



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Nancy Sifton collection on Rudolf Nureyev

1960-2013 [bulk 1963-1993]

(S) *MGZMD 463

Compiled by Heather Lember, 2016.

Summary

Creator: Sifton, Nancy

Title: Nancy Sifton collection on Rudolf Nureyev

Date: 1960-2013 [bulk 1963-1993]

Size: 20.36 linear feet (43 boxes, 2 oversized folders, 9 tubes)

Source: Donated by Nancy Sifton, 2013.

Abstract: Rudolf Nureyev (1938-1993) was a Soviet born ballet dancer and choreographer who attained political asylum in France, and spent much of his career performing in Western Europe and the United States. The Nancy Sifton collection on Rudolf Nureyev chronicles the dance career and posthumous acclaim of Nureyev through photographs, clippings, posters, and programs compiled by author, researcher, and dance enthusiast, Nancy Sifton.

Preferred citation: Nancy Sifton collection on Rudolf Nureyev, (S) *MGZMD 463. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled by Heather Lember, 2016.

Creator History

Rudolf Khametovich Nureyev (1938-1993) was a ballet dancer and choreographer who was born and raised in the Soviet Union. He began studying ballet at the Leningrad Choreographic School in 1955 under the instructor Alexander Pushkin. Upon his graduation in 1958, Nureyev began dancing with the Kirov Ballet. In 1961, the company's lead male dancer, Konstantin Sergeyev, sustained an injury and Nureyev was chosen to replace him on their European tour. While in Paris, having already attracted negative attention from the KGB for his social interactions with Western Europeans, Nureyev was ordered to return to the Soviet Union in lieu of traveling with the Kirov Ballet to England. Instead, Nureyev sought political asylum in France, defecting with the assistance of French authorities and friends.

Due to his acclaim with the Kirov Ballet, Nureyev was swiftly hired by the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, where he began dancing in performances of *The Sleeping Beauty*. While on tour in Denmark, Nureyev met the Royal Danish Ballet's soloist, Erik Bruhn. The two became a couple, maintaining a romantic relationship and close friendship until Bruhn's death in 1986.

Later in 1961, Nureyev was invited to London by Margot Fonteyn, where he made his inaugural performance in the United Kingdom at the London Royal Academy of Dancing Gala. This performance led to the Royal Ballet offering Nureyev a contract as principal dancer. His debut with the company was in a production of *Giselle* in which he danced opposite Fonteyn. Nureyev performed with Fonteyn in many subsequent performances including *Swan Lake*, *La Bayadere*, *Les Sylphides*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. He remained principal dancer with the Royal Ballet until 1970, when he was promoted to principal guest artist, and spent the following decade traveling for international tours and performances.

In 1964, Nureyev choreographed a production of *Raymonda* for the Royal Ballet, and *Swan Lake* for the Vienna State Opera. He went on to choreograph and direct numerous productions, including *Don Quixote*, *The Nutcracker*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Sleeping Beauty*.

In 1973, Nureyev appeared in the documentary film *I am a Dancer*, which was directed by Pierre Jourdan, and featured Margot Fonteyn, Carla Fracci, and Lynn Seymour. Nureyev also appeared in a film version of *Romeo and Juliette* (1966) and a film adaptation of *Don Quixote* (1973), as well as the Ken Russell directed film, *Valentino* (1977), and the 1983 drama, *Exposed*. Nureyev performed in several Nureyev and Friends programs on Broadway beginning in 1974 until 1984.

Nureyev was appointed director at the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1983, where he continued to dance, as well as direct and choreograph performances. One year after his appointment, Nureyev tested positive for HIV, and his health began to decline throughout the decade. He directed his final performance, *La Bayadère*, in 1992 at the Paris Opéra. Nureyev died of AIDS-related complications in Paris on January 6, 1993.

