



# The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

## **W. H. Stephan photographs**

1949-1959

\*MGZEB 19-271

Processed by Tara D. Strongosky, 2019.

### **Summary**

**Title:** W. H. Stephan photographs

**Date:** 1949-1959

**Size:** 3.58 linear feet (9 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Mrs. Sally Limbach (sister of W. H. Stephan), 1959.

**Abstract:** W. H. (Wilbur Hulin) Stephan (1921-1959) was a Ohio born photographer who specialized in dance. The W. H. Stephan photographs date from 1949 to 1959 and are comprised of black and white negatives and photographic prints of numerous ballet and modern dance companies throughout New York City and the greater tri-state region. The majority of the collection documents the productions and dancers of well-known companies, chiefly American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, New York City Ballet, and Slavenska-Franklin Ballet. The photographs captured the New York modern dance scene and its well-known figures including Merce Cunningham, Myra Kinch, Pearl Lang, Sophie Maslow, and Paul Taylor.

**Preferred citation:** W. H. Stephan photographs, \*MGZEB 19-271. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Tara D. Strongosky, 2019.

### **Creator History**

W. H. (Wilbur Hulin) Stephan (1921-1959) was a photographer who specialized in dance. Stephan was born in Upper Sandusky, Ohio and began exploring photography as a teenager. While still in high school, he opened up a studio for photographic finishing and general photographic work. After serving in World War II as a Public Relations Photographer, he returned to fine arts and studied painting under Hans Hofmann while maintaining a photography practice. Throughout the early 1950s Stephan won several photograph competitions while attending the Illinois Institute of Technology where he earned a bachelor's degree in photography. Following graduation in 1951, he moved to New York City. By 1954, he was regularly exhibiting and publishing dance photographs in books and magazines including *Dance Magazine*, *Dance News*, *Dance Observer*, *The New York Times*, and *The London Dancing Times*. He

was also a monthly contributor to the *Dancing Star Magazine*. An enthusiast of motor scooters, Stephan toured Europe by motor scooter in the summer of 1957 where he photographed international ballet companies. From 1953 until his death in 1959, Stephan was employed as a photographer for Pagano, Inc., a company that provided photographs to advertising agencies.

## Scope and Content Note

The W. H. Stephan photographs date from 1949 to 1959 and are comprised of black and white negatives and photographic prints of numerous ballet and modern dance companies throughout New York City and the greater tri-state region.

The collection is arranged into two series, Negatives and Photographic Prints. The series are arranged into sections by Companies, Individuals, Productions, Publications, Promotional, and Non-dance photographs. The files are arranged alphabetically.

The majority of the collection documents the productions and dancers of well-known companies, chiefly American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, New York City Ballet, and Slavenska-Franklin Ballet. Productions include American Ballet Theatre's *Giselle* and *Pillar of Fire*; Joffrey Ballet's *Pas de Deesses*; José Limón Dance Company's *King's Heart*; and Royal Danish Ballet's *Napoli*. Stephan also paid special attention to dancers Alexandra Danilova and Sonia Arova, both of whom are well-represented within the collection.

Stephan also spent a great deal of time photographing modern dance's most prominent figures. Included in the collection are studio portraits of Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor; Myra Kinch in a production of *Giselle's Revenge*; Pearl Lang; Sophie Maslow; and a production of Doris Humphrey's *The Shakers*, inspired by the 18th century American Christian sect.

Additionally, Stephan drew attention to dance forms outside of ballet and modern dance. He photographed figures such as Indian folk dancer Bhaskar Roy Chowdhury; mime and dancer Angna Enters; traditional Indian dancer Nala Najan; and Ryliss Barnes Simpson, better known as Javanese dancer Hasoutra.

Of special note is a mock-up flyer Stephan designed to promote his 1954 exhibit of Alexandra Danilova photographs at the Kamin Dance Bookshop and Gallery (Box 9, Folder 7). The mock-up consists of a mounted black and white print of Danilova with Stephan's hand drawn type on tracing paper announcing the show and its details.

