



## The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

### **Ted Shawn papers, Additions**

1833-1980 [bulk 1920-1970]

(S) \*MGZMD 419

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2015.

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Shawn, Ted, 1891-1972

**Title:** Ted Shawn papers, Additions

**Date:** 1833-1980 [bulk 1920-1970]

**Size:** 36.93 linear feet (56 boxes, 17 volumes, 8 oversized folders)

**Source:** Gift of the Estate of John Christian, 1992.

**Abstract:** Ted Shawn (1891-1972) was an American dancer, choreographer, educator, and founder of Jacob's Pillow, an internationally renowned dance education center and performance space. With Ruth St. Denis, he created the Denishawn School of Dance, the first dance school to produce a professional company in the United States. The Ted Shawn papers, Additions date from 1833 to 1980 (bulk 1920-1970) and document Shawn's career through correspondence, writings, business records, musical scores, photographs, scrapbooks, programs, and other printed material. The collection also holds a small amount of St. Denis's business records, concerning her activities between 1930 and 1932.

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2015.

#### **Separated Materials:**

Ted Shawn papers, 1913-1982 (bulk 1940-1972). Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

### **Creator History**

Ted Shawn (1891-1972) was an American dancer, choreographer, educator, and founder of Jacob's Pillow, an internationally renowned dance education center and performance space. Together with his

wife, dancer and choreographer Ruth St. Denis, he created the Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts, the first American dance school to produce a professional dance company.

Shawn's interest in dance began in college during his ministry studies in Denver, Colorado; when an attack of diphtheria left him temporarily paralyzed, and dancing became a regular part of his physical therapy. The hard labor of this reconstructive process would later embody the masculinity of his dance style and life's work. Upon his full recovery, Shawn began dancing full time, and within a year made his stage debut in *Female of the Species* (1911), his own two-act play with incidental solo dances. In 1912, Shawn moved to Los Angeles, California and quickly established a small dance company. Comprised of only three people, the company gave local performances and, in 1913, toured the country, ending in New York City.

It was in New York that he met dancer and choreographer Ruth St. Denis. The couple began dancing together and were married in 1914. The following year, they created the Denishawn School of Dance and Related Arts. St. Denis's experience with eastern philosophies, religion, and eurhythmics, coupled with Shawn's highly structured methods of kinetic movement, embodied the Denishawn style and laid the groundwork for the modern dance movement in the United States. Many of the company's dances drew on St. Denis's knowledge of Hindu mythology and other eastern folk tales, as well as unique musical visualizations. Modern dance pioneers Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Eleanor King, Lillian Powell, and Marion Rice were among those that studied and danced at the Denishawn School.

Denishawn dissolved after the separation of Shawn and St. Denis in 1929. During this time, Shawn danced and taught internationally, making appearances in Germany, France, Spain, and England. In 1932, Shawn established Ted Shawn and His Dancers (later renamed Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers), a company comprised entirely of male dancers. They rehearsed, choreographed, and trained at Shawn's farm in Becket, Massachusetts, what would later become Jacob's Pillow. The company toured and performed throughout the United States from 1933 to 1940, when the company dissolved because many of its members joined the Armed Forces. At the suggestion of friends and colleagues, Shawn opened rehearsals at the farm to the public for a small fee. Through this and additional funding, the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival was created. Each year, the Festival continues to highlight dancers and dance companies from the United States and internationally.

Shawn taught and lectured extensively throughout his career. He also authored nine books, including *The American Ballet* (1926), *Fundamentals of a Dance Education* (1935), *How Beautiful Upon the Mountain: A History of Jacob's Pillow* (1944), *Thirty-Three Years of American Dance* (1959), and an autobiography: *One Thousand and One Night Stands* (1960 with Gray Poole).

Shawn retired to Florida in the late 1960s, but continued to teach classes at Jacob's Pillow until the age of 80. He died in 1972.

