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Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Professional and personal papers

1942-1984

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Processed by Margaret Domer and Irina Klyagin.

Summary

Creator: Greco, Jose_

Title: Professional and personal papers

Date: 1942-1984

Size: 48 linear feet (302 folders)

Source: Gift, Jose Greco, 12/31/1991

Abstract: The papers primarily document the administrative roles José Greco filled as director of Spanish dance companies and as head of the José Greco Foundation for Hispanic Dance.

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Language of the Material: In English with some material in Spanish and French

Processing note: Processed by Margaret Domer and Irina Klyagin.

Creator History

is a flamenco and Spanish dance artist performing in the United States and abroad. He was born Costanzo Greco in the village of Montorio nei Frentani in the Abruzzi mountains of Italy in December 1918. In 1928, José accompanied his mother and sister to New York to join their father. In Brooklyn,

José became interested in dance while accompanying his sister Norina to classes at Helene Veola's School of Spanish Dance. He enrolled as a student and received encouragement from Vicente Escudero who observed him perform there. 's professional debut took place in 1937 at the Hippodrome Theater in Manhattan dancing in various operas. He began making nightclub appearances in New York and Chicago. In 1938, the legendary Spanish dancer, La Argentinita, approached to audition for her company, which he joined in 1943. The company toured the United States for the next two years, making several guest appearances with the Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House. In 1945, La Argentinita died and, accompanied by her sister, Pilar Lopez, escorted her body back to Spain. While there, he and Pilar Lopez formed a new company to carry on the works of Argentinita, touring all over Europe. made his film debut in "Manolete," directed by Florian Rey in 1948. The dancers, decors and costumes he acquired for the film were to form the basis of his first company. 's Ballets y Bailes de Espana debuted at the Apollo Theatre in Barcelona in 1949 and toured the European continent and Great Britain. and his Spanish Ballet made their American debut at the Shubert Theater on October 1, 1951 followed by two extensive tours across America. In January 1952, José hired John F. Nonnenbacher, Jr. to manage his company. Jack Nonnenbacher would be the company manager until his death in 1970. made a featured appearance in Norman Foster's "Sombrero" in 1952 and appeared in Michael Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days," as well as "Holiday for Lovers." In 1965, he had a co-starring role in Stanley Kramer's "Ship of Fools." His last film appearance was in Ferde Grofe Jr.'s "The Proud and The Damned" in 1968. In addition to movies and touring with his company, Greco also made television appearances on such programs as Ed Sullivan, Bob Hope, Perry Como, and Andy Williams, as well as filming an entire Voice of Firestone program. The company also made several recordings of their music for Decca, RCA, MGM and Columbia Records. During the late 1960's, developed a relationship with the Northwood Institute where he established the School of Spanish Arts on institute campuses in Michigan, Indiana, and Texas. In 1968, he founded the Academia y Conservatorio de Arte de Marbella y Andalucia in Spain, which offered courses in Spanish dance, music, literature and related arts and crafts. After the death of Jack Nonnenbacher, the management of the company was taken up by Carlton Sedgely, an associate from Northwood Institute, who was a partner in the Royce Carlton agency which booked lecturers for colleges and universities. The Foundation for Hispanic Dance, Inc. was created in New York City in 1971 to sponsor educational endeavors. After his last world tour with a large company in 1976-1977, Mr. Greco concentrated his efforts on Foundation activities. Together with his prima ballerina, Nana Lorca, conducted lecture-demonstrations and master classes in universities and colleges around the U.S. In 1974, founded El Centro de Arte Espagnol in Malaga, Spain, with Nana Lorca as co-director. Other pursuits have included an autobiography, *The Gypsy in My Soul*, which was published in 1977. toured the United States as Count Dracula in *The Passion of Dracula* in 1978 and played Jonathan Brewster in a 1981 production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in Malaga, Spain. Mr. Greco performed in television projects and appeared with the Miami Opera Company in their 1980-81 season, and with the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico from 1980-1982. In 1983, inaugurated and appeared with The All New Company of Spanish Dancers, Singers and Musicians, which performed throughout the U.S. and Canada. This new company featured several of his children, including II, and his daughters, Alessandra, Carmela and Lola Greco. In 1997, continues to play a role in promoting Spanish culture as President of his Foundation for Hispanic Dance. In addition, he has been a Fellow at the National Endowment for the Arts and a Professor of Dance at Franklin & Marshall College since 1993. He continues to direct The Spanish Dance Company.

Scope and Content Note

This collection covers the period from 1948-1984, although there is some information, mainly in Mr. Greco's personal files, dating from the mid-late 1940's. The richest documentation centers on company activities between 1952 and 1969, when John "Jack" Nonnenbacher was the Managing Director of the Company. During these years, the company may well have been the only professional dance group in the world to function on its own, independent of any foundation or government underwriting. The documentation in this group is particularly strong in administrative correspondence and information on

bookings and tours. Carlton Sedgeley assumed the role of manager for the Company in 1970 aiding in appealing to newer and younger audiences. In 1971, The Foundation for Hispanic Dance was established. As a non-profit organization, the foundation could apply for local and national funds to develop a new series of presentations including lecture-demonstration-recitals, symphony guest performances, and college/university residencies and master classes. The records document this second period from 1970 to 1984, with most correspondence previous to 1982. Carlton Sedgeley was the Acting Director of the foundation during most of this time, as well as a partner of the Royce Carlton lecture agency. Royce Carlton gradually assumed the entire booking responsibilities for from Kolmar-Luth Entertainment in the 1970s so that administration had become more centralized than before. However, financial concerns were just as severe as ever, and this collection reflects very well the constant hardships faced by a dance company having to deal with a myriad of unions, agents, lawyers, immigration officials and accountants.

Arrangement: The papers of are divided into eight series. I. Administration II. Organization and development III. Bookings and tours IV. Choreography V. Legal VI. Personal-- VII. Films and other projects VIII. Financial

Key Terms

Occupations

Choreographers
Flamenco dancers

Subjects

Flamenco
Manuscripts -- Collections
Spanish dancing

Titles

Gift of José Greco

Names

Greco, Jose_
Amparo, Nila
Lorca, Nana
Nonnenbacher, Jack
Sedgeley, Carlton
DHCA
Jose_ Greco Company

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