Nancy Sifton is a dance enthusiast and collector of Nureyev photographs and memorabilia, having first seen him perform in a 1965 production of *Swan Lake*. Sifton is a regular contributor to the *Ballet Hotline* website, and has published articles on Nureyev in *Dance & Dancers*, *Dance Pages*, *Ballet Review*, and *Dance Now*. She has also transcribed audio recordings for the New York Public Library's Dance Oral History Project, and interviews for Diane Solway's biography, *Nureyev His Life* (1998). Sifton co-authored a finding aid for Robert Gable's collection of Nureyev photographic scrapbooks, and is writing her own book about Nureyev in which she has consulted her collection for research.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from 1960 to 2013 (bulk dates 1963-1993) and contains materials compiled by Nancy Sifton that chronicle the dance career of Rudolf Nureyev. Included are photographs, files of clippings, programs, and posters, as well as papers detailing a campaign by fans to assist Nureyev in obtaining a visa to visit his mother in Russia, reports from two Nureyev Symposiums, and a dance scrapbook.

The photographs held in this collection are arranged alphabetically by performance name. They primarily depict live performances, but there are also images of rehearsals, and some publicity stills. Nearly every image contains a handwritten caption on the back of the photograph indicating the production name, dancers depicted, the dance company, the date and location of the performance, and the photographer. In many cases photographs from a single production span multiple years and portray

the performance in various locations. Nureyev appears in nearly every photograph either alone or with other performers. Some of the dancers frequently depicted include Margot Fonteyn, Merle Park, Karen Kain, Eva Evdokimova, and Yoko Morishita.

The clippings files are arranged in chronological order, and include reviews, interviews, commentaries, profiles, performance announcements, and remembrances dating from 1960 to 2003. The clippings were compiled from the United States, as well as publications in England, France, Austria, Canada, Scotland, Italy, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Spain, the Netherlands, Greece, and Russia. Some of the clippings have been annotated or translated into English, and most folders are labeled with the name, date, and location of the performance addressed or reviewed.

The programs are arranged chronologically and were collected by Sifton from performances in such cities as, New York, Los Angeles, Boston; London, England; Paris, France; Vienna, Austria; Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Rome, Italy; Athens, Greece; and Toronto, Canada. A number of the programs have also been autographed by Nureyev and dancers with whom he performed.

Sifton helped organize two symposiums about Nureyev between 1997 and 1998 which paid tribute to his career and legacy. The Symposiums files contain her reports, notes, and organizational materials for the events, *The Dancer's Legacy: A Tribute to Rudolf Nureyev*, which was held in New York City, and *Rudolf Nureyev: Man and Legend*, which was held in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The scrapbook was created for Sifton by Robert Gable in 2006. It is divided into two sections entitled, "Men Who Dance" and "Women Who Dance." Although there is a photograph of Nureyev included, the scrapbook's focus is not on any particular dancer. There is very little textual information provided, with the exception of a single typed table of contents that names each dancer depicted in the scrapbook.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by format. Photographs and posters are arranged alphabetically. Clippings and programs are arranged chronologically.

Key Terms

Geographic Names

Amsterdam (Netherlands)
Athens (Greece)
Denmark
London (England)
New York (N.Y.)
Paris (France)
Vienna (Austria)

Subjects

Ballet
Ballet companies -- Photographs
Ballet dancers

Occupations

Choreographers
Dancers

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)

Photographs
Posters
Programs
Scrapbooks

Names

Bruhn, Erik, 1928-1986
Fonteyn, Margot, 1919-1991
Gable, Robert Burns
Nureyev, Rudolf, 1938-1993
Park, Merle
Sifton, Nancy
Ope_ra de Paris. Ballet
Royal Ballet
Wiener Staatsoper