Finally, there is a small amount of non-dance, personal photographs. These include beach outings, locations around New York City, Chicago, Tarrytown, and many shots of cats.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Ballet -- 20th century

Ballet companies -- Photographs

Dance companies -- Photographs

Modern dance -- United States

**Occupations**

Dancers.

Photographers.

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Negatives (photographs)

Photographic prints

**Names**

Cunningham, Merce

Kinch, Myra

Lang, Pearl, 1921-2009

Maslow, Sophie

Stephan, W. H.

Taylor, Paul, 1930-2018

American Ballet Theatre

Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo

Chicago Opera Ballet

Juilliard Dance Ensemble

New York City Ballet

Slavenska-Franklin Ballet

## Container List

### Series I: Negatives 1949-1958 (6 boxes 2.5 linear feet)

#### Companies 1951-1957

- b. 1 f. 1 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater 1954  
Includes dancers Claude Thompson and Maggie.  
American Ballet Theatre 1954-1957
- b. 1 f. 2 *Billy the Kid* circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 3 Bruhn, Erik circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 4 Eglevsky, André 1957 January 26
- b. 1 f. 5 Essen, Viola 1954 February 27
- b. 1 f. 6 *Giselle* 1955  
Includes dancers Erik Bruhn and Alicia Alonso.
- b. 1 f. 7 Laing, Hugh circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 8 Nelson, Peter 1957 January 22
- b. 1 f. 9 Nelson, Peter and Anne Wilson 1957 January 27
- b. 1 f. 10 Papish, Arlene and Jack Kauflin 1956
- b. 1 f. 11 *Pillar of Fire* circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 12 Ruffner, Jerry 1956 December 3
- b. 1 f. 13 *The Spell* circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 14 *Swan Lake* circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 15 *Les Sylphides* circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 16 American Ballet Theatre at Brooklyn Academy of Music 1956 January 10  
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo 1953-1955
- b. 1 f. 17 Class with Michel Fokine 1953 June 1
- b. 1 f. 18 Danilova, Alexandra circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 19 Danilova, Alexandra exhibit at Kamin Gallery 1954
- b. 1 f. 20 Raher, David 1955 December
- b. 1 f. 21 Zoritch, George 1955 February 6
- b. 1 f. 22 Berlin State Ballet 1955
- b. 1 f. 23 Bill Hooks Dance Company circa 1950s
- b. 1 f. 24 Connecticut College Department of Dance 1954-1955
- b. 1 f. 25 Dance Notation Bureau 1954  
Doris Humphrey choreography 1955-1956
- b. 2 f. 1 At the Juilliard School Festival 1956 April 27
- b. 2 f. 2 *The Shakers* 1955 August 21
- b. 2 f. 3 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 1954  
Includes a production of *Celtic Ballet*.  
James Waring and Company 1954-1956
- b. 2 f. 4 *Freaks* 1954 March 30
- b. 2 f. 5-7 Unidentified productions 1954 February 28-1956 December 5  
Joffrey Ballet 1955

Series I: Negatives (cont.)

Companies (cont.)