## Scope and Content Note

The Ted Shawn papers, Additions date from 1833 to 1980 (bulk 1920-1970) and document Shawn's career as a dancer, choreographer, and educator, from his establishment of the Denishawn School with Ruth St. Denis through his final years at Jacob's Pillow. The collection contains correspondence, writings, business records, photographs, scrapbooks, musical scores, posters, programs, and other printed material. A small amount of Jacob's Pillow material documents the organization's activities after Shawn's death in 1972. The business records of Ruth St. Denis document her activities immediately following the disbandment of the Denishawn Dancers.

Correspondence dates from 1929 to 1979 and consists of incoming and outgoing letters, which document the nature of Shawn's relationships with his students, colleagues, and friends. The letters provide a general survey of Shawn's professional and personal endeavors, with no particular correspondent dominating the communications, though his activities associated with Jacob's Pillow and his solo performances between 1940 and 1970 are the best-represented. Also included are copies of Shawn's annual newsletter that he sent to friends and colleagues, dating from 1945 to 1971. The correspondence is arranged chronologically with the exception of letters between Shawn and American artist and impresario Katherine Dreier, which comprise a separate chronological run.

Correspondence between Katherine Dreier and Shawn reveal their close personal and professional relationship. Letters discuss Shawn's activities from the time he separated from Ruth St. Denis in 1929, until 1933, after the advent of Jacob's Pillow. Correspondence discusses the planning and arrangement of Shawn's debut in Berlin; the introduction to his European representative, Frederic Beckman; as well as Dreier's book, *Shawn the Dancer*, which was published in 1933. Dreier's efforts to promote Shawn's work in Germany is evident in letters to her from German artists-such as Paul Klee, Hans Richter, Wassily Kandinsky, and Heinrich Campendonk-regarding their availability for Shawn's performances. Shawn's detailed accounts provide insight into his performances, tours, and financial difficulties during this time. The letters are sometimes accompanied by newspaper clippings and reviews of Shawn's performances in Germany. A small amount of material pertaining to Dreier's book is also held here, including photograph lists, text drafts in English and German, and chronologies and biographical sketches of Shawn. Other correspondence relating to Shawn's 1930 German tour is located in the chronological correspondence for 1929-1930. These letters are primarily between Shawn and Frederic Beckman.

Shawn's ideas on dance education and choreography are most evident in the writings. Choreographic writings are sparse, though a small amount of notes, lyrics, and movement sequences are present, including those for *King Lear*, *The Bajour*, *The Song of Songs*, *Dance Arabe*, and *Mountain Whippoorwill*. Essay titles include "Terminology of the Dance," "Pre-dance Training," "Fundamentals of a Dance Education," "Kinetic Approaches to Dance," and "Foundation for American Dance." Denishawn writings by Shawn with Ruth St. Denis include "The Denishawn Movement for the Furtherance of Creative Dance in America" and "The Theatre of the Dance: A Proposal by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn to Build a Theatre of Dance in New York City." A small amount of essays by Ruth St. Denis without Shawn include "Raising Hope," "Dancing in Church," and "The Dance and Civilization." The writings also hold Shawn's published articles for the *Boston Herald* and pedagogy lectures that he wrote at Jacob's Pillow for a 1951 Springfield College course.

Business records are comprised of files for Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, and Jacob's Pillow. The St. Denis files primarily document the business and performance engagements of St. Denis between 1930 and 1933, including the reorganization of the Denishawn School, the formation of the Ruth St. Denis Concert Group, and dance tours along the east coast. Materials are predominately handwritten expense reports, budgets, and programs. Jacob's Pillow files date from 1940 to 1980. Materials include board of directors meeting minutes; correspondence and printed material relating to advertising, sales, and finances; and project documentation created for grant funding. Programs and press releases for Jacob's Pillow and Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers are interspersed throughout the files. Business records for Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers are limited to miscellaneous tour schedules, notes, a small amount of correspondence, and advertising and printing requisitions.

