



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Adolph Bolm collection**

circa 1922-1983

(S) \*MGZMD 50

Processed by Amy Taylor Alpers.

## Summary

**Creator:** Bolm, Adolf, 1894-1951

**Title:** Adolph Bolm collection

**Date:** circa 1922-1983

**Size:** 3 boxes 138 folders, ca. 1100 items

**Source:** Purchase.

**Abstract:** The Adolph Bolm Collection documents the career of Adolph Bolm through papers and research information collected by author, John Dougherty, in preparation for writing several biographical articles and a book on the dancer.

**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:** Adolph Bolm Collection, (S)\*MGZMD 50, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Amy Taylor Alpers.

## Creator History

Adolph Bolm, born in St. Petersburg, Russia, September 25, 1884, entered the Maryinsky Theatre at age 9. A student of varied interests and talents, he graduated in 1903 with first honors not only in dance but also in music, painting, and literature. From 1904-1909, he partnered the great ballerinas of the Maryinsky, including Anna Pavlova and Tamara Karsavina. Beginning in 1908, he put together a small troupe and toured to Stockholm, Copenhagen, and later Berlin. He also joined Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in its Paris premiere in 1909, creating a stir with his performance of the leading part in

*Polovtsian Dances*. Leaving Russia for good in 1911, he danced for Diaghilev's company until the conclusion of its last American tour in 1917, creating roles such as Dorkon in *Daphnis and Chloe*, the Moor in *Petrouchka*, and Prince Ivan in *Firebird*. He settled in the United States, first working for two seasons as the co-maitre de ballet with Rosina Galli at the Metropolitan Opera. He formed a touring company called Ballet Intime, which in its first season included the Japanese dancer, Michio Ito. The company existed in some form until 1928, its last tour including Agnes de Mille as guest artist. In 1920 he joined the Chicago Opera as choreographer. There he created what many consider the first purely American ballet, *Birthday of the Infanta*, featuring Ruth Page. In 1923, he opened a school in Chicago, sharing the teaching with two colleagues from the St. Petersburg School. He remained in Chicago until 1930 when he moved to San Francisco to work with the opera there. In his insistence that the San Francisco Opera Association create a school under its auspices and by giving the first all-ballet evenings, Bolm essentially created the San Francisco Ballet. For that troupe he created his *Bach Cycle* and staged *El Amor Brujo*, and his last choreography *Mephisto*. In 1935, he moved to Hollywood, where he worked as a teacher and choreographer in film and concerts. Between 1940 and 1942, he appeared with Ballet Theatre, recreating his roles from Diaghilev's company, including Pierrot in *Carnaval* and the Blackamoor in *Petrouchka*. He died in his Hollywood home at age 66, April 16, 1951.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Adolph Bolm Collection documents the career of Adolph Bolm through papers and research information collected by author, John Dougherty, in preparation for writing several biographical articles and a book on the dancer. The collection is divided into three series.

**Arrangement:** Correspondence and Research Notes General Research Notes and Writings General Research Notes Writings Personal Documents of Adolph Bolm Correspondence Diaries and/or Typed Transcriptions Writings by Adolph Bolm Miscellaneous

### **Key Terms**

#### **Titles**

Dance Special Acquisitions Fund

#### **Subjects**

Manuscripts -- Collections

#### **Names**

Bolm, Adolf, 1894-1951

Dougherty, John 1910-1988

## Container List

### I. Correspondence and Research Notes (89 folders, 369 items, 584 leaves)

Series I comprises correspondence with, and/or notes compiled on, eighty individuals including Bolm's dance partners, students, relatives, and acquaintances. Many of these folders contain signed letters to John Dougherty from such people as Bolm's wife, Beatrice, Willam Christensen, Natalia Clare, Anton Dolin, Nana Gollner, Tamara Karsavina, Ted Shawn, and Carl Van Vechten, to name the most prominent.

- b. 1 f. 1 Armitage, Merle 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 2 Baldina, Alexandra 1961 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 3 Barton, Craig 1962-1963 (3 Items)
- b. 1 f. 4 Bates, Talma 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 5 Beaumont, Cyril W. 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 6 Blackburn, Evelyn 1963 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 7-13 Bolm, Beatrice 1960-1966 (ca. 100 Items)
- b. 1 f. 14 Borine, Norman 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 15 Bowling, Frances 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 16 Buffano, Beniamino 1963 (3 Items)
- b. 1 f. 17 Camryn, Walter 1963 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 18 Carlson, Jehanne Salinger 1963 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 19 Caspary, Vera 1961 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 20 Christensen, Willam Farr 1962 (4 Items)
- b. 1 f. 21 Clare, Natalia n.d. (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 22 Cunningham, Imogen 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 23 Dolin, Anton 1964 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 24 Edwards, Evangeline 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 25 Equizabal, Juan 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 26 Faiss, Fritz 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 27 Felsch, Celina Cummings 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 28 Fernández, José 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 29 Ford Foundation 1964 (3 Items)  
(Marcia Thompson)
- b. 1 f. 30 Frey Rozelle 1961 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 31 Garcia, Antonio 1963 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 32 Goldner, Nancy 1983 (5 Items)
- b. 1 f. 33 Gollner, Nana 1961 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 34 Grace, Princess of Monaco 1963-1964 (7 Items)
- b. 1 f. 35 Graham, Martha 1962 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 36 Hanff, Helene 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 37 Hoffmann, Gertrude 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 38 Horst Louis 1963 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 39 Isham, Irene (Clark) 1963-1964 (11 item)
- b. 1 f. 40 Joel, Lydia 1961-1963 (4 Items)

