



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane collection**

1947-2013

(S) \*MGZMD 433

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** Briane, Mirielle

**Title:** Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane collection

**Date:** 1947-2013

**Size:** 2.26 linear feet (1 box, 2 volumes)

**Source:** Donated by Oleg Briansky, 2016.

**Abstract:** Oleg Briansky (1929-) is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and artistic director, born in Belgium to Russian parents. Mireille Briane is a French dancer, choreographer, teacher, and artistic director. Both have worked in the United States since 1963. The Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane collection (1947-2013) consists of photographs, programs, loose clippings, scrapbooks, and video recordings.

**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 Use:** The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Dance Division at [dance@nypl.org](mailto:dance@nypl.org).

**Preferred citation:** Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane collection, (S) \*MGZMD 433. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2016.

## Creator History

Oleg Briansky (1929-) is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and artistic director. Briansky was born to Russian parents in Brussels on November 9, 1929. He was trained with the Vaganova Method, and studied with such masters as Leonide Katchourowsky, Victor Gsovsky, Madame Rousanne, Boris

Kniaseff, and Vera Volkova. He made his professional debut in Brussels in 1945, and in 1946 joined the Ballets des Champs-Élysées in Paris. Over the next few years, his career flourished and he performed as a principal dancer at the London Festival Ballet, the New York Metropolitan Ballet, the Munich Opera Ballet, the Teatro Colon of Buenos Aires, the Royal Opera House in Antwerp, and the Chicago Opera Ballet.

Mireille Briane was born in Paris and began training as a dancer at the Paris Opera at the age of 8. By the time she was 16 she was a principal dancer at the Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux. She was soon dancing at the Ballets des Champs-Élysées, the Ballets de Paris, the Chicago Opera Ballet, and the London Festival Ballet.

Briansky and Briane met when they were both dancers at Les Ballets des Champs-Élysées, and they were married in 1953. During the 1950s and 1960s they often performed together in international tours in North and South America. In 1963 they settled in New York City, and in 1965 they co-founded the Briansky Saratoga Ballet Center, a professionally oriented summer dance program in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Briane taught at the School of American Ballet, Alvin Ailey Dance Center, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ballet de Rio de Janeiro, and Universal Ballet Academy. She also directed a series of children's ballets for Radio Television Française and created a year-long series of educational ballet programs for the Independent Television Network in Britain.

Briansky taught for the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the School of American Ballet, the Teatro Comunale in Florence, Danceworks in London, the Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris, the Universal Ballet Company in Seoul, the Teatro Municipal in Rio de Janeiro, and Rosella Hightower's Centre de Danse Classique in Cannes. Briansky supervised the dances for the Academy Award-nominated documentary *The Children of Theatre Street* (1978).

From 1990 to 1991, Briansky was associate director of the Universal Ballet Academy in Washington, D.C. He received the 1994 Nijinsky Award for his ballet, *Scheherazade*. He was also a panelist for the New York State Council on the Arts and a juror for the Prix de Lausanne International Ballet Competition. Briansky and Briane served as artistic directors of the Ballet Guild of the Lehigh Valley from 1994 to 2006.

In 2008, the Russian filmmaker Yelena Demikovsky made a documentary about the lives and careers of Briansky and Briane, *Happy to Be So...* In 2015 Briansky and Briane were awarded Mark DeGarmo Dance's "Educational Visionary" Lifetime Achievement Award, as "visionaries who have promoted innovation in education through the arts."

### **Scope and Content Note**

The majority of the Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane collection consists of photographs documenting the productions Briansky and Briane performed in or choreographed in France, England, South America, and the United States. The photographs are annotated with information on the dancers and location of each production. These are arranged alphabetically by production title. There are also headshots, backstage and rehearsal shots, personal photographs, and photographs of special events. Also included is an annotated copy of Irène Lidova's 1953 publication, *17 Visages de la Danse Française*.

Briansky and Briane's careers as dancers and teachers are further documented with one folder of

programs. There are programs from two exhibitions at the Saratoga Ballet Center: *Ballet Memorabilia*, which Briansky and Briane organized with Lucien Mars in 1966 and from the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the organization, now the Briansky Saratoga Ballet Center. There are also programs from the 1978 film, *The Children of Theatre Street* for which Briansky supervised dance sequences; and from the Universal Ballet Academy, where Briansky and Briane worked as associate director and assistant associate director. A flyer for a screening of *Happy to Be So*, the documentary about Briansky and Briane, is also included.

Publicity materials contain two scrapbooks of newspaper clippings documenting Briansky's career 1952 to 1954, when he was primarily dancing in London. One scrapbook includes notes to Briansky from Anton Dolin and Tamara Toumanova. There are a few loose clippings and a 2006 issue of the magazine *Dance Teacher*, which featured a cover story on Briansky and Briane.