Scores consist of published, printed, and manuscript scores of songs used by Shawn throughout his career for a variety of dances and class exercises. Scores for Denishawn; Jacob's Pillow; Ted Shawn

and His Men Dancers; and Shawn's solo work are included, with the Denishawn scores comprising the bulk. These and some scores for Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers are heavily annotated and sometimes contain manuscript drafts of songs written by Jess Meeker, Vassily Zavadsky, Eastwood Lane, Paul Seelig, and Wolfgang Erben. Some of the Denishawn scores contain a photograph of a dancer and choreographic notes.

Photographs, many of which are housed in albums, provide rich documentation of Denishawn, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, and Jacob's Pillow. Denishawn photographs include performance stills, snapshots of rehearsals and classes, portraits of dancers, and photographs from the company's 1925-1926 tour of Asia. Images of Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers comprise a significant amount of the photographs. They consist of production stills, portraits, headshots, and casual snapshots of Shawn with the original company: Barton Mumaw, Frank Overlees, Wilbur McCormack, Dennis Landers, Fred Hearn, Foster Fitz-Simons, John Delmar, and Frank Delmar. There are several photographs documenting the performance of Shawn's *O Libertad!* and *Kinetic Molpai*. Snapshots show Shawn and his company painting and working around the house at Jacob's Pillow; building the theater and surrounding structures; tending to the farm land; and engaging in other day-to-day tasks. Additional photographs of Jacob's Pillow include production stills from various Jacob's Pillow Dance Festivals, primarily from the 1972 season. Portraits and performance stills of Shawn span the entirety of his career. The collection also holds portraits and performance stills of several other dancers, such as Ruth St. Denis, Hans Weidt, Ernestine Day, members of the Ballet Guild in Melbourne, Australia (1947), and Barton Mumaw.

Programs and printed materials span the length of Shawn's career and document his work with Denishawn, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, Jacob's Pillow, and to some degree, his solo dance performances. Clippings, programs, press releases, announcements, and invitations are present; as well as printed visual materials such as broadsides, bookplates, and printed quotations. Also held within the visual materials are ballet charts listing dance technique exercises. The collection also contains posters advertising Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers and the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

Scrapbooks contain performance announcements and reviews; programs; clippings; and photographs. They document the performance and reception of productions staged by Denishawn, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, and Jacob's Pillow. One scrapbook documents the reception of Shawn's autobiography, *One Thousand and One Night Stands* (1960).

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by format.

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

- Business records
- Photograph albums
- Photographs
- Posters
- Programs (documents)
- Scores
- Scrapbooks
- Writings (document genre)

### Occupations

- Choreographers

Male dancers

**Subjects**

Dance -- Study and teaching

Eurythmics

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

Modern dance -- United States

**Titles**

Kinetic molpai (Choreographic work : Shawn)

O, libertad! (Choreographic work : Shawn)

**Names**

Dreier, Katherine Sophie, 1877-1952

Pilates, Joseph H. (Joseph Hubertus)

St. Denis, Ruth, 1880-1968

Denishawn Dancers

Jacob's Pillow

Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers

## Container List

### Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1-7 1929-1943
- b. 2 f. 1-6 1943-1944
- b. 3 f. 1-7 1944-1946
- b. 4 f. 1-7 1946-1949
- b. 5 f. 1-7 1949-1957
- b. 6 f. 1-6 1957-1958
- b. 7 f. 1-8 1958-1960
- b. 8 f. 1-6 1960
- b. 9 f. 1-11 1960-1979
- b. 10 f. 1-3 Annual Newsletters 1945-1971
- Dreier, Katherine
- b. 10 f. 4-7 1929-1930
- b. 11 f. 1-7 1930-1932
- b. 12 f. 1-3 1932-1933, 1935

### Writings

- b. 12 f. 4-7 Denishawn 1882-1930  
Includes Denishawn choreographic notes and essays by Ruth St. Denis.
- b. 13 f. 1-2 Denishawn 1920s  
Consists of essays written by Shawn and St. Denis during the Denishawn era, as well as proposals and a manifesto for the Denishawn School of Dance.