Container List

Photographs

- b. 41 f. 1-3 1963-1991
- b. 43 f. 3-4 1978-1988
- b. 8 f. 12-13 1993-1995
 - b. 1 f. 1 *About a Dark House* 1977-1978
 - b. 1 f. 2 *Adagio Hammerklavier* 1977
 - b. 1 f. 3 *Afternoon of a Faun* 1977
 - b. 1 f. 4 *Agon* 1973-1975
 - b. 1 f. 5 *Amazon Forest* 1975
 - b. 1 f. 6 *Appalachian Spring* 1975-1987
 - b. 1 f. 7 *Apollo* 1969-1984
 - b. 1 f. 8 *L'Après Midi d'un Faune* 1979-1982
 - b. 1 f. 9 *Aureole* 1973-1976
 - b. 1 f. 10 *Bach Suite* 1984
 - b. 1 f. 11 *La Bayadère* 1963-1976
 - b. 1 f. 12 *Birthday Offering* 1968
 - b. 1 f. 13 *Book of Beasts* 1973
 - b. 1 f. 14 *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* 1971-1984
 - b. 2 f. 1 *Canarsie Venus* 1977-1979
 - b. 2 f. 2 *Cinderella* 1987
 - b. 2 f. 3 *Clytemnestra* 1980
 - b. 2 f. 4 *Conservatoire* 1978-1982
 - b. 2 f. 5 *Coppelia* 1975-1979
 - b. 2 f. 6 *Le Corsaire* 1962-1978
 - b. 2 f. 7 *Dances at a Gathering* 1970-1973
 - b. 2 f. 8 *Don Juan* 1974-1975
 - b. 2 f. 9-10 *Don Quixote* 1970-1983
 - b. 2 f. 11 *The Dream* 1975-1976
 - b. 2 f. 12 *El Penitente* 1977
 - b. 2 f. 13 *Equitorial* 1980
 - b. 2 f. 14 *L'Estasi* 1968
 - b. 43 f. 1 *Exposed* 1983
 - b. 2 f. 15 *Faun* 1978
 - b. 2 f. 16 *Field Figures* 1971-1972
 - b. 3 f. 1 *La Fille Mal Gardée* 1974-1976
 - b. 3 f. 2 *Flower Festival* 1974-1984
 - b. 3 f. 3 *Four Schumann Press* 1976-1978
 - b. 3 f. 4 *Five Tangos* 1980
 - b. 3 f. 5 *Gayane* 1963

Photographs (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 6-8 *Giselle* 1962-1986
- b. 3 f. 9-10 *Hamlet* 1963-1977
- b. 3 f. 11 *Harlequin* 1984
- b. 43 f. 2 *I am a Dancer* 1973
- b. 3 f. 12 *The Idiot* 1980
- b. 3 f. 13 *Jazz Calendar* 1968
- b. 3 f. 14 *Le Jeune Homme et la Morte* 1973
- b. 4 f. 1 *Laborintus* 1972
- b. 4 f. 2 *Laurencia* 1960
- b. 4 f. 3 *Les Sylphides* 1962-1977
- b. 4 f. 4-5 *The Lesson* 1976-1977
- b. 4 f. 6 *Lucifer* 1975
- b. 4 f. 7 *Lully* 1986
- b. 4 f. 8 *Manfred* 1969-1983
- b. 4 f. 9 *Manon* 1974-1976
- b. 4 f. 10 *Marco Spada* 1981
- b. 4 f. 11 *Marguerite and Armand* 1963-1977
- b. 4 f. 12 *Miss Julie* 1974-1983
- b. 4 f. 13 *Moments* 1975-1976
- b. 5 f. 1 *Moor's Pavane* 1972-1987
- b. 5 f. 2 *Night Journey* 1975
- b. 5 f. 3 *Notre Dame de Paris* 1983
- b. 5 f. 4-5 *The Nutcracker* 1968-1988
- b. 5 f. 6 *Orpheus* 1988
- b. 5 f. 7 *Paradise Lost* 1967-1968
- b. 5 f. 8 *Pelléas et Mélisande* 1969
- b. 5 f. 9 *Petrouchka* 1972-1979
- b. 5 f. 10 *Phaedra's Dream* 1984-1985
- b. 5 f. 11 *Pierrot Lunaire* 1977
- b. 5 f. 12 *Poeme Tragique* 1961
- b. 5 f. 13 *Prince Igor* 1965
- b. 5 f. 14 *Prodigal Son* 1972-1982
- b. 6 f. 1 *Raymonda* 1965-1986
- b. 6 f. 2 *Les Rendezvous* 1969
- b. 6 f. 3-6 *Romeo and Juliet* 1965-1981
- b. 6 f. 7 *Ropes of Times* 1970
- b. 6 f. 8 *Rubies* 1980-1981
- b. 6 f. 9 *Scarlet Letter* 1975
- b. 6 f. 10 *Scheherazade* 1978-1978
- b. 6 f. 11 *Side Show* 1972-1973
- b. 7 f. 1-3 *Sleeping Beauty* 1966-1984

