



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Cynthia Gregory papers**

1946-2017

(S) \*MGZMD 523

Processed by Nathan Evans in 2020.

## Summary

**Creator:** Gregory, Cynthia

**Title:** Cynthia Gregory papers

**Date:** 1946-2017

**Size:** 5 linear feet (11 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Cynthia Gregory in 2019.

**Abstract:** Cynthia Gregory is a retired American dancer and former prima ballerina for the American Ballet Theatre. The Cynthia Gregory papers, dated 1946 to 2017, document her dancing career and retirement activities, with emphasis on her American Ballet Theatre tenure. The collection includes articles, programs, correspondence, photographs, awards and certificates, tutus, dance shoes, video recordings, and film.

### 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](mailto:dance@nypl.org)). Audio and moving image materials will be subject to preservation assessment and migration prior to access.

Dancewear can be requested by appointment only.

**Preferred citation:** Cynthia Gregory papers, (S) \*MGZMD 523. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Language of the Material:** Multiple languages English, with some Chinese, German, Greek, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.

**Processing note:** Processed by Nathan Evans in 2020.

## Creator History

Cynthia Gregory is a retired American dancer and former prima ballerina for the American Ballet Theatre. Born in 1946 in Los Angeles, Gregory began dancing as a child and performed with the California Children's Ballet Company for four years. She won a scholarship to the San Francisco Ballet in 1961, performing in the corps de ballet and soon after as a soloist. In 1965, Gregory moved to New York City and joined the American Ballet Theatre. She became a soloist in 1966 and prima ballerina in 1967, the same year she debuted as Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*; Gregory is closely associated with this role and her performance is still seen as definitive. Her other lead ballets included *Coppélia*, *Corsaire*, *Don Quixote*, *Giselle*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. Throughout her career, Gregory guested with dance companies around the world and partnered with Fernando Bujones, Peter Martins, and Rudolf Nureyev, among others. In 1986, she became a permanent guest artist at the Cleveland San Jose Ballet and began her Celebration Tour, a travelling show that raised awareness for drug abuse. After resigning from the American Ballet Theatre in 1991, Gregory continued to guest for dance companies before retiring from performing in 1992. She has since staged several ballets, taught master dance classes, illustrated dance artwork, and served as Chairman of the Board for Career Transition for Dancers. Gregory has received numerous honors, including the 1975 Dance Magazine Award and two honorary doctorates. She resides in Nevada.

## Scope and Content Note

The collection, dated 1946 to 2017, documents Gregory's dancing career and retirement activity, with emphasis on her American Ballet Theatre tenure. It is divided into six groups: Early Years, American Ballet Theatre, Guesting and Other Activities, Years after Performing, Dancewear, and Video Recordings and Film.

The Early Years group is arranged in two sections: Los Angeles and San Francisco Ballet. The Los Angeles section contains materials from 1946 to 1961, mostly concerning Gregory's ballet activity. The San Francisco Ballet materials document Gregory's time with the company from 1961 to 1965. Both sections contain articles, programs, correspondence, and photographs. Most of these materials relate to Gregory performing.

The American Ballet Theatre group is the most substantial part of the collection. It reflects Gregory's tenure with the company from 1965 to 1991, focusing on performances in New York City and around the United States, as well as international tours. Also included are materials relating to Gregory's 1977 White House performance and 20th Anniversary Gala in 1985. This group contains articles, programs, correspondence, photographs, and some press releases and resumes. Articles consist of interviews, profiles, and reviews of performances. Programs are mostly for Gregory's performances, but also include some before and after her tenure. Correspondence is largely personal and incoming, from fans, teachers, and colleagues; there is also a portion of mostly outgoing mail to Gregory's parents. Photographs primarily show Gregory performing solo or with partners.

The Guesting and Other Activities group highlights Gregory's performances as a guest dancer outside of the American Ballet Theatre, both in the United States and internationally; of special note are materials for her Celebration Tour and activity with the Cleveland Ballet. This group also contains materials for Gregory's advertising work and awards received during her career. Included here are articles and clippings, programs, personal and professional correspondence, photographs, and certificates.

The Years after Performing group covers activity from 1993 to 2017, including Gregory's staging work, master class instruction, artwork, awards received during retirement, and Career Transition for Dancers chairmanship. There are also some personal letters and photographs, and Gregory's memoir

manuscript.

Dancewear consists of Gregory's theatre robe, four pairs of dance shoes, and six tutus. Gregory's first ballet shoes and tutu are included, as well as four tutus worn for performances of various ballets.