### Shawn, Ted

- b. 14 f. 1 *Thirty-Three Years of American Dance* 1959
- b. 14 f. 2 *Boston Herald Articles* 1936
- b. 14 f. 3-6 Choreographic Notes 1930s-1961
- b. 14 f. 7-9 Essays circa 1919-1930
- b. 14 f. 10 *Fundamentals of a Dance Education* 1937  
Final draft.
- b. 14 f. 11 *How Beautiful Upon the Mountain* 1947  
Additional chapter for the third edition (published).
- b. 15 f. 1-3 Lectures and Notes 1939-1960s
- b. 15 f. 4 Writings about Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis 1930s-1962

### Business Records

#### St. Denis, Ruth

- b. 13 f. 3-4 Denishawn Attendance Books 1917, 1919
- b. 15 f. 6 Advertising 1931
- b. 15 f. 7 Behymer, Lynden Ellsworth 1931
- b. 15 f. 8 Boston 1931
- b. 15 f. 9 Cambodian Ballet 1931
- b. 15 f. 10 Catalogue 1931-1932
- b. 15 f. 11 Chicago Civic Theatre 1931

Business Records (cont.)  
 St. Denis, Ruth (cont.)

- b. 15 f. 12 Correspondence and Receipts 1903-1921
- b. 15 f. 13 Creative Night 1931
- b. 15 f. 14 Dancers' Club 1931-1932
- b. 15 f. 15 Date Diary 1932
- b. 16 f. 1-6 Denishawn 1923-1931
  - b. 16 f. 7 Falmouth and Hampton 1932
  - b. 16 f. 8 General Productions 1931
  - b. 16 f. 9 Herter, Albert 1931-1932
- b. 16 f. 10 Italy circa 1931
- b. 16 f. 11 Lights 1930
- b. 16 f. 12 Los Angeles Dates 1932
- b. 16 f. 13 Lowrey, Edward 1931-1933
- b. 16 f. 14 Mary/Madonna circa 1931
- b. 16 f. 15 Montclair, New Jersey 1932-1933
- b. 16 f. 16 Music Expenses 1931-1932
- b. 16 f. 17 Namora, Litia 1932
- b. 16 f. 18 Paramount 1932
- b. 16 f. 19 Peterboro, New Hampshire 1932
- b. 16 f. 20 Pratt, Alicia/Chicago 1931
  - b. 17 f. 1 Productions 1932
  - b. 17 f. 2 The Ruth St. Denis Concert Dancers 1931-1933
  - b. 17 f. 3 Saminsky Production 1931
  - b. 17 f. 4 *Tagore Poem/Broadway Theatre* 1930
  - b. 17 f. 5 Teachers' Expenses 1932
  - b. 17 f. 6 Telegrams 1929-1932
  - b. 17 f. 7 Waldorf Astoria 1931
  - b. 17 f. 8 Ward Belmont School 1931
- b. 17 f. 9-10 Westchester County Dance Festival 1931, 1933
- b. 17 f. 11 Wheeler, Pearl 1931
- b. 17 f. 12 Miscellaneous 1931
- b. 17 f. 13-14 Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers 1932-1940
  - Jacob's Pillow
- b. 17 f. 15-16 1940-1967
  - Unsorted business records.
- b. 18 f. 1 1943-1967
  - Unsorted business records.
- b. 18 f. 4-6 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 1965-1980
  - b. 18 f. 7 Box Office 1970
  - b. 18 f. 8 Faculty and Courses 1942-1967
  - b. 18 f. 9 Financial Records 1955-1958
- b. 19 f. 1-7 Financial Records 1959-1970
  - b. 19 f. 8 Gray, John 1971

Business Records (cont.)

Jacob's Pillow (cont.)

