



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Grand Union records**

bulk 1972-1978

(S) \*MGZMD 132

## Summary

**Creator:** Grand Union (Performance group)

**Title:** Grand Union records

**Date:** bulk 1972-1978

**Size:** .75 linear feet (54 folders)

**Source:** The Grand Union Records were donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1993 by Performing Artservices, New York, N.Y.

**Abstract:** Grand Union, a performing arts collective, was active between 1970 and 1976. This collection includes office files, press materials, photographs, and information on the performances and performers of the group, especially Yvonne Rainer.

**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>

**Conditions Governing Access:**  
Stored OFFSITE.

**Preferred citation:** Grand Union Records, (S) \*MGZMD 132, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Laura Raucher and Charles Perrier.

## Creator History

The Grand Union, also know as the Rio Grand Union, came into being in the fall of 1970. A collective of friends, choreographers, and performers, its early members included Trisha Brown, Douglas Dunn,

Nancy Green, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, David Gordon and Barbara Lloyd. The collective dissolved in May 1976 and became the New Grand Union. The members of the New Grand Union were Barbara Dilley, Douglas Dunn, David Gordon, Nancy Lewis and Steve Paxton. The New Grand Union stopped soliciting dates for ensemble performance, but continued to produce and seek sponsorship for its members separately. Performing Artservices, which managed the Grand Union during the early 1970's, donated this collection in 1993. All of the work was improvised in performance, the feeling being that the familiarity and confidence established in previous performances and shared history provided a solid ground for spontaneous behavior and inspiration in performance. An ongoing, constantly changing approach to work resulted in no two performances being alike. Sometimes the evening seemed to be about fun and games; sometimes it was solemn and highly symbolic. Sometimes it was hard to characterize. In this respect the Grand Union seemed to be more about process, involvement, and transition than any fixed view of art and theater.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection is divided into five series: Office files, Press materials, Performers, Performances, and Photographs. It includes press information, photographs, programs, and correspondence concerning engagements of the Grand Union, ca. 1970-1976. It also includes correspondence, financial records, and photocopies of photographs borrowed by Margaret Hupp Ramsay for her 1986 thesis entitled *The Grand Union (1970-1976) : an improvisational performance group*, published in 1991. The majority of the correspondence is between Performing Artservices and the members of Grand Union about upcoming engagements and other administrative issues. Included in the press materials are program notes, mission statements, observations from Grand Union members and critics, reviews, programs, and flyers. Of particular interest are the transcript and other materials from Grand Union talks to critics, an October 1974 meeting between Robb Baker, Carolyn Brown, Kathy Duncan, John Howell, James Klosty, Deborah Jowitt, Andy Mann, Robert Pierce, Sara Rudner, Valda Setterfield and Marcia Seigel and Grand Union members Trisha Brown, Barbara Dilley, Douglas Dunn, David Gordon and Nancy Lewis. More than half of the collection concerns the performers and performances of the members of the Grand Union and includes information on engagements, reviews, grant applications, correspondence and press materials. Yvonne Rainer, with eight folders, is the most represented of the performers; included is her fellowship application for a film project in 1974-1975. Of interest in the materials pertaining to performances and teaching residencies is the Dance Gallery Festival in April/May, 1973, in which the Grand Union mainly performed, but other artists were also invited to present their works at the festival. Other Festival materials include schedules, budgets, correspondence about technical and production needs, and a final grant report that explains the successes and difficulties of this endeavor. Also of interest are the scripts that exist for some of the engagements.

**Arrangement:** The Grand Union Records are organized in the following series: Series I: Office files Series II: Press Materials Series III: Performers Series IV: Performances Series V: Photographs

### **Key Terms**

#### **Occupations**

Dancers

#### **Titles**

Gift of Performing Artservices, 1993

#### **Subjects**

Improvisation in dance

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

Photographs

**Names**

Grand Union (Performance group)

Rainer, Yvonne, 1934-

Performing Artservices, Inc.

## Container List

### Office files (3 folders)

Correspondences and financial records related to administrative needs and potential engagements, arranged alphabetically and chronologically within each folder.

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence 1972-1978, undated
- b. 1 f. 2 Financial information 1972-1978, undated
- b. 1 f. 3 Ramsay, Margaret Hupp 1989  
Includes correspondence and photocopies of photographs.

### Press Materials (14 folders)

Reviews, articles, biographies, press releases, arranged chronologically within each folder. Multiple reviews from a single publication are filed under the publication's name.