Joffrey Ballet (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 8 Joffrey, Robert at the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) Festival  
1955 March 24
- b. 2 f. 9 *Pas des Déesses* 1955 March 24
- b. 2 f. 10 John Butler Company 1955  
At Brooklyn Academy of Music.  
José Limón Dance Company 1954-1956
- b. 2 f. 11 At Connecticut College Festival 1955 August
- b. 2 f. 12 *King's Heart* 1956 April 20
- b. 2 f. 13 Limón, José 1954-1955  
Juilliard Dance Ensemble 1955-1957
- b. 2 f. 14 *Primavera* 1955  
Choreographed by Anna Sokolow.
- b. 2 f. 15 *Three Lyric Dances* 1956 May 13  
Choreographed by Ben Harkarvy.
- b. 2 f. 16 Unidentified production 1957 January 8  
London Festival Ballet 1955
- b. 2 f. 17 Briansky, Oleg 1955 March-May
- b. 2 f. 18 Unidentified production 1955 February 19  
Martha Graham Dance Company 1955
- b. 2 f. 19 Cohan, Robert 1955 May 12-16
- b. 2 f. 20 Hickson, Mary 1955 May 18  
Merce Cunningham Dance Company 1956-1957
- b. 2 f. 21 King, Bruce 1956 August 14
- b. 2 f. 22 *Septet* 1957 January  
National Ballet of Canada 1955
- b. 2 f. 23 Hunter, Fergus 1955 October 14
- b. 2 f. 24 Unidentified productions 1955 March 25  
At Brooklyn Academy of Music.  
New York City Ballet 1954
- b. 3 f. 1 Classes circa 1950s
- b. 3 f. 2 Harper, Herbie circa 1950s
- b. 3 f. 3 Johnson, Louis 1954
- b. 3 f. 4 Tompkins, Beatrice 1954 February 28
- b. 3 f. 5 Tompkins, Beatrice and Roland Vazquez 1954 April 30
- b. 3 f. 6 Vazquez, Roland 1954
- b. 3 f. 7 North Carolina Dance Theater 1956  
Unidentified performances.
- b. 3 f. 8 Paris Opera Ballet 1956  
Includes dancer Lycette Darsonval.
- b. 3 f. 9 Paul Taylor Dance Company 1956  
Includes a production of *Little Circus*.
- b. 3 f. 10 Radio City Music Hall Corps de Ballet 1956  
Includes dancer Anthony Mordente.
- b. 3 f. 11 *Romola James' Unmatched Gloves* 1951

Series I: Negatives (cont.)  
Companies (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 12     **Royal Danish Ballet 1956**  
At Brooklyn Academy of Music.
- Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet 1953-1956**
- b. 3 f. 13     **Performance at Brooklyn Academy of Music 1956 December 15**  
Includes dancers Istvan Rabovsky, Job Sanders, Sonia Arova, and Nora Kovach.
- b. 3 f. 14     **Arova, Sonia 1955**
- b. 3 f. 15     **Arova, Sonia and Job Sanders 1956 May 28**
- b. 3 f. 16     **Sanders, Job 1953-1955**
- b. 3 f. 17     **San Francisco Ballet 1954-1955**  
Includes dancer Dick Andros.
- b. 3 f. 18     **Shirley Broughton Dance Company 1954**  
Includes a production of *Canzone*.
- Slavenska-Franklin Ballet 1953**
- b. 3 f. 19     **Frederic Franklin Teaching 1953 July 16**
- b. 3 f. 20     ***Mademoiselle Fifi Rehearsal* 1953 July 24**  
Includes dancer Alexandra Danilova.
- b. 3 f. 21     ***A Streetcar Named Desire* 1953 July 25**
- b. 3 f. 22     ***Waltz of the Flowers* 1953 July 23**
- b. 3 f. 23     **William Dollar and Company 1955**  
b. 4 f. 1     Includes unidentified performances at a Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival.

**Individuals 1950-1958**

- b. 4 f. 2     **Becker, Lee 1956 February 18**  
At Henry Street Playhouse.
- b. 4 f. 3     **Belafonte, Harry 1956 April 21**  
Belafonte performing in *Sing, Man, Sing*.
- b. 4 f. 4     **Bell, Ben circa 1950s**
- b. 4 f. 5     **Bettis, Valerie 1956 April 21**  
At Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival.
- b. 4 f. 6     **Chowdury, Bhaskar Roy 1956 October 17**
- b. 4 f. 7     **Cole, Harold 1957 March 3**
- b. 4 f. 8     **Curtis, Paul circa 1950s**
- b. 4 f. 9     **DaSilva, Hal 1952 December 2**
- b. 4 f. 10     **DiNunzio, Gildo 1956 May 19**  
DiNunzio was the Metropolitan Opera's assistant conductor.
- b. 4 f. 11     **Durante, Vito 1954 February 28**
- b. 4 f. 12     **Enters, Angna 1956 November 9**  
At Brooklyn Academy of Music.
- b. 4 f. 13     **Fitzmaurice, Joan 1953 June 3**  
Includes a performance of *Denmark Drum* at Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival.
- b. 4 f. 14     **Golub, Audrey 1950 May 5-1954 July 5**  
At Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival.
- b. 4 f. 15     **Goya, Carola and Matteo 1956 July 7**  
At Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