- b. 19 f. 9 *La Meri- Spanish Book* 1967
- b. 20 f. 1 Lynn, Carol- Film Catalogue 1963-1964
- b. 20 f. 2 Premieres Lists 1967-1970
- b. 20 f. 3 Publicity 1970
- b. 20 f. 4 Vestris Prize 1968

Scores

Denishawn

- b. 21 f. 1-8 1917-1920
- b. 22 f. 2-7 1920, 1923  
Includes *Dagger Dance*, *Dance Chinoise*, *Egyptian Ballet*, and others.
- b. 20 f. 5-6 1921
- b. 23 f. 1-5 1921
- b. 24 f. 1-5 1922-1927
- b. 25 f. 1-6 1924-1925, 1940s  
The score from the 1940s was filed with the Denishawn scores. It is one manuscript score for *Osage Pawnee* and belonged to Barton Mumaw as a sergeant during the war.
- b. 26 f. 1-5 1927  
Includes scores for *A Gringo Tango* and *Boston Fancy*.
- b. 27 f. 1-5 1928, circa 1920s  
Includes *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Around the Hall* (Eastwood Lane).
- b. 34 f. 1-4 1929  
Includes scores for *Ramadan* and *Poème Tragique*.
- b. 28 f. 1-8 1920s  
Includes scores for *Cosmic Dance of Siva* and *Danse Americaine*.
- b. 29 f. 1-7 1920s  
Includes scores for *Bacchanale*, *The Caravan* and *Dance Algiers*.
- b. 30 f. 1-7 1920s  
Includes scores for *Cambodian Dance*, *Egyptian Palace Dance*, *Rain Ceremony*, and *Bavarian Trio*. Many scores here are original manuscripts.
- b. 31 f. 1-5 1920s  
Includes scores for *Sand Shuffle*, *Tibetan Devil Dance*, and *Tibetan Folk Dance*.

Jacob's Pillow

- b. 31 f. 6 1934-1949
- b. 32 f. 1-6 1930s-1940s  
Includes some scores potentially used for Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers.
- b. 33 f. 1-4 Shawn Solo Music 1920s-1960s  
These scores were originally housed and labeled separately from the Denishawn scores, though some music herein was likely used during the Denishawn era. Included are scores for *Thunderbird*, *Hound of Heaven*, and *Farruca Triana*, among others.
- b. 34 f. 5-6 Shawn Solo Music 1935  
*Hound of Heaven*

Published, Annotated

- b. 20 f. 7-9 1920s-1940s
- b. 35 f. 1-4 1920s-1940s
- b. 36 f. 1-5 1920s-1940s
- b. 37 f. 1-5 1920s-1940s



Scores (cont.)  
Published, Annotated (cont.)

- b. 40 f. 1-7 1920s-1940s
- b. 41 f. 1-4 1920s-1940s
- b. 38 f. 1-4 1928-1950
  - b. 39 f. 1 1930s
- b. 39 f. 2-3 Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers 1929-1933
- Photographs
  - b. 41 f. 5 1930s-1960s
    - v. 1 1923-1971
  - b. 41 f. 6-7 Australia/Ballet Guild 1947
  - b. 45 f. 1 Australia/Ballet Guild 1947
  - b. 41 f. 8-9 Christian, John 1940s-1970
  - b. 42 f. 1 Day, Ernestine 1920s
  - Denishawn
    - v. 2 1915-1916
    - b. 42 f. 2 1915-1921
      - v. 3 1915-1925
  - Photograph album containing images of the Denishawn House, snapshots of the Denishawn Dancers, and a small amount of photographs from Denishawn's East Asian tour in 1925.
  - b. 42 f. 3 1916-1925
  - b. 44 f. 1 1925
  - b. 45 f. 2 1925-1926
    - v. 4 1925-1926
  - Photograph album documenting the Denishawn Dancers' 1925-1926 East Asian tour.
  - v. 5 1925-1931
    - This album also documents Denishawn's East Asian tour; some images may depict Shawn building Jacob's Pillow.
  - v. 6 Germany and Spain Travel Photographs 1929-1930
  - b. 42 f. 4 Home in Florida 1968-1970
  - b. 45 f. 3 The Icehouse Players 1959
  - Jacob's Pillow
    - b. 42 f. 5-9 1930s-1972
    - b. 49 f. 4 1950s
    - b. 43 f. 1-3 1972
      - b. 43 f. 4 Mumaw, Barton 1930s
    - b. 45 f. 4-5 Other Dancers and Individuals 1916-1961
    - b. 43 f. 4-9 Other Dancers and Individuals 1917-1970
    - b. 55 f. 1-2 Pilates, Joseph 1934
    - b. 46 f. 1-7 Shawn, Ted 1914-1969
    - Portraits, Germany tour, and group photographs.
    - b. 47 f. 1-4 Shawn, Ted 1939-1970
    - Snapshots of Shawn alone and with John Christian; pilates photographs.
    - Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers
      - b. 49 f. 1-3 1930s
      - Photograph album.

