



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Eleanor King letters to Grace Stevenson**

1942-1984

(S) \*MGZMD 87

Processed by Henley Haslam.

## Summary

**Creator:** King, Eleanor, 1906-1991

**Title:** Eleanor King letters to Grace Stevenson

**Date:** 1942-1984

**Size:** 1 document box 29 items in 9 folders

**Source:** Gift. Grace Stevenson. Received: December 8, 1992.

**Abstract:** Eleanor King (1906-1991) writes to her longtime friend about her travels and professional activities.

**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:** King, Eleanor, 1906-1991. Letters to Grace Stevenson, (S) \*MGZMD 87, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Henley Haslam.

## Creator History

Eleanor King was born in Middletown, Pennsylvania in 1906. After studying locally with Clair Tree Major, she moved to New York to work with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman at their studio. She also received training in mime with Etienne Decroux, and in Oriental dance forms of Japan, Sri Lanka, and Bali. King created roles in many of the early work of Humphrey and Weidman. Her performances for Weidman were in the premieres of *The Conspirator*(1930) and *The Happy Hypocrite*(1930); roles created for Humphrey included *Water Study*(1929), *Life of the Bee*(1929), *The Shakers*(1932), *The Pleasures of Counterpoint*(1932), and *Suite in F*(1933). Eleanor King began to choreograph in The

Little Company, a group consisting of herself, Ernestine Henoch (Stodelle), Letitia Ide, and José Limon. Her first solo credits came from another small company of concert dancers, the Theatre Dance Group, which included dancers Fé Alf, George Bockman, Sybil Shearer, and William Bales. She then worked extensively touring the United States and Canada as a concert dancer and with a company of her own based in Seattle, Washington. Her first large work was *Icaro*, with poetry of Lauro de Bosis and music by David Diamond and Franczeska Boas, which premiered at the Brooklyn Museum Dance Center in May, 1937. In 1955, King became associate professor in the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts at the University of Arkansas, teaching dance and mime, and also choreographing for the Theatre of the Imagination. She took a sabbatical (1960-1961) to study dance in Japan, where she also lectured.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Eleanor King (1906-1991) writes to her longtime friend about her travels and professional activities.

### **Key Terms**

#### **Occupations**

Choreographers  
Dancers

#### **Titles**

Gift of Grace Stevenson

#### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Letters (correspondence)

#### **Subjects**

Manuscripts -- Collections

#### **Names**

King, Eleanor, 1906-1991

## Container List

- f. 1 1977 (3 Items)
- f. 2 1979 (1 Item)
- f. 3 1980 (2 Items)
- f. 4 1981 (2 Items)
- f. 5 1982 (6 Items)
- f. 6 1983 (5 Items)
- f. 7 1984 (6 Items)
- f. 8 1985 (3 Items)
- f. 9 1986 (1 Item)