



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Rhoda Grauer papers**

1965-2011 [bulk 1974-1994]

(S) \*MGZMD 443

Compiled by Amelia Carlin, 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** Grauer, Rhoda

**Title:** Rhoda Grauer papers

**Date:** 1965-2011 [bulk 1974-1994]

**Size:** 10.22 linear feet (26 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Gift of Rhoda Grauer, 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2015.

**Abstract:** Rhoda Grauer (born in 1944) is a pioneering producer of dance on television. She is widely known for her 1993 documentary series DANCING, which explored the meaning of dance in world culture. Her papers date from 1965 to 1994, and trace the development of her career as a producer in the performing arts, the creation of DANCING, and her work with Twyla Tharp, Jerome Robbins, and American Ballet Theatre.

**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:**

Sound and video materials are unavailable pending digitization.

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**Preferred citation:** Rhoda Grauer papers, (S) \*MGZMD 443. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Amelia Carlin, 2016.

## Creator History

Rhoda Grauer is a pioneering producer of dance on television; and a director, writer, and manager for performing arts, documentary film, and radio. The primary focus of her work is world culture with an emphasis on traditional and contemporary dance. Grauer was born in Poughkeepsie, New York, and studied theater at Vassar College, graduating in 1966.

She worked for the Festival of Two Worlds, from 1968 to 1974, becoming administrative director in July 1973. During this period, she also directed or worked as assistant director for a number of plays, including *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1974) at Vassar College, *The Pelican* at The Classic Theater at Stagelights (1973), and two original one act plays at La MaMa Theatre, New York (1972).

While at Spoleto, Grauer worked with Jerome Robbins, and through him became friends with Twyla Tharp in 1973, who introduced her to the mediums of film and video. She became the executive director of the Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation in 1974. Her first production role was for *Making Television Dance: A Videotape by Twyla Tharp*, which featured Mikhail Baryshnikov and aired in 1977. This was the first of a number of productions Grauer worked on with Tharp and Baryshnikov.

Grauer was invited to direct dance programs for the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978, where she developed and administered the national funding program. She also produced NBC's *Live from Studio 8H: An Evening with Jerome Robbins and Members of the New York City Ballet* in 1980.

Grauer was asked to join American Ballet Theatre to establish a media department in 1981. During this period, she toured with the company, worked on organizing the benefit galas (1994, 1995), and also produced Twyla Tharp's television adaptation of *The Catherine Wheel* (1981), and *Baryshnikov by Tharp with American Ballet Theatre* (1984). In 1984, Grauer joined the Performance Programs division of WNET (channel 13), the New York PBS television station, where she worked on the series *Great Performances* and *Dance in America*. Some of the programs she produced were: *David Gordon's Made in USA* (1987); *The Search for Nijinsky's Rite of Spring*; and *Gregory Hines: Tap Dance in America* (1989).

While at WNET, Grauer developed the idea to create a documentary series on dance in world culture, focusing on why people dance. Research for the *DANCING* series began in the late 1980s and the eight hour series aired in May, 1993. It was filmed on five continents and includes the dance traditions of eighteen cultures. As part of outreach for the series, the program "America Dancing" was created as an audience development campaign which included a series of live events organized to tie in with broadcasts of the documentary.

Grauer subsequently worked as director of Media and Performing Arts at the Asia Society, New York, and as Dean at the School of the Visual and Performing Arts, Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus. She lives in Bali, Indonesia.

## Scope and Content Note

The Rhoda Grauer papers date from 1965 to 2011 (bulk dates 1974 - 1994) and chronicle Grauer's career as a producer of dance works for television and the stage.

The planning, production, and reception of the documentary series *DANCING* that Grauer created and produced is well represented in the collection, and files include funding applications and the script for each of the eight episodes. The film and video recordings include a large amount of research materials and resources used for the series.

The majority of the collection is grouped according to the development of Grauer's professional career, starting in the 1960s with her work with the Festival of Two Worlds and early directing roles. The records are alphabetically arranged within these categories. Most strongly represented are her files from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Ballet Theatre, and WNET. These files contain grant proposals; planning and production documents, such as detailed schedules and budgets; meeting minutes and agendas; reports; contracts and negotiations; correspondence; travel itineraries; financial records; clippings; and printed matter. Files for specific productions may include scripts; stage diagrams; and contact lists and contract details of cast and crew. Correspondence and production files may also contain notes and printed matter.

