



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Irma Duncan Collection of Isadora Duncan materials

1914-1934

(S) *MGZMC-Res. 23

Processed by A.M.Wentink.

Summary

Creator: Duncan, Irma

Title: Irma Duncan Collection of Isadora Duncan materials

Date: 1914-1934

Size: 300 items

Source: Gift. Irma Duncan Rogers. Materials received: 1957.

Abstract:

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: Irma Duncan Collection of Isadora Duncan Materials, (S) *MGZMC-Res 23, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by A.M.Wentink.

Creator History

Irma Duncan was born Irma Dorette Henriette Ehrich-Grimme on February 26, 1897, in Schleswig-Holstein near Hamburg. Becoming a pupil of Isadora Duncan in January 1905 at her Grunewald school near Berlin, her name was legally changed to Irma Duncan in 1917. Along with Isadora's five other original pupils, she became an adopted daughter. In 1918 these six formed an independent group known as the Isadora Duncan Dancers. Irma's debut as such occurred at Carnegie Hall on June 27 of that year. In 1921 she accompanied Isadora to Russia to found, at the government's invitation, a school of dance. Irma served as a teacher in Moscow for seven years making her solo debut there on April 29, 1923. After Isadora's death in 1927 until 1930, she directed the Moscow school. She toured with her

students to Europe and to the United States (the latter during the 1928-1929 and 1929-1930 seasons). When her group, known as the Isadora Duncan Dancers of Moscow, were forced to return to Russia, Irma chose to remain in the United States. Duncan became a U.S. citizen in 1935. She married Sherman S. Rogers, a New York attorney, on September 19, 1935. She authored several books on Isadora Duncan and her technique. Irma Duncan Rogers died on September 20, 1977.

Isadora Duncan - List of Events

Date Event 1878? May 27 Born in San Francisco

1896 To Chicago. Met Augustin Daly and was engaged to dance in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in New York. Danced under Daly for two years in various shows.

1898-99 Gave concerts in Carnegie Hall Studio with Ethelbert Nevin, and danced in the drawing-rooms of New York society. Gave three different concerts in Newport, including *The [UNK] of Omar Khayyam*, September 1898. In April, 1899, danced *The Happier Age of Gold*, Idylls from Theocritus and [UNK] at the Lyceum Theatre in New York.

1899-1900 To London. Danced in private homes and before Queen Victoria, and was admired by artists and intellectuals. *Dance Idylls* program.

1900-1901 To Paris. Gave *Dance Idylls* program in private salons and studios, again attracting artists, intellectuals, and the social [UNK].

1902 Travelled with the Loie Fuller troupe. Met Alexander [UNK], the impresario, after dancing for artists at the Kunstler Haus in Vienna. Gross arranged her contract to dance 30 evenings in [UNK].

1903 Gave *Dance Idylls* program at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt in Paris, June-July. Debut at Kroll Opera House, Berlin. To Greece for winter.

1904 Presented *The Suppliants* (Aeschylus) with a Greek boy's chorus in Vienna and Germany. Spent May-August in Bayreuth where she danced in *Tannhauser* at the invitation of Frau Cosima Wagner. Opened school in Grunewald with her sister, Elizabeth, and met Gordon Craig in December. Christmas in St. Petersburg.

1905 Visited Russia again in February. Gave many concerts in Germany, Belgium, and Holland. Danced Gluck's [UNK].

1906 Toured Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Sweden with Craig and Martin Shaw. Spent summer at Villa [UNK] near Noordwijk, on the Dutch coast. Daughter, Deirdre, born in September. Translated conversations between Craig and Eleonora Duse in Florence, late November, where Craig was designing *Rosmersholm*. Performances in Warsaw, December-January.

1907 Ill with neuralgia January-March. Toured Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. To Russia in December. Friendship with Constantin Stanislavsky.

1908 Toured Russia in January and again in the spring. Gave concerts in London and New York under Charles Frohman's management. Late in year appeared in U.S. with Walter Damrosch conducting.

1909 Concert series in Paris under the direction of Lugué-Poe. [UNK] Paris Singer. Concerts in U.S. with Damrosch in November.

1910 Son, Patrick, born May 1.

1911 Appeared again in U.S. with Damrosch. Danced [UNK] *Orpheus*.

1913 Concerts in Paris with Mounet-Sully, the Colonne orchestra and chorus, and [UNK] Pierné. April 19, children drowned in Seine. Joined brother Raymond to help refugees in Epirus, May-June. Lived near Eleonora Duse in Viarregio in the fall.