This collection includes filmed performances of ballets and other dance works choreographed by Briansky, as well as *Happy to Be So...*, a documentary about Briansky and Briane.

**Arrangement:** The Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane collection is divided into the following categories: Photographs, Programs, Publicity Materials, and Video Recordings.

## Key Terms

### Occupations

Arts administrators  
Choreographers  
Dance teachers  
Dancers

### Subjects

Ballet -- United States  
Ballet -- United States -- History -- 20th century  
Dance -- England -- History -- 20th century  
Dance -- France -- History -- 20th century  
Dance -- Photographs  
Dance -- Production and direction -- Study and teaching  
Dance -- Technique  
Dance programs

### Names

Briansky, Oleg

## Container List

### Photographs 1947-1989

#### Productions 1951-1980s

- b. 1 f. 1 *Adagio* 1962
- b. 1 f. 2 *Aurora's Wedding* 1955, 1956
- b. 1 f. 3 *Autumn* 1960, 1963
- b. 1 f. 4 *Ballerina* 1949
- b. 1 f. 5 *Blue Danube* 1050s, 1953
- b. 1 f. 6 *Chaises Musicales* 1950
- b. 1 f. 7 *Checkmate* 1958
- b. 1 f. 8 *The Devil's Bride* 1947
- b. 1 f. 9 *Don Quixote* 1955, 1959
- b. 1 f. 10 *Esmereida* 1953, 1961
- b. 1 f. 11 *Francesca da Rimini* 1959
- b. 1 f. 12 *Giselle* 1955
- b. 1 f. 13 *Grand Finale* 1980s
- b. 1 f. 14 *Idylle* 1954
- b. 1 f. 15 *The Merry Widow* 1955
- b. 1 f. 16 *Napoli* 1962
- b. 1 f. 17 *The Nutcracker* 1950s, 1963, 1966
- b. 1 f. 18 *Peter and the Wolfe* 1970s
- b. 1 f. 19 *Pieces Brilliantes* late 1950s
- b. 1 f. 20 *Rendez-Vous* 1959
- b. 1 f. 21 *Revenge* 1955
- b. 1 f. 22 *Ribbon Dance* 1950s
- b. 1 f. 23 *Roman Centurion* 1959
- b. 1 f. 24 *Romeo and Juliet* 1961
- b. 1 f. 25 *Samson and Dalilah* 1966
- b. 1 f. 26 *Scheherazade* 1950s
- b. 1 f. 27 Showcase Piece - Mireille Briane 1961
- b. 1 f. 28 *Snow Maiden* 1961
- b. 1 f. 29 *Soirée* 1955, 1956
- b. 1 f. 30 *Swan Lake* 1950s, 1961
- b. 1 f. 31 *Les Sylphides* 1956
- b. 1 f. 32 *Sylvia* 1957
- b. 1 f. 33 *Symphonic Impressions* 1951
- b. 1 f. 34 *Water Music* 1959

#### Other Photographs 1947-1989

- b. 1 f. 35 Backstage and Rehearsal Shots 1956-1970s
- b. 1 f. 36 Headshots 1952

Photographs (cont.)

Other Photographs (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 37 Personal Photographs 1950s
- b. 1 f. 38 Publicity Shots 1947, 1952
- b. 1 f. 39 Special Events 1975-1989
- Teaching
- b. 1 f. 40 Mireille Briane 1969-1970s
- b. 1 f. 41 Oleg Briansky 1970s-1980s
- b. 1 f. 42 *17 Visages de la Danse Française by Irène Lidova* 1953  
A French book consisting of photographs and brief biographies of prominent French dancers, including Briansky.

Inscribed by the author to an unknown recipient. Briansky's entry is annotated in Russian.

- b. 1 f. 43 Programs 1956-2008
- Publicity Materials 1952-2013
- b. 1 f. 44 Loose Clippings and Magazine 1955, 1976, 2006
- Scrapbooks - Newspaper Clippings
- v. 1 1952-1953  
Includes notes to Briansky from Anton Dolin and Tamara Toumanova.
- v. 2 1953-1954

Video Recordings 1991-2008

*Country Moon Charleston Ballet* 1995 February 3, 1995 February 4  
Choreographed by Briansky; With Devon Carney and Kin Pauley.

Unavailable pending digitization

*Happy to Be So... - Documentary about Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane*  
2008  
Directed by Yelena Demikovsky.

Unavailable pending digitization

*Jeux D'Enfants* 1996 May 25  
Choreographed by Briansky.

Unavailable pending digitization

*Scheherazade - Memphis Concert Ballet* 1991 October 27  
Choreographed by Briansky.

Unavailable pending digitization

Video Recordings (cont.)

Student Performance - Saratoga Ballet Theatre, Bernnhard Theatre 2005 July

23

Choreographed by Briansky.

Unavailable pending digitization