Grauer's production roles in works by the choreographers Twyla Tharp and Jerome Robbins, beginning in the early 1970s and continuing through her tenure at American Ballet Theatre, and at the public television station WNET are well reflected throughout the records.

Personal papers contain files labelled as "personal" or "private" by Grauer and include a small amount of correspondence with friends and family, notes, and household records. These files also trace her job seeking activities and career development through correspondence, resumes, applications, and clippings relating to her career.

Also present are photographs relating to various productions with which Grauer was involved, several earlier Tharp works, and publicity photos.

Film recordings of performances include *The Catherine Wheel* (1985); *Baryshnikov by Tharp* (1984); *Pink Dream* by American Ballet Theatre (1984); and *David Gordon's Made in USA* (1987).

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

American Ballet Theatre  
Dance  
Festival of Two Worlds

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings  
Contracts  
Correspondence  
Photographs  
Scripts (documents)  
Slides

### **Occupations**

Television producers and directors

### **Names**

Baryshnikov, Mikhail, 1948-  
Robbins, Jerome  
Tharp, Twyla  
WNET (Television station : New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

- Festival of Two Worlds
- b. 1 f. 1-4 1968-1973
  - b. 1 f. 5-6 Clippings and Printed Matter 1958-1974, 1982
- Directing and Administrative Roles
- b. 1 f. 7 APA-Phoenix 1967-1968  
*La Cambiale di Matrimonio*  
Finch College Auditorium.
  - b. 1 f. 8 1974
  - b. 23 f. 1 Poster and Stage Plans 1974
  - b. 24 f. 1 Props 1974
  - b. 1 f. 9 Evening of Reader's Theatre 1974  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
  - b. 1 f. 10 *Inside Out and Sweetness* 1982  
La MaMa Theatre.
  - b. 1 f. 11-12 *The Magic Flute* 1976  
Artpark Theater. Includes photographs.
  - b. 2 f. 1 Orleans Arena Theater 1970
  - b. 2 f. 2-4 *The Pelican* 1973  
Includes slides and photographs.
  - b. 2 f. 5-6 Phoenix House Ballet Benefit with Jerome Robbins 1975-1976
  - b. 2 f. 7-8 *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* 1973-1974  
Vassar College Theater Department. Includes slides.
- Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation
- b. 2 f. 9-10 1965-1967
  - b. 3 f. 1 1977-1978
  - b. 3 f. 2-4 Board of Directors 1987-1989  
Material concerns the dissolution of the Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation.
- Clippings and Printed Matter
- b. 3 f. 5-7 1976-1981
  - b. 24 f. 2 1976
- National Endowment for the Arts
- b. 3 f. 8-12 1978-1990
  - b. 4 f. 1-2 1979-1981
  - b. 4 f. 3-6 Correspondence 1978-1983
- Jerome Robbins
- b. 4 f. 7 China Tour 1981  
*Live From Studio 8H: An Evening With Jerome Robbins and Members of the New York City Ballet*

National Endowment for the Arts (cont.)

Jerome Robbins (cont.)

Live From Studio 8H: An Evening With Jerome Robbins and Members of the New York City Ballet (cont.)

b. 4 f. 8-9 1980

b. 5 f. 1-2 1980

b. 23 f. 2 Set Design 1980

Reports and Printed Matter

b. 5 f. 3-6 Annual Reports 1975-1980

b. 6 f. 1-3 Budget Requests 1979-1980

b. 6 f. 4-6 Dance Program Policy Panel 1979-1981

Dance Touring Program Guidelines and Directories

b. 6 f. 7 1979

b. 7 f. 1-3 1979-1982

b. 7 f. 4-6 Handbooks and Research 1978-1980

American Ballet Theatre

b. 7 f. 7 Correspondence 1984

*Baryshnikov by Tharp with American Ballet Theatre*

Working title: *Push Comes to Shove*, or "Push."

b. 7 f. 8-10 1981-1984

Includes early proposal document with photographs.

b. 8 f. 1-2 1984-1986

Distribution 1984-1988

Records of agreements, payments, rights, and formats. The material is arranged alphabetically by country or content.

