



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Letters to Walter Sorell

1964-1973

(S) *MGZMC-Res. 29

Processed by R. A. Carr.

Summary

Creator: Wigman, Mary, 1886-1973

Title: Letters to Walter Sorell

Date: 1964-1973

Size: 108 13 folders items

Source: Gift. Gift of Walter Sorell. Material received: 1974.

Abstract: A collection of letters written by Mary Wigman, in German, to Walter Sorell, translator of her book *Die Sprache des Tanzes*. Also included are: letters to Mr. Sorell from other correspondents including Hanya Holm, John Martin, Juana de Laban and Margherita Wallmann discussing Mary Wigman, her book and Mr. Sorell's projected biography of Hanya Holm; a letter to Mary Wigman from Frederica T. Gibbon; an essay by Mary Wigman, "Dance pedagogy: letter to a young dancer," in English.

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: Wigman, Mary, 1886-1973. Letters to Walter Sorell, (S) *MGZMC-Res. 29, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by R. A. Carr.

Creator History

Mary Wigman, German modern dancer and choreographer, was born Mary Wiegmann, November 13, 1886 in Hanover. She trained first with Emile Jaques-Dalcroze in Hellerau and Dresden and later with Rudolf von Laban in Ansona, Switzerland and in Munich. Her debut as a concert dancer and

choreographer occurred in 1919. Successful performances encouraged her to open her own school in Dresden, where among her first students were Yvonne Georgi, Gert Palucca, and Harald Kreutzberg. By 1925, her students included Ruth Abrahamowitsch, Hanya Holm, and Tilly Losch. Her students performed as a company, touring Western Europe throughout the 1930's. Wigman performed at the Berlin Olympics of 1936, but the National Socialists closed her school, and she became a teacher at the Leipzig Music Academy. After World War II, she returned to Berlin, re-opening her school in 1948, which became the center for the German modern dance movement. She choreographed over one hundred dances for herself and her dancers but also worked in various German opera houses, staging productions of Gluck in Leipzig and Mannheim and a famous joint performance of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *Catulli Carminain* in 1955. She died in Berlin September 18, 1973.

Scope and Content Note

A collection of letters written by Mary Wigman, in German, to Walter Sorell, translator of her book *Die Sprache des Tanzes*. Also included are: letters to Mr. Sorell from other correspondents including Hanya Holm, John Martin, Juana de Laban and Margherita Wallmann discussing Mary Wigman, her book and Mr. Sorell's projected biography of Hanya Holm; a letter to Mary Wigman from Frederica T. Gibbon; an essay by Mary Wigman, "Dance pedagogy: letter to a young dancer," in English.

Key Terms

Titles

Gift of Walter Sorell

Subjects

Manuscripts (Letters)

Manuscripts -- Collections

Names

Wigman, Mary, 1886-1973

Sorell, Walter, 1905-1997

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