Series I: Negatives (cont.)  
Individuals (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 16 Greco, Jose 1956 January 14  
At Brooklyn Academy of Music.
- b. 4 f. 17 Happ, Bill circa 1950s
- b. 4 f. 18 Harkavy, Benjamin 1955 June 23  
At the Silvermine Arts Center in New Canaan, Connecticut.
- b. 4 f. 19 Harold, Stephen 1955 March 19
- b. 4 f. 20 Hilton, Bob circa 1950s
- b. 4 f. 21 Johnson, Frances circa 1950s
- b. 4 f. 22-23 Kinch, Myra 1955 April 23-December 10  
Includes performances from the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival and  
Brooklyn Academy of Music.
- b. 4 f. 24 Kinch, Myra and Ruth Page 1956 July  
At Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.
- b. 4 f. 25 Lang, Pearl 1955 August
- b. 4 f. 26 Lee, Ernie 1957 November 2
- b. 4 f. 27 Litz, Katherine and Ray Harrison 1958 January 25
- b. 5 f. 1 Maslow, Sophie 1956 April 28  
At Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival.
- b. 5 f. 2 Mayfair, Sheilah circa 1950s
- b. 5 f. 3 McKayle, Donald 1956 November 26  
At Hunter College.
- b. 5 f. 4 Mr. New York State weightlifting 1952
- b. 5 f. 5 Moore, Lillian 1954 July 5  
At Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) festival.
- b. 5 f. 6 Oliver, Susan 1955  
At Circle in the Square Theatre in front of *La Ronde* poster.
- b. 5 f. 7 Preston, Neil 1954 December 11
- b. 5 f. 8 St. Just, Emy 1956 January 4  
At Hunter College.
- b. 5 f. 9 Seeley, Howard 1954 September 9  
From Seeley's wedding day.
- b. 5 f. 10 Simpson, Ryliss Barnes "Hasoutra" circa 1950s
- b. 5 f. 11 Stevie 1953 September
- b. 5 f. 12 Taylor, Paul 1955 April-1956 April
- b. 5 f. 13 Ted 1955 August 1
- b. 5 f. 14 Van Loon, Marion 1954 April 30
- b. 5 f. 15 Wynn, David 1954 February 16
- Productions 1953
- b. 5 f. 16 *Love Possesses Not* 1953 June 1  
At Amato Opera House.
- b. 5 f. 17 *Banjo* circa 1950s
- Publications 1954-1955

Series I: Negatives (cont.)  
Publications (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 18-20      **Laurence Hope poetry and dance photographs** circa 1950s  
This file includes photographs of traditional Indian dancer Nala Najan. While there is no context provided with these files, it appears that Stephan was combining the poetry of Laurence Hope with images of Nala Najan that he cut out, pasted, and manipulated. Included are several poems of Laurence Hope handwritten by Stephan.
- b. 5 f. 21      **Dancing Star Magazine** 1955 November  
**Non-dance photographs** 1949-1953
- b. 5 f. 22      **Beach outings** circa 1950s
- b. 5 f. 23      **Cats** circa 1950s
- b. 5 f. 24      **Central Park** 1953
- b. 5 f. 25      **Chicago** 1949
- b. 5 f. 26      **42nd Street, Early Morning** circa 1950s
- b. 5 f. 27      **Tarrytown, New York** 1953
- b. 6 f. 1-7      **Unidentified negatives** circa 1950s

Series II: Photographic Prints 1949-1959 (3 boxes 1.08 linear feet)

**Companies** 1953-1958

**American Ballet Theatre** 1958

- b. 9 f. 1      **Alonso, Alicia and Erik Bruhn** circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 1      **Bruhn, Erik** circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 2      **Classes** circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 3      **Classes** circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 4      *Don Quixote Pas de Deux* circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 2      **Eglevsky, André** circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 3      **Laing, Hugh** circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 4      *The Mirror* 1958
- b. 7 f. 5      *Swan Lake* circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 6      *Les Sylphides* circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 5      **Tallchief, Maria** circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 7      **Youskevitch, Igor** circa 1950s

**Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo** 1955

- b. 9 f. 6      **Arova, Sonia** circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 8      **Danilova, Alexandra** circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 9      *The Dying Swan* circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 10      **Zoritch, Geoge** 1955 February 6
- b. 7 f. 11      **Connecticut College** 1954-1955
- b. 9 f. 8      **Connecticut College** 1954-1955

**Doris Humphrey choreography** 1955-1956

- b. 7 f. 12      *The Shakers* 1955
- b. 7 f. 13      **At Juilliard Festival** 1956 April 27
- b. 9 f. 9      **At Juilliard Festival** 1956 April 27
- b. 7 f. 14      **James Waring and Company** 1954-1955
- b. 9 f. 10      *Freaks* 1954
- b. 9 f. 11      **At Henry Street Playhouse** 1955 January 9
- Joffrey Ballet** 1955



Series II: Photographic Prints (cont.)

Companies (cont.)

Joffrey Ballet (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 15      *Pas des Deesses* 1955 June 23
- b. 7 f. 16      Unidentified performance 1955
- b. 7 f. 17      Juilliard Dance Ensemble 1957
- José Limón Dance Company 1956
- b. 7 f. 18      *King's Heart* 1956 April 20
- b. 7 f. 19      Dancers circa 1950s
- London Festival Ballet 1955
- b. 7 f. 20      Briansky, Oleg 1955 March-May
- b. 7 f. 21      *Don Quixote Pas de Deux* circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 12
- b. 9 f. 13      *Esmeralda* circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 22      Martha Graham Dance Company 1955
- Includes dancer Robert Cohan.
- b. 9 f. 14      Cohan, Robert 1955
- National Ballet of Canada 1955
- b. 7 f. 23      Hunter, Fergus 1955 October 14
- b. 9 f. 15
- b. 7 f. 24      At Brooklyn Academy of Music 1955 March 25
- New York City Ballet circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 16      Harper, Herbie circa 1950s
- Royal Danish Ballet circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 17      *Napoli* circa 1950s
- Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet 1956 December
- b. 7 f. 25      Arova, Sonia circa 1950s
- b. 7 f. 26      At Brooklyn Academy of Music 1956 December
- b. 7 f. 27      Slavenska-Franklin Company 1953
- Includes Frederic Franklin teaching a class.
- b. 7 f. 28      William Dollar and Company 1955
- b. 9 f. 18

Individuals 1950-1959

- b. 8 f. 1      Bell, Ben circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 19
- b. 8 f. 2      Crater, Allene circa 1950s
- b. 8 f. 3      Cunningham, Merce circa 1950s
- b. 8 f. 4      Curtis, Paul circa 1950s
- b. 9 f. 20      Del Ora circa 1950s
- b. 8 f. 5      DiNunzio, Gildo circa 1950s
- DiNunzio was the Metropolitan Opera's assistant conductor.
- b. 8 f. 6      Golub, Audrey circa 1950s
- b. 8 f. 7      Kinch, Myra 1955 December 10
- At Brooklyn Academy of Music.
- b. 7 f. 8      Kinch, Myra and Ruth Page 1956 July
- At Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.
- b. 8 f. 9      Lang, Pearl 1955 August
- b. 8 f. 10      Moore, Lillian 1954

Series II: Photographic Prints (cont.)

Individuals (cont.)

b. 8 f. 11      **Preston, Neil** 1954 December 11

b. 8 f. 12      **St. Just, Emy** 1956

**Promotional** 1954

Includes a mock-up flyer Stephan designed to promote his 1954 exhibit of Alexandra Danilova photographs at the Kamin Dance Bookshop and Gallery (Box 9, Folder 7). The mock-up consists of a mounted black and white print of Danilova with Stephan's hand drawn type on tracing paper announcing the show and its details.

b. 8 f. 13      **Flyer for exhibition at the Library of Performing Arts at New York Public Library** 1954

b. 9 f. 7      **Mock-up flyer design for Kamin Dance Bookshop exhibition** 1954

b. 7 f. 29-30      **Unidentified prints** circa 1950s

b. 8 f. 12

b. 9 f. 21-22