1914 Opened school at Bellevue, near Paris.

1915 Improvised *La Marseillaise* at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Gave unsuccessful performances at the Century Theatre.

1916 South American tour. Performances in Paris and New York.

1918 Met Walter Morse Rummel. Tour of France.

1919 [UNK] Festival in Paris. Tour of Switzerland.

1921 To Moscow in July to open school at the invitation of the Russian government.

1922 Married Serge [UNK] on May 3. Began U.S. tour with sell-out concerts at Carnegie Hall in October. Much of tour cancelled because of her "Bolshevik tendencies."

1923-24 Performances throughout Russia. Last Russian performance given before the party leaders in September, 1924.

1927 Gave last concert, July 8, at the Théâtre Mogador in Paris. Killed in accident in Nice, September 14.

Scope and Content Note

Holographs, typescripts, clippings, and memorabilia. The materials in this collection are the personal effects of Isadora Duncan left with Irma Duncan. The collection is comprised of four major groups of materials: correspondence to and correspondence from Isadora Duncan (and others), manuscripts relating to, for the most part, the years Isadora Duncan spent in Russia, 1921-24, a group of clippings, and memorabilia. Letters to Isadora Duncan are from, among others: Gordon Craig, Fernand Divoire, Eleonora Duse, Sergei Esenin, Walter Morse Rummel, Ellen Terry, and Anatolii Lunacharskii. Letters from Isadora Duncan are primarily to Irma Duncan and Anatolii Lunacharskii. A large portion of the correspondence and manuscripts in this collection has been published in: *MGYB (Duncan) Duncan, Irma. Duncan Dancer, *MGYB (Duncan) Duncan, Irma and Macdougall. Isadora Duncan's Russian Days, and *MGYB (Duncan) Macdougall. Isadora. In English, French, and Russian.

Arrangement: I. Correspondence A. Isadora Duncan Letters B. Letters to Isadora Duncan II. Manuscripts A. Isadora Duncan Autobiographical Writings B. Isadora Duncan Writings C. Notebooks D. Program-related Materials E. Manuscripts - General III. Clippings IV. Memorabilia

Key Terms

Titles

Irma Duncan Collection
nuc

Subjects

Manuscripts (Letters)
Manuscripts -- Collections

Names

Duncan, Irma
Duncan, Isadora, 1877-1927

Container List

I. Correspondence (121 folders)

A. Isadora Duncan letters (34 folders)

- f. 1 ca. 1914
- f. 2 ca. 1920
- f. 3 1921
- f. 4 1921-24?
- f. 5 ca. 1922
- f. 6 1922?
- f. 7 1922?
- f. 8 1922-23?
- f. 9 1922-24?
- f. 10 ca. 1923
- f. 11 ca. 1923-24
- f. 12 1924 Jan. 15
- f. 13 1924 Jan. 20
- f. 14 1920 June 20
- f. 15 1924 June 24
- f. 16 1924 July?
- f. 17 1924 June [July] 10
- f. 18 1924 June [July] 16
- f. 19 1924 July 28
- f. 20 1924 Aug. 4
- f. 21 1924 Aug. 12
- f. 22 1924 Oct.
- f. 23 1924 Oct.
- f. 24 1924 Oct. [13
- f. 25 1924 Nov. 27
- f. 26 1924 Dec. 16
- f. 27 [1925] Feb. 1
- f. 28 1925 Mar. 12
- f. 29 1925 Mar. 30
- f. 30 [1926] Jan. 27
- f. 31 1926 Apr. 1
- f. 32 1926 June 15
- f. 33 n.d
- f. 34 n.d

