



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Letters from Lincoln Kirstein to Donald Richie

1957-1964

(S) *MGZMD 252

Compiled by Maggie Long, Palmer School of Library and Information Science, class of 2011, 2011.

Summary

Creator: Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996

Title: Letters from Lincoln Kirstein to Donald Richie

Date: 1957-1964

Size: .21 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Donated by Donald Richie, 1996, 2011.

Abstract: The collection contains personal letters from Lincoln Kirstein to Donald Richie written from 1957 to 1964, as well as undated letters. Kirstein sent these to Richie in Japan, where he moved in 1947. In many letters, Kirstein discusses his work with the New York City Ballet and his interest in Richie's own work.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

Preferred citation: Letters from Lincoln Kirstein to Donald Richie, (S) *MGZMD 252. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Maggie Long, Palmer School of Library and Information Science, class of 2011, 2011. This collection has been left in its original order, and no materials have been removed or discarded.

Creator History

Lincoln Edward Kirstein (1907-1996) was born on May 4, 1907 in Rochester, New York and educated at Harvard College (A.B. 1929, A.M. 1930). In 1934, he co-founded the School of American Ballet with George Balanchine and Edward M.M. Warburg. He also participated in the founding and/or direction of the American Ballet Company in 1935, Ballet Caravan 1936-1941, and the Ballet Society in 1946, and he became general director of the succeeding company, New York City Ballet, in 1948. Kirstein married

Fidelma Cadmus, sister of artist Paul Cadmus, in 1941 and served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1945. His career included work with visual artists and writers on various projects, and his dance-related publications include: *Dance Index* books on Michel Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky, and the New York City Ballet; a history of theatrical dance; and writing assistance to Romola Nijinsky on a biography of her husband. He retired from New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet in 1989. The recipient of many distinguished awards, Lincoln Kirstein died on January 5, 1996. Donald Richie was born in Lima, Ohio in 1924. In 1947, he moved to Tokyo, Japan, where he has since been based. Richie is a novelist, filmmaker, essayist and expert on Japanese film.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains personal letters from Lincoln Kirstein to Donald Richie written between 1957 and 1964, as well as some undated letters. In these letters, Kirstein discusses his work with the New York City Ballet; his opinions about Donald Keene, a renowned expert on Japanese literature and culture; the work of George Balanchine, his co-founder of the School of American Ballet and a leading classical choreographer; and other subjects. The collection also includes one letter to Kirstein from an unknown correspondent (Hugh?), dated August 18, 1960. Many of Kirstein's letters to Richie include poems and articles, and one includes Kirstein's essay on photographer George Platt Lynes, printed in a 1960 gallery exhibition brochure.

Arrangement: Chronological.

Key Terms

Subjects

Ballet -- History -- 20th century
Ballet -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence

Geographic Names

Japan

Names

Balanchine, George
Keene, Donald
Lynes, George Platt, 1907-1955
Richie, Donald, 1924-2013
New York City Ballet

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 1957
- b. 1 f. 2 1958
- b. 1 f. 3 1959
- b. 1 f. 4 1960
- b. 1 f. 5 1961
- b. 1 f. 6 1962
- b. 1 f. 7 1963
- b. 1 f. 8 1964
- b. 1 f. 9 Undated