
b. 54 f. 10	Differences Of Need 1982
b. 54 f. 11	<i>Exploring</i> 1964 Solomons performed and choreographed a production on NBC.
b. 54 f. 12	Fatstick
b. 54 f. 13	Flesh Wine And Sinew To The Bone 1983 A solo performance by Solomons.
b. 54 f. 14	Free to Dance Project 2000
b. 54 f. 15	Gminor
b. 54 f. 16	Gut Boys
b. 54 f. 17-18	Kinesia #5 1992
b. 54 f. 19	Kinetic Molpai
b. 54 f. 20	Latent Spring 1995
b. 54 f. 21	Long Beach Summer School 1973
b. 55 f. 1-2	Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1966, 1971
b. 55 f. 3	Masse 1971
b. 55 f. 4	Morelli Concert 1976
b. 55 f. 5	Mythosaur 1988
b. 55 f. 6	New School 1971
b. 55 f. 7	<i>Noz</i> 1980
b. 55 f. 8	Opus Pocus 1991

	Photographs (cont.)
	Gus Solomons Company/Dance (cont.)
b. 55 f. 9 b. 55 f. 10	Petal Rock Rebus 1983
	Private Parts
b. 55 f. 11	Pulp 1992
b. 55 f. 12	PsychoMotorWorks
b. 55 f. 13	Pyrothonium 1971
b. 55 f. 14	Site Line 1989
b. 55 f. 15-18	<i>Steps</i> 1980-1983
b. 55 f. 19	Vert
b. 55 f. 20-24 b. 56 f. 1-17 b. 57 f. 1-17 b. 58 f. 1-16 b. 64 f. 5-7	1960's-1990s The photographs lack identification. The photographs are arranged chronologically.
b. 65 f. 1-8	Solomons and Studio Pictures
	Travel Photographs
b. 59 f. 1	Travels and Events 2002
b. 59 f. 2	Aspen 1990
b. 59 f. 2-3	Bagamoya Student's Performances 1988
b. 58 f. 5	Ballet Preljocaj 1996 Photographs were taken in Fano, Italy and Aix en Provence, France.
b. 59 f. 6	Chicago
b. 59 f. 7	Ekaterinberg 1996
b. 60 f. 1	Guatemala
b. 60 f. 2	Harlem Nutcracker Tour
b. 60 f. 3	Inman 1985
b. 60 f. 4-5	Salzburg 1996, 2001
b. 60 f. 6-7	University of Southern California
b. 60 f. 8	Valuables and Studio 1989
b. 60 f. 9	The Yard
b. 61 f. 1-8 b. 62 f. 1-6 b. 63 f. 1-6 b. 64 f. 1-4	Assorted Travel Photographs 1980s-2000s
b. 73 f. 1-16 b. 74 f. 1-3 b. 75 f. 1-5 t. 5	Family Papers and Photographs c1950s-1960s
b. 68 b. 69 f. 1-9 b. 70 t. 1	Drawings Box 70 holds a drawing pad.
	Artifacts
b. 72	Plaque Honoring Paradigm 2004
b. 72	Gus Solomons College Ring
b. 71	Playing Cards Designed for Gut-Stomp Lottery Kill
	Audio and Moving Image Materials 1960s-2000s

Audio and Moving Image Materials 1960s-2000s

Inquiries regarding audio and moving image materials in the collection may be directed to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division (dance@nypl.org). Audio and moving image materials will be subject to preservation assessment and migration prior to access.

Audio and Moving Image Materials (cont.)

Video 1960s-2000s

The videos recordings mostly documents the productions of Solomons Company/Dance and Paradigm; and workshops taught by Solomons.

Sound Recordings

The sound recordings hold mostly musical selections that was used for the company's performance and practice sessions.have music were used by Solomons used for performance and practice sessions;