- b. 1 f. 4 Dance Magazine 1972-1975
- b. 1 f. 5 Grand Union talks to the critics 1976  
Includes correspondence, transcripts.
- b. 1 f. 6 Soho Weekly News 1974-1976
- b. 1 f. 7 Village Voice 1971-1976
- b. 1 f. 8 Miscellaneous articles 1974-1975, undated
- b. 1 f. 9 Miscellaneous reviews 1971-1976, undated
- b. 1 f. 10 Biographies  
Includes correspondence
- b. 1 f. 11 Fee schedule 1970, undated
- b. 1 f. 12 Mockups 1973-1974, undated  
Includes photographs.
- b. 1 f. 13 New Grand Union (May 1976)
- b. 1 f. 14 Observations 1971, undated
- b. 1 f. 15 Press release
- b. 1 f. 16 Program information
- b. 1 f. 17 Programs, flyers, posters 1971-1976, undated

### Performers (11 folders)

Individual folders on the performers are filed alphabetically and arranged chronologically within each folder.

- b. 1 f. 18 Green, Nancy 1971, 1976, undated  
Includes reviews and biography.
- b. 1 f. 19 Lloyd, Barbara 1972-1973, undated  
Includes biography.
- b. 1 f. 20 Paxton, Steve 1973, undated  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 21 Rainer, Yvonne, biography and reviews 1972-1975, undated
- b. 1 f. 22 Rainer, Yvonne, correspondence 1971-1974, undated
- b. 1 f. 23 Rainer, Yvonne, Dallas, Texas
- b. 1 f. 24 Rainer, Yvonne, film project 1974-1976  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 25 Rainer, Yvonne, Guggenheim 1974
- b. 1 f. 26 Rainer, Yvonne, Pacific Coast tour 1973  
Includes correspondence.

- b. 1 f. 27 Rainer, Yvonne, Paris, France 1972, undated  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 28 Rainer, Yvonne, Rome, Italy 1973-1974, undated  
Includes correspondence.  
Performances (22 folders)  
Arranged alphabetically by performance venue and arranged chronologically within each folder.
- b. 1 f. 29 Annenberg Center, Philadelphia, Penn. (Feb. 1974) 1973, undated  
Includes correspondence and blueprints.
- b. 1 f. 30 Bordeaux, France (Nov. 18-22, 1974)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 31 Buffalo State College, N.Y. (Sept. 22-24, 1973)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 32 Dance Gallery Festival, New York, N.Y. (April-May, 1973)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 33 Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, Minn. (Oct. 5, 1975)  
Includes script.
- b. 1 f. 34 La Mama, New York, N.Y. (Mar. 14-16, 1975 and Apr. 22-25, 1976)  
Includes financial information.
- b. 1 f. 35 Lewiston Art Park, Lewiston, N.Y. (July-Aug. 1974)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 36 MoMing Collection, Chicago, Ill. (Oct. 10-13, 1975)
- b. 2 f. 37 New York University Teaching Program, New York, N.Y. (Spring 1972)
- b. 2 f. 38 Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio (Jan. 3-22, 1972)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 39 Rome, Italy (Jan. 2-4, 1974)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 40 San Diego State College, San Diego, Calif. (Feb. 19-23, 1974) 1973-1974  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 41 Seibu Theater, Japan (Dec. 14-17, 1975)  
Includes reviews.
- b. 2 f. 42 State University of New York at Stonybrook (May 6, 1972 and May 4, 1974)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 43 University of California at Los Angeles (May 3-5, 1976)
- b. 2 f. 44 University of California at Santa Barbara (Apr. 29-May 1, 1976) 1975-1976
- b. 2 f. 45 University of Iowa, Iowa City (Mar. 7-8, 1974)  
Includes script.
- b. 2 f. 46 University of Montana, Missoula (May 6-8, 1976) 1975-1976  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 47 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minn. (Oct. 5-10, 1975)  
Includes script.
- b. 2 f. 48 Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts, Vienna, Va. (Aug. 22, 1974)  
Includes correspondence.
- b. 2 f. 49 List of performance 1973-1974
- b. 2 f. 50 Technical sheet  
Photographs (4 folders)  
Performances and performers documented in photographs and contact sheets.

- b. 2 f. 51 **Performances**  
Photographers include Cosmos, Tom Berthiaume.
- b. 2 f. 52 **Performances**  
Photographers include Cosmos, Babette Mantolte, Peter Moore, and Susan Horwitz.
- b. 2 f. 53-54 **Contact sheets**  
Photographers include Cosmos.