



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Ruth Page papers

1956-1965

(S) *MGZMC-Res. 12

Summary

Creator: Page, Ruth, 1899-1991

Title: Ruth Page papers

Date: 1956-1965

Size: 70 folders ca. 70 items

Source: Gift.

Abstract: Ruth Page, American dancer, choreographer, and director of ballet companies, was born in 1899, the daughter of a physician in Indiana. Her dance studies began with local teachers in Indianapolis. Like many a young girl, she was inspired by seeing Anna Pavlova perform, and actually did perform with the legendary dancer's troupe during a tour to South America in 1918. Her training continued in Chicago with Adolph Bolm who created *The Birthday of the Infanta* for her, dancing the role with Bolm's Ballet Intime at the London Coliseum in 1920. Her varied performing career included being premiere danseuse with Chicago Allied Arts from 1924-1927, Irving Berlin's Music Box Revue, a brief time with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, touring the Orient and Moscow in the late 1920's, solo tours throughout the United States, touring with Harald Kreutzberg 1932-1933, and premiere danseuse with the Chicago Grand Opera Company from 1934-1937. Chicago was her base, having married the successful lawyer Thomas Hart Fisher, who also managed her dance career affairs. With her partner Bentley Stone, she formed Page-Stone Ballet Company in Chicago in 1938. Page was one of the first to tackle American themes in her dances including the ballad of Frankie and Johnny (choreographed with Stone), Poe's poem *The Bells*, and the story of a revivalist preacher Billy Sunday. She worked with the Chicago Lyric Opera and toured a Chicago Opera Ballet company, introducing many great dancers to the American public, including Rudolf Nureyev's New York City debut in March, 1962. With the resources of a successful husband, she commissioned scores from Aaron Copland, Darius Milahud and others, designs from Isamu Noguchi, Pavel Tchelitchev, and André Delfau, whom she married in 1983, many years after the death of Thomas Fisher. She wrote two books, *Page by Page* and *Class*. The recipient of the Dance Magazine Award (1990), the Illinois Gubernatorial Award (1985) and several honorary degrees, she died in Chicago April 7, 1991. A collection of items, mostly correspondence, relating to publicity and public relations for tours of Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet (later called Ruth Page's International Ballet). The correspondence is chiefly between Thomas Hart Fisher, representing Miss Page and the Chicago Opera Ballet, and representatives of Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

Chief subjects include the compilation of press and souvenir books, the engagement of guest artists (including Kirsten Simone and Henning Kronstam), and tour publicity. Other items include sections of pressbooks, articles by Page, and copies of public testimonial to Ruth Page's cultural accomplishments.

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: Page, Ruth, 1899-1991. Papers, (S)*MGZMC-Res. 12, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

Creator History

Ruth Page, American dancer, choreographer, and director of ballet companies, was born in 1899, the daughter of a physician in Indiana. Her dance studies began with local teachers in Indianapolis. Like many a young girl, she was inspired by seeing Anna Pavlova perform, and actually did perform with the legendary dancer's troupe during a tour to South America in 1918. Her training continued in Chicago with Adolph Bolm who created *The Birthday of the Infanta* for her, dancing the role with Bolm's Ballet Intime at the London Coliseum in 1920. Her varied performing career included being premiere danseuse with Chicago Allied Arts from 1924-1927, Irving Berlin's Music Box Revue, a brief time with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, touring the Orient and Moscow in the late 1920's, solo tours throughout the United States, touring with Harald Kreutzberg 1932-1933, and premiere danseuse with the Chicago Grand Opera Company from 1934-1937. Chicago was her base, having married the successful lawyer Thomas Hart Fisher, who also managed her dance career affairs. With her partner Bentley Stone, she formed Page-Stone Ballet Company in Chicago in 1938. Page was one of the first to tackle American themes in her dances including the ballad of *Frankie and Johnny* (choreographed with Stone), Poe's poem *The Bells*, and the story of a revivalist preacher *Billy Sunday*. She worked with the Chicago Lyric Opera and toured a Chicago Opera Ballet company, introducing many great dancers to the American public, including Rudolf Nureyev's New York City debut in March, 1962. With the resources of a successful husband, she commissioned scores from Aaron Copland, Darius Milahud and others, designs from Isamu Noguchi, Pavel Tchelitchev, and André Delfau, whom she married in 1983, many years after the death of Thomas Fisher. She wrote two books, *Page by Page* and *Class*. The recipient of the Dance Magazine Award (1990), the Illinois Gubernatorial Award (1985) and several honorary degrees, she died in Chicago April 7, 1991.

Scope and Content Note

A collection of items, mostly correspondence, relating to publicity and public relations for tours of Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet (later called Ruth Page's International Ballet). The correspondence is chiefly between Thomas Hart Fisher, representing Miss Page and the Chicago Opera Ballet, and representatives of Columbia Artists Management, Inc. Chief subjects include the compilation of press and souvenir books, the engagement of guest artists (including Kirsten Simone and Henning Kronstam), and tour publicity. Other items include sections of pressbooks, articles by Page, and copies of public testimonial to Ruth Page's cultural accomplishments.

Arrangement: I. Correspondence II. Miscellany

Key Terms

Subjects

Dance publicity

Manuscripts -- Collections

Names

Page, Ruth, 1899-1991

Fisher, Thomas Hart

Kronstam, Henning

Simone, Kirsten

Chicago Opera Ballet

Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

Ruth Page's International Ballet

Container List

I. Correspondence

The correspondence is chiefly between Thomas Hart Fisher, representing Miss Page and the Chicago Opera Ballet, and representatives of Columbia Artists Management, Inc. Chief subjects include the compilation of press and souvenir books, the engagement of guest artists (including Kirsten Simone and Henning Kronstam), and tour publicity

- f. 1 Hal Abbey/Misc. 1960-61 (9 Items)
- f. 2 Thomas Hart Fisher/Misc. 1956-65 (7 Items)
- f. 2A Thomas Hart Fisher/Misc. 1956-65 (8 Items)
- f. 3 Tate Irvine/Thomas Hart Fisher 1956 (3 Items)
- f. 4 Miscellaneous 1959-60 (4 Items)
- f. 5 Oleg Briansky/Thomas Thompson 1957 (1 Items)
- f. 6 Miscellaneous 1961-62 (5 Items)
- f. 7 Claudia Cassidy & Bill Crawford/Ruth Page 1967 (3 Items)

II. Miscellany

Other items include sections of pressbooks, articles by Page, and copies of public testimonial to Ruth Page's cultural accomplishments.

- f. 8 Pressbook Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet Typescript (c.c.), (with corrections) ca. 1958 (40 p. 2 encl.)
- f. 9 Typescript Pressbook for Ruth Page's International Ballet (sections) (With additions and corrections by Thomas Hart Fisher) (25 p.)
- f. 10 Ruth Page "Opera as Dance" (mimeograph) (5 p.)
[in *Opera News*, April 21, 1962]
- f. 11 Page, Ruth Speech to Chicago Arts Festival, Typescript (photocopy) ca. 1956 (27 p.)
TLS (memorandum), 1956, August 16 Helen Kunitz to Audrey Michaels (1 L. [13 p.]
- f. 12 Chicago, Mayor Richard J. Daley Proclamation of Sunday, March 17, 1963 to be Ruth Page Day in Chicago 1 L. [13 p.] (photocopy)
Ballet Guild of Chicago Citation awarded to Ruth Page Chicago's First Lady of Dance 1 L. [13 p.] (photocopy) n.d.