B. Letters to Isadora Duncan (86 folders)

- f. 35 Adams, Mrs Bridges
- f. 36 Astruc, Gabriel

- I. Correspondence (cont.)
 - B. Letters to Isadora Duncan (cont.)
 - f. 37 Bloch, Ernest
 - f. 38 Bourdelle, Emile Antoine
 - f. 39 Constantine, King of Greece
 - f. 40-41 Craig, Edward Gordon
 - f. 42 Craig, Elena (Meo)
 - f. 43-44 D'Annunzio, Gabriele
 - f. 45-47 Debussy, Claude (to Walter Morse Rummel)
 - f. 48-49 Denis, Georges A.
 - f. 50 Dent, Hugh R.
 - f. 51 Desprès, Suzanne
 - f. 52-59 Divoire, Fernand
 - f. 60-61 Duncan, Augustin
 - f. 62 Duncan, Deirdre and Patrick
 - f. 63 Duncan, Elizabeth
 - f. 64 Duncan Patrick (birth certificate)
 - f. 65 Duncan, Penelope
 - f. 66-67 Dunoyer de Segonzac, André
 - f. 68-86 Duse, Eleonora
 - f. 87 Eastman, Max
 - f. 88 Esenin, Sergei
 - f. 89-90 Estournelles de Constant, Paul
 - f. 91 de Fougères, André
 - f. 92 Gemier, Firmin
 - f. 93-94 Haeckel, Ernst
 - f. 95 John Augustus
 - f. 96 Lidig, Rita
 - f. 97 Litvinov, Mrs. Ivy
 - f. 98 Lugné-Poë, Aurelian Francois
 - f. 99-104 Lunacharskii, Anatolii
 - f. 105 Margueritte, Paul
 - f. 106 Marx, Magdelaine
 - f. 107 Pankhurst, Estelle Sylvia
 - f. 108 Paul-Boncour, [UNK]
 - f. 109-111 Powys, John Cowper
 - f. 112 Rummel, Walter Morse
 - f. 113-115 Sorel, Cecile
 - f. 116 Tchaikovsky, Vera
 - f. 117-120 Terry, Ellen
 - f. 121 Van Dongen, Kees
- II. Manuscripts (47 folders)
 - A. Duncan, Isadora. Autobiographical writings. (9 folders)

- II. Manuscripts (cont.)
 - A. Duncan, Isadora. Autobiographical writings. (cont.)
 - f. 122 Letter to Anatolii Lunacharskii, (draft) 1921.
 - f. 123 Telegrams between Isadora Duncan and Anatolii Lunacharskii, (transcriptions) 1921.
 - f. 124 "Russian school." Moscow. (essay) 1924.
 - f. 125 Letter to Paul Kennaday, (autobiographical sketch) 1925.
 - f. 126-130 "My Bolshevik days." (autobiographical studies) 1921-24
 - B. Isadora Duncan writings. (10 folders)
 - f. 131 Lecture notes. New York. ca. 1914-15
 - f. 132 [[UNK] to pianist Harold Bauer. San Francisco. 1917
 - f. 133 "Art and culture. Art and the masses." 1921.
 - f. 134 Unpublished essay. Nice. 1925.
 - f. 135 "Movement is life". Nice. 1925.
 - f. 136 Essay on beauty. n.d.
 - f. 137 Declaration. n.d.
 - f. 138 Declaration. n.d.
 - f. 139 Name list. n.d.
 - f. 140 Laundry list. 1920.
 - C. Notebooks. (3 folders)
 - f. 141 Duncan, Isadora. Notebook ca. 1900-03
 - f. 142 Duncan, Isadora. Notebook ca. 1905.
 - f. 143 Rummel, Walter Morse. Notebook 1904-12
 - D. Program-related materials [UNK] n.d. (16 folders)
 - f. 144-147 Duncan, Augustin. Program materials 1915-22
 - f. 148-150 Duncan, Isadora. Program materials 1915 n.d.
 - f. 151-159 Program materials [UNK] n.d.
 - E. Manuscripts (general). (9 folders)
 - f. 160 Adler, Jacob. Speech ca. 1910
 - f. 161 [Bynner, Witter]. Poem. "You wrote..."
 - f. 162 Divoire, Fernand. "Oration funebre pour Isadora Duncan." 1927.
 - f. 163 Eastman, Max. Poem. "Isadora Duncan". ca. 1914-15
 - f. 164 Fauchois, René. Poem. 1916.
 - f. 165 Macdougall, Allan Ross. Transcriptions: [UNK] from letters of Isadora Duncan 1921-27
 - f. 166 Mason, Redfern. Article. n.d.
 - f. 167 Tanagra, Ange. Review. "La premiere de Miss Duncan... 29 novembre 1903".
 - f. 168 List. "Lettres correspondentes; lettres importantes". n.d.
- III. Clippings (6 folders)
 - f. 169-174 Clippings, re: Isadora Duncan and Duncan Dancers.
- IV. Memorabilia (9 folders)
 - f. 175 Duncan, Isadora. Calling cards.

IV. Memorabilia (cont.)

- f. 176 Duncan, Isadora. Fragment of red fringe...from the shawl she wore at the time of her fatal accident 1927 Sept. 4.
- f. 177-178 Duncan, Isadora. Portfolios.
- f. 179 Duncan, Isadora. Stationery.
- f. 180 Isadora Duncan Studio, Moscow. Stamp.
- f. 181 Walkowitz, Abraham. Drawings of Isadora Duncan 1934.
- f. 182 Calling cards.
- f. 183 Postcards.