Film and video recordings include American Ballet Theatre and guest performances from 1975 to 1990. There is also an interview with Gregory, video of her childhood appearance on *The Jack Benny Program*, short film with Ivan Nagy, a master class taping, and Linda Ronstadt's "When You Wish Upon a Star" music video featuring Gregory.

**Arrangement:** The collection is divided into six groups: Early Years; American Ballet Theatre; Guesting and Other Activities; Years after Performing; Dancewear; and Audio and Video Recordings.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Ballet dancers  
Dancers -- 20th century  
Women dancers

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Ballet slippers  
Business correspondence  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Personal correspondence  
Photographs  
Theater programs  
Tutus  
Video recordings

### Names

Gregory, Cynthia  
American Ballet Theatre  
San Francisco Ballet

## Container List

### Early Years 1946-1965

#### Los Angeles 1946-1961

- b. 1 f. 1 Articles 1951-1960
- b. 1 f. 2 Programs 1952-1960
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence and Drawing 1946-1956  
Drawing by Gregory, age six.
- b. 1 f. 4-5 Photographs 1946-1960
- b. 1 f. 6 Permits, Receipts, and Awards 1955-1961

#### San Francisco Ballet 1961-1965

- b. 1 f. 7 Articles 1961-1965
- b. 1 f. 8-10 Programs 1961-1965  
Includes tour itineraries and dressing room pass for the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House.
- b. 1 f. 11 Correspondence 1961-1965
- b. 1 f. 12 Photographs 1961-1965
- b. 9 f. 1

### American Ballet Theatre 1953-2007

#### Articles and Clippings 1967-1991

- b. 2 f. 1-7 Interviews and Profiles 1967-1991
- b. 2 f. 8-9 Reviews--New York City 1967-1991
- b. 2 f. 10-12 Reviews--Other U.S. Cities 1967-1991
- b. 2 f. 13 Advertisements 1967-1985

#### Programs 1953-2007

- b. 3 f. 1-7 Performances and Tours 1965-2007  
Includes tour itineraries from 1965 to 1974.
- b. 3 f. 8-9 Annual Programs 1953-1990
- b. 4 f. 1-3

#### Correspondence 1965-1991

- b. 4 f. 4 Parents 1965-1980s
- b. 4 f. 5-6 Colleagues and Teachers 1967-1991  
Includes notes by Gregory about Rudolf Nureyev.
- b. 4 f. 7 Fan Letters 1968-1991

#### Photographs 1966-1991

- b. 4 f. 8-11 General Performing 1966-1991  
Includes some slides.

#### Performing With Partners 1968-1985

- b. 5 f. 1 Bruhn, Erik 1975
- b. 5 f. 2 Bujones, Fernando 1970s-1980s
- b. 5 f. 3 Denard, Michael 1972-1977
- b. 5 f. 4 Godunov, Alexander 1979-1981
- b. 5 f. 5 Kage, Jonas 1968-1977
- b. 5 f. 6 Kivitt, Ted 1975-1977

American Ballet Theatre (cont.)  
Photographs (cont.)  
Performing With Partners (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 7       **Marks, Bruce** late 1960s
- b. 5 f. 8       **Nagy, Ivan** 1969-1978
- b. 5 f. 9       **Nureyev, Rudolf** 1975-1978
- b. 5 f. 10      **Tippet, Clark** 1977-1985
- b. 5 f. 11      **Rehearsing** 1968-1989
  - b. 9 f. 1
- b. 5 f. 12      **Portraits** 1970s-1989
  - b. 9 f. 1
- b. 5 f. 13      **Personal** 1960s-1990
  - b. 9 f. 2       Photographs mostly show Gregory at American Ballet Theatre events or on tour.
- b. 5 f. 14-15   **International Tours** 1966-1970
  - Includes materials for tours in the Soviet Union, Japan, Greece, and the United Kingdom.
  - Contains correspondence, notes, photographs, programs, itineraries, magazine, and clippings.
- b. 5 f. 16      **White House Performance** 1977
  - Includes letter to Gregory from President Jimmy Carter, notes, press release, program, and clipping.
- b. 5 f. 17-19   **20th Anniversary Gala** 1985
  - b. 6 f. 1-2   Includes correspondence, photographs, clippings, and programs.
- b. 6 f. 3       **Press Releases and Resumes** 1973-1988
- Guesting and Other Activities** 1967-1992
  - Guesting** 1967-1993
    - b. 6 f. 4       **Texas** 1967-1969, 1985
      - b. 9 f. 2       Includes programs, newsletter, and 1985 certificate.
    - b. 6 f. 5-6     **Argentina** 1972, 1990
      - Includes correspondence, photographs, and programs.
    - b. 6 f. 7       **Germany** 1972-1979
      - Materials are for Gregory's 1972 and 1974 Stuttgart appearances, and 1979 Berlin appearance. Includes correspondence, photographs, programs, and clippings.
    - b. 6 f. 8       **With Peter Martins** 1973-1980
      - Includes correspondence, photographs, clippings, and programs.
    - b. 6 f. 9-11     **Cuba** 1974
      - b. 9 f. 2       Includes correspondence, notes, photographs, clippings, and programs.
    - b. 6 f. 12-13   **Cleveland Ballet** 1975-1993
      - Materials relate to Gregory's activity with the Cleveland Ballet from 1975 to 1979, and her performances as a permanent guest for the company from 1986 forward (then called the Cleveland San Jose Ballet). Includes correspondence, photograph, certificate, clippings, and programs.
    - b. 6 f. 14       **Seattle** 1977
      - Includes program.
    - b. 6 f. 14       **New York City** 1977-1984
      - Includes letter, photograph, clipping, and programs.
    - b. 7 f. 1        **Vienna State Opera Ballet** 1977
      - Includes correspondence, photographs, and articles.
    - b. 7 f. 2        **Australia** 1978
      - b. 9 f. 2       Includes photographs, itinerary, and program.
    - b. 7 f. 3        **Various** 1980-1984
      - For guest performances in Arkansas, Miami, Toronto, and at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Includes photographs and clippings.