- I. Correspondence and Research Notes (cont.)
- b. 1 f. 41 Kalimos, Leon 1960 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 42 Kamin, Martin and Sally 1963-1964 (8 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 43 Karsavina, Tamara 1961-1963 (6 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 44 Kromdyk, Peggy 1964 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 45 Ladre, Marian 1963 (2 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 46 Le Mone, Evelyn 1963 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 47 Leslie, Caird n.d. (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 48 Leslie, Serge 1961-1963 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 49 Lewis, Curt Connor 1961-1962 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 50 Loring, Eugene 1961 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 51 Lytton, Bart 1964 (2 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 52 McGinley, Michael 1983 (4 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 53 Martin, John 1961, 1965 (5 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 54 Maxwell, Albertine 1962-1964 (7 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 55 Mayfield, John 1963 (16 Items)  
(Syracuse University)
  - b. 1 f. 56 Murray, Elfrida 1963 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 57 Nadelle, Bob 1964 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 58 Nelson, Peter 1963 (2 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 59 Niles, Doris 1964 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 60 Ohtaguro, M. n.d. (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 61 Oswald, Genevieve 1964 (2 Items)  
(see also Folder No. 50)
  - b. 1 f. 62 Oumansky, Alexander and Peggy 1963-1964 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 63 Page, Ruth 1963 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 64 Patterson, Frederick 1963-1964 (5 Items)  
(The Cornish School)
  - b. 1 f. 65 Pianowski, Mieczyslaw 1963-1964 (4 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 66 Pinska, Klarna n.d. (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 67 Powell, Stanley and Esther 1964 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 68 Primus, Margery 1964 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 69 Remisoff, Nicolai 1963, n.d. (5 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 70 Renov, Ramon 1962 (2 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 71 Rothschild, Howard 1966 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 72 Schaeffer, Rosalind 1980? (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 73 Scudder, Marie 1964 (2 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 74 Shawn, Ted 1962-1963 (4 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 75 Smith, Loran F. 1962 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 76 Sokolova, Lydia 1964 (3 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 77 Southworth, Robert 1962 (1 item)
  - b. 1 f. 78 Still, William Grant and Verna Arvey 1964 (6 Items)
  - b. 1 f. 79 Stury, Alfred 1964, 1983 (4 Items)

I. Correspondence and Research Notes (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 80 Van Vechten, Carl 1963 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 81-83 Wells, Evelyn 1963-1964 (41 item)
- b. 1 f. 84 Wells, Mary Ann 1963 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 85 Wenger, Evelyn 1963 (3 Items)
- b. 1 f. 86 Windus, Gwen 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 87 Zali, Lila 1961 (2 Items)
- b. 1 f. 88 Zemach, Benjamin 1964 (1 item)
- b. 1 f. 89 Unidentified 1963-1966 (8 Items)

II. General Research Notes and Writings (37 folders, 989 leaves)

Series II contains John Dougherty's more general research notes and writings on Bolm. These include typed transcriptions of articles on Bolm by other authors, as well as several drafts of articles by Dougherty.

- b. 2 f. 90-118 General Research Notes (721 (leaves) Items)  
Writings
- b. 2 f. 119-120 "The Many Firsts of Adolph Bolm" (2 Items)  
(2 versions, 46 leaves)
- b. 2 f. 121-124 "Adolph Bolm: an Evaluation of His Career" (4 Items)  
(4 versions, 193 leaves)
- b. 2 f. 125-126 Miscellaneous (29 leaves) (10 Items)

III. Personal Documents of Adolph Bolm (12 folders, 96 leaves, 2 diaries)

Series III comprises personal documents of Adolph Bolm. Included are nine items of correspondence between Bolm and/or Fernando Wagner and Carlos Chávez concerning a proposed tour of Mexico in 1950; four diaries and/or typed transcriptions of diaries, spanning the years 1942-1950; three articles written by Bolm; miscellaneous production notes, mainly for *Firebird* and *Birthday of the Infanta*; and a magazine, *Art and Archaeology*, inscribed by Bolm to Mr. Walter Graham.

A. Correspondence (concerning proposed tour to Mexico)

- b. 3 f. 127 Adolph Bolm to Fernando Wagner 1950 (1 item)
- b. 3 f. 128 Fernando Wagner to Adolph Bolm 1950 (6 Items)
- b. 3 f. 129 Carlos Chávez to Adolph Bolm 1950 (3 Items)

B. Diaries and/or Typed Transcriptions

- b. 3 f. 130 (with transcription) 1942 July-Oct (2 Items)
- b. 3 f. 131 1944 Jan. - Dec (1 item)  
(only transcription)
- b. 3 f. 132 1947 Jan. - Dec (1 item)  
(only transcription)
- b. 3 f. 133 1950 Jan. - Dec (7 Items)  
(with transcription) (also includes son's wedding invitation)

C. Writings by Adolph Bolm

- b. 3 f. 134 "Enrico Cecchetti" n.d. (1 item)  
(hand-signed, 3 leaves)
- b. 3 f. 135 "Is There a Specifically Russian Classical Ballet System?" (1 item)  
(ca. 1949, 3 leaves)

III. Personal Documents of Adolph Bolm (cont.)

C. Writings by Adolph Bolm (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 136 "4000 Years of Television" by Richard W. Hubbell Preface by A. Bolm 1942  
(1 item)  
(5 leaves)

D. Miscellaneous

- b. 3 f. 137 Production notes (14 leaves) (9 Items)
- b. 3 f. 138 *Magazine, Art and Archaeology, 1922 inscribed by Bolm to Mr. Walter Graham* (1 item)