b. 8 f. 3-16 A to J

b. 9 f. 1-9 J to Y

b. 9 f. 10-13 Press and Publicity 1984-1987

Production Files

b. 9 f. 14-16 1981-1985

b. 10 f. 1-10 1984-1985

b. 11 f. 1-2 1984-1990

b. 11 f. 3-4 Scripts 1984

b. 11 f. 5-11 Benefit Gala Event 1983-1985

*The Catherine Wheel*

b. 12 f. 1-6 1983-1989

Jerome Robbins at the Festival of Two Worlds

b. 12 f. 7-8 1981-1982

o. 1 Poster 1982

b. 12 f. 9 Lorne Michaels 1982-1985

b. 12 f. 10 Miami Tour 1982-1983

WNET

b. 12 f. 11-12 1981-1987

b. 13 f. 1-2 1992-1994

WNET (cont.)

**DANCING**

Working title: *The Dance Project*.

- b. 13 f. 3-6      **Correspondence 1992-1994**  
**Marketing and Outreach**  
Includes educational materials and press kits for "America Dancing."
- b. 13 f. 7-10      **1989-1993**
- b. 14 f. 1-6      **1992-1993**
- b. 14 f. 7-8      **Production Files 1987-1993**  
Includes a detailed list of film resources used during the production of the series.
- Proposals and Planning**  
Includes National Endowment for the Arts funding proposals and applications.
- b. 14 f. 9-10      **1985, 1987**
- b. 15 f. 1-7      **1987-1992**
- b. 16 f. 1      **1991**
- Reports**
- b. 16 f. 3-4      **1993-1994**
- b. 26      **Final Report 1994**
- b. 16 f. 5      **Research Materials 1980s**
- Reviews, Responses and Ratings**
- b. 16 f. 6-12      **1993**
- b. 17 f. 1-2      **1993**
- b. 17 f. 3-5      **Press Clippings Book 1993**
- b. 17 f. 6      **Script 1992**
- b. 17 f. 7      **Treatments 1988**
- b. 18 f. 1-7      ***David Gordon's Made in U.S.A.* 1985-1987**  
Working title: *Murder*. Includes a photograph and scripts.
- b. 18 f. 8-9      **Emmy Awards 1985-1987**
- b. 18 f. 10      **Jerome Robbins Project 1988**
- b. 19 f. 1-2      **Twyla Tharp Projects 1987-1990**
- Personal Papers**
- b. 19 f. 3-11      **1965-1987**  
**Correspondence and Notes**
- b. 19 f. 12-13      **1978-1981**
- b. 20 f. 1-3      **1978-1987**
- b. 20 f. 4-6      **Professional Correspondence 1970-1980s**  
Includes job applications and resumes.
- Photographs**
- b. 20 f. 7      **1980s**  
Various productions and individuals.

Photographs (cont.)

- b. 23 f. 3 Jerome Robbins Portrait 1980s  
Twyla Tharp
- b. 20 f. 8 *Baker's Dozen and 8 Jelly Rolls* 1971, 1979
- b. 20 f. 9 *Baryshnikov by Tharp With American Ballet Theatre* 1984
- b. 20 f. 10 *Disperse, Jam, One, Two, Three, and Tank Dive* 1965-1967
- b. 20 f. 11 *Brahm's Paganini* 1980
- b. 20 f. 12-13 *The Catherine Wheel* 1981, 1983
- b. 20 f. 14 *The Fugue and Cacklin' Hen* 1970, 1977
- b. 20 f. 15 *The Little Ballet and Sinatra Suite* 1983
- b. 20 f. 16 *Making Television Dance* 1977
- b. 20 f. 17 *Ocean's Motion and Uncle Edgar Dyed His Hair Red* 1975, 1981
- b. 20 f. 18 *Once More Frank* 1976
- b. 20 f. 19 *Push Comes to Shove* 1976
- b. 20 f. 20 Portraits of Twyla Tharp 1980s  
Includes a photograph with David Byrne.

Programs, Printed Matter, and Ephemera

- b. 21 f. 1-6 1964-1977
- b. 22 f. 1-7 1978-2000s
- b. 25 f. 1-3 1980-1995
  - b. 24 f. 4 Commemorative Dance Stamps 1978
  - b. 23 f. 3 Baryshnikov Calendar 1984