Guesting and Other Activities (cont.)

Guesting (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 4-6 **Celebration Tour 1986-1987**  
Includes correspondence, photographs, itinerary, clippings, and programs.
- b. 7 f. 7 ***Cynthia Gregory and Fernando Bujones: Together!* 1988**
- b. 9 f. 3 Includes correspondence, notes, photographs, clippings, and programs.
- b. 7 f. 8 **Venezuela 1990**  
Includes programs.
- b. 7 f. 9 **Taiwan 1992**  
Includes access badge, clipping, and program.
- b. 7 f. 10-11 **Awards and Other Activities 1975-1992**  
Includes materials for the 1975 Dance Magazine Award; National Arts Club Citation of Merit; Lion of the Performing Arts honor; 64th Academy Awards; and Gregory's advertising work. Primarily contains photographs and programs.

Years after Performing 1993-2017

- b. 7 f. 12-13 **Awards and Honorary Degrees 1993-2016**
- b. 8 f. 1 Includes materials for Salute to the Arts; Hofstra University and Purchase College honorary degrees; Capezio Dance Award; and Actors Fund Gala. Primarily includes correspondence, notes, and programs.
- Staging 1993-2017**
- b. 8 f. 2 ***Swan Lake -- Monterey, Mexico* 1993**  
Staged for Ballet de Monterey. Includes notes, sketches, photograph, and clipping.
- b. 8 f. 3 ***Rossini Dances* 2003**  
Staged for the Ohio Ballet. Includes photographs and note.
- b. 8 f. 3 ***Chopiniana* 2004**  
Staged for the American School of Ballet. Includes program.
- b. 8 f. 4 ***Swan Lake -- Las Vegas* 2015-2017**  
Staged for the Nevada Ballet Theatre. Includes notes, clippings, and programs.
- b. 8 f. 5 **Master Class 1995**  
Includes program.
- b. 8 f. 5-8 **Career Transition for Dancers 1996-2015**  
Primarily includes programs.
- b. 8 f. 9 **Artwork 1998-2010s**
- b. 10 Includes sketches, cards, exhibition programs, calendar, artwork price lists, clippings, and two t-shirts with Gregory's art on them.
- b. 8 f. 10 **Personal Correspondence and Photographs 1994-2013**
- b. 9 f. 3 Some photographs show Gregory at White House events.
- b. 8 f. 11 **Memoir Manuscript**  
Documents Gregory's life up to 1967.

Dancewear

Dancewear can be requested by appointment only.

- b. 10 **Robe**
- Shoes**
- b. 11 **First Ballet Slippers**
- b. 11 **Pointe Shoes**  
Two pairs. One pair is signed by Gregory.
- b. 11 **Margot Fonteyn's Point Shoe**  
One shoe only. Inscribed by Fonteyn to Gregory, 1978.
- b. 11 **Jazz Shoes**  
Worn for Linda Ronstadt's "When You Wish Upon a Star" music video.

Dancewear (cont.)

Tutus

First Tutu

Practice Tutu

*Coppélia Tutu*

*Corsaire Tutu*

*The Dying Swan Tutu*

*Giselle Tutu*

Video Recordings and Film 1955-2006

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