



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Todd Bolender letters to Joel Schnee**

1974-2003

(S) \*MGZMD 149

## Summary

**Creator:** Bolender, Todd

**Title:** Todd Bolender letters to Joel Schnee

**Date:** 1974-2003

**Size:** 1 box (10 folders)

**Source:** Gift of, Joel Schnee, 2006

**Abstract:** Todd Bolender was born Feb. 27, 1914 in Canton, Ohio and settled in New York City in 1936 where he studied with Hanya Holm. Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine recruited him for their first company, the American Ballet. Kirstein asked him to join Ballet Caravan and he was a novice choreographer with Ballet Society. When New York City Ballet was founded in 1948, there began a long association between Bolender and the company which included memorable performances in Balanchine's *The four temperaments*, *Symphonic concertante*, and *Agon*, Jerome Robbins' *Age of anxiety and Concert*, and creating his own works *Still point*, *Souvenirs*, and *Creation of the world*. A period of working abroad included being ballet director in Cologne and Frankfurt, Germany and the Ataturk Opera House in Turkey. He became artistic director of the Kansas City Ballet (later renamed the State Ballet of Missouri) in 1981, retiring in 1996. As artistic director emeritus, he continued to supervise his own works for the company. He died, age 92, in Kansas City, Kan. on Oct. 12, 2006. Personal letters written over a 30 year span to colleague Joel Schnee, discussing their mutual careers as choreographers and ballet directors, especially in Germany and Turkey. People discussed include Heinz Spoerli, William Whitener, James Jordan, Betty Cage, Una Kai, Sevgi Hanim, New York City Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, the George Balanchine Foundation, and State Ballet of Missouri. Passing references are made to George Balanchine, Janet Reed, the United States Information Agency, San Francisco Ballet, John Taras, and George W. Bush.

**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:** Todd Bolender letters to Joel Schnee, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

### **Creator History**

Todd Bolender was born Feb. 27, 1914 in Canton, Ohio and settled in New York City in 1936 where he studied with Hanya Holm. Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine recruited him for their first company, the American Ballet. Kirstein asked him to join Ballet Caravan and he was a novice choreographer with Ballet Society. When New York City Ballet was founded in 1948, there began a long association between Bolender and the company which included memorable performances in Balanchine's *The four temperaments*, *Symphonie concertante*, and *Agon*, Jerome Robbins' *Age of anxiety* and *Concert*, and creating his own works *Still point*, *Souvenirs*, and *Creation of the world*. A period of working abroad included being ballet director in Cologne and Frankfurt, Germany and the Ataturk Opera House in Turkey. He became artistic director of the Kansas City Ballet (later renamed the State Ballet of Missouri) in 1981, retiring in 1996. As artistic director emeritus, he continued to supervise his own works for the company. He died, age 92, in Kansas City, Kan. on Oct. 12, 2006.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Personal letters written over a 30 year span to colleague Joel Schnee, discussing their mutual careers as choreographers and ballet directors, especially in Germany and Turkey. People discussed include Heinz Spoerli, William Whitener, James Jordan, Betty Cage, Una Kai, Sevgi Hanim, New York City Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, the George Balanchine Foundation, and State Ballet of Missouri. Passing references are made to George Balanchine, Janet Reed, the United States Information Agency, San Francisco Ballet, John Taras, and George W. Bush.

**Arrangement:** Chronological arrangement, 1974-1991, 1993-2003 and undated

### **Key Terms**

#### **Subjects**

Ballet -- Germany

Ballet -- Kansas

Ballet -- Turkey

Choreographers -- United States -- 20th century

#### **Occupations**

Choreographers

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

Correspondence

#### **Titles**

Gift of Joel Schnee

#### **Names**

Bolender, Todd

Cage, Betty  
Hanim, Sevgi  
Jordan, James (James Alexander)  
Kai, Una  
Schnee, Joel  
Spoerli, Heinz, 1941-  
Whitener, William  
George Balanchine Foundation  
Kansas City Ballet  
New York City Ballet  
State Ballet of Missouri