Photographs (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 4 *Sonate à Trois* 1975
- b. 7 f. 5 *Song of the Earth* 1975-1976
- b. 7 f. 6 *Songs of a Wayfarer* 1971-1988
- b. 7 f. 7 *Spectre de la Rose* 1978-1981
- Swan Lake*
- b. 7 f. 8-10 1960-1985
- b. 8 f. 1-2 1969-1988
- b. 8 f. 3 *La Sylphide* 1964-1984
- b. 8 f. 4 *The Tempest* 1982-1984
- b. 8 f. 5 *Toreador* 1977
- b. 8 f. 6 *Tristan* 1974-1975
- b. 8 f. 7 *Two Brothers* 1987
- b. 8 f. 8 *Ulysses* 1977-1979
- b. 8 f. 9 *La Ventana* 1975
- b. 8 f. 10 *Vivace* 1978-1979
- b. 8 f. 11 *Washington Square*

Clippings

- b. 8 f. 12-20 1959-1962
- b. 9 f. 1-19 1962 November-1966 May
- b. 10 f. 1-19 1966 September-1971 March
- b. 11 f. 1-20 1971 May-1973 November
- b. 12 f. 1-16 1974 January-1975 January
- b. 13 f. 1-16 1975 February-1975 December
- b. 14 f. 1-15 1975 December-1977 May
- b. 15 f. 1-13 1977 June-1978 May
- b. 16 f. 1-19 1978 June-1979 December
- b. 17 f. 1-17 1980 January-1981 August
- b. 18 f. 1-21 1981 August-1982 December
- b. 19 f. 1-17 1983 January-1984 March
- b. 20 f. 1-17 1984 March-1985 August
- b. 21 f. 1-23 1984 August-1987 June
- b. 22 f. 1-21 1987 June-1990 February
- b. 23 f. 1-20 1989 November-1993 December
- b. 24 f. 1-10 1992 October-1993 February
- b. 25 f. 1-17 1993 March-1995 January
- b. 26 f. 1-21 1995 March-1997 February
- b. 27 f. 1-21 1997-1999
- b. 28 f. 1-21 1999-2003
- b. 29 f. 1-16 2003-2011
- b. 30 f. 1-2 2012-2013

Programs

Programs (cont.)

- b. 30 f. 3-16 1965-1974
- b. 43 f. 5-14 1973-1999
- b. 31 f. 1-10 1974-1976
- b. 32 f. 1-17 1976-1978
- b. 33 f. 1-15 1978-1979
- b. 34 f. 1-17 1979-1982
- b. 41 f. 7-8 1980-1993
- b. 35 f. 1-15 1982-1984
- b. 36 f. 1-15 1984-1988
- b. 37 f. 1-16 1989-1999
- b. 38 f. 1-6 1998-2006

Posters

- b. 42 f. 7-12 1975-2003
 - t. 1 1981
 - t. 2 1988
 - t. 3 1995
 - t. 4 *The Birthday Offering* 1971
Don Quixote 1983
 - t. 5 1974
 - t. 6 1974-1983
- b. 42 f. 1 1983
 - t. 7 *I am a Dancer* 1972
- b. 42 f. 2 *The King and I* 1989
 - t. 8 *Lucifer* 1975

Nureyev Festival

- b. 41 f. 4-5 1976-1980
 - o. 1 1976
 - o. 2 1976
 - t. 9 1982-1985
- b. 42 f. 3-4 *Nureyev and Friends* 1974
- b. 42 f. 5 *The Overcoat* 1990
- b. 42 f. 6 *La Sylphide* 1981
- b. 41 f. 6 *Valentino* 1977

Petition Campaign

- b. 38 f. 7-14 1972-1978
- b. 39 f. 1-4 1977-1980
- b. 39 f. 5-10 Symposiums 1997-1998
- b. 40 f. 1-13 Scrapbook 2006