Photographs (cont.)

Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers (cont.)

- v. 7 1930s  
Portraits, snapshots, and performance stills of Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers.
- v. 8 1930s  
Portraits, snapshots, and performance stills of Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers.
- b. 55 f. 3-6 1930s, 1938  
Includes photographs of *O, Libertad!*
- v. 9 Circa 1938-1940  
Snapshots of Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers at Jacob's Pillow, individual performance stills of Shawn, and a small amount of photographs of Barton Mumaw preparing to go to war.
- b. 47 f. 5-8 1930s-1940s
  - b. 47 f. 9 Weidt, Hans 1931-1932
  - b. 47 f. 10 Miscellaneous Photographs 1900-1912
  - b. 55 f. 7 Miscellaneous Photographs 1931, 1950
- b. 48 f. 1-4 Miscellaneous Photographs, Slides, and Negatives 1920s-1972

Programs and Printed Material

- b. 48 f. 5 1903-1929
- b. 55 f. 8-9 1910, 1925  
*Mirror of Noh*, volume 1 and *Ignacio Zuloaga: 12 Kunstdrucke aus der Jugend*.
- v. 10 1928-1934
- v. 11 1934-1935
- b. 45 f. 6 Clippings
  - b. 54 f. 1 1917-1945
  - b. 45 f. 6 1920-1930
  - b. 48 f. 6-8 1920-1940
  - b. 22 f. 1 1925-1947
  - b. 50 f. 1-2 1939-1970
- b. 50 f. 3-5 Denishawn 1924-1931

Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers

- b. 22 f. 8 1930s
- b. 50 f. 6-9 1931-1940
- b. 51 f. 1-4 1933-1940

Jacob's Pillow

- b. 51 f. 5-9 1933-1948
- b. 52 f. 1-9 1949-1965
- b. 53 f. 1-5 1966-1978

- b. 53 f. 6-7 Ted Shawn Solo Work and Recognition 1929-1960s

Visual Materials

- b. 56 f. 1-2 1833-1945
  - b. 45 f. 7 1917-1939
- b. 55 f. 10 1920s-1931
  - o. 1 Ballet Charts 1920s  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.

Programs and Printed Material (cont.)

Visual Materials (cont.)

- o. 2     **Ballet Charts** 1920s  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.
- o. 3     **Ballet Charts** 1920s  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.
- o. 7     **Drawing** circa 1930s  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.
- v. 17    **Printing Block** circa 1940s

Scrapbooks

- v. 12    **Denishawn** 1915-1917
- b. 56 f. 3   **Denishawn** 1920s  
Loose pages removed from scrapbook, volume 12.
- v. 13    **Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers** 1935
- v. 14    **Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers** 1939
- v. 15    **Jacob's Pillow** 1941-1942
- v. 16    *One Thousand and One Night Stands* 1960-1961

Posters

- b. 44 f. 2-8   **1930s-1957**
  - o. 8     **1931**  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.
  - o. 4     **Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers** 1940  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.

Jacob's Pillow

- o. 5     **1952**  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.
- o. 6     **1952**  
Dance cage - flat file # 264.
- b. 54 f. 2-5   **1959-1970**