



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Mikhail Mordkin Photographs**

circa 1860s-1978 [bulk 1910-1939]

\*MGZEB 16-248

Compiled by Camille Croce Dee, 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** Mordkin, Mikhail, 1881-1944

**Title:** Mikhail Mordkin Photographs

**Date:** circa 1860s-1978 [bulk 1910-1939]

**Size:** 2.77 linear feet (6 boxes, 1 volume)

**Source:** Gift of Mordkin estate. Received August 1, 1980.

**Abstract:** The Mikhail Mordkin Photographs document the life and career of ballet dancer, choreographer and teacher Mikhail Mordkin (1881-1944) and span from approximately the 1860s to 1978.

**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>

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Camille Croce Dee, 2016.

**Related Materials:**

Mikhail Mordkin papers, circa 1885-1979, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

## Creator History

Ballet dancer, choreographer and teacher Mikhail Mordkin (1881-1944) was born in Russia and graduated from the Bolshoi Ballet School. After one season in 1909 with Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, he toured with Anna Pavlova, later forming his own company in 1911. In 1912, Mordkin married Bolshoi ballerina Bronislava Pozhitskaia and they had one son, Michael Mordkin, Jr. Mordkin settled in the United States in 1924. He formed the short-lived Mordkin Ballet company in 1926, dissolving it that same year. He opened a school of ballet in New York City in 1925. In 1937, he began a new Mordkin Ballet company in New York. The company was a forerunner of American Ballet Theatre. Mordkin died at his home at age 64.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Mikhail Mordkin Photographs document the life and career of ballet dancer, choreographer and teacher, Mikhail Mordkin (1881-1944), and span from approximately the 1860s to 1978.

The collection consists of mostly black and white photographs, some sepia photographs and a few color snapshots covering the professional and personal life of Mordkin. Included are a number of early ballets in which he appeared, such as *L'Automne Bacchanale* (circa 1910-1928), *Aziade (The Legend of Azyiade)* (circa 1910-1927), as well as photographs of Mordkin in costume and with various partners, including Anna Pavlova.

Also contained are numerous photographs of the 1937-1939 Mordkin Ballet productions, including *Dionysus*, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, *Giselle*, *(The) Goldfish*, *(The) Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Trepak*, and *Voices of Spring*; stars included Patricia Bowman, Lucia Chase, Nina Stroganova, and Leon Varkas. Photographers include Delar, Lucas-Pritchard, Ira L. Hill's Studio, Harold Swahn, and Benjamin Woolf.

There are numerous family photographs, especially of Mordkin's wife, ballerina and teacher, Bronislava Pozhitskaia, through her later years, and their son, Michael, Jr.

**Arrangement:** Alphabetical by subject.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Ballet companies -- New York (State) -- New York

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Photographs

### **Names**

Chase, Lucia, 1897-1986

Pavlova, Anna, 1881-1931

Pozh\_itsk\_aia, Bronislava Avgustovna

Mordkin Ballet Company

## Container List

- Mordkin, Michael, Jr 1913-1977
- b. 1 f. 1-7 1913-1977
  - b. 6 f. 1 circa 1940s  
Some photographs mounted.
- Mordkin, Mikhail circa 1860s-1969
- b. 6 f. 2 And Alexandra Balashova 1914-circa 1915  
Mounted; also includes clippings for *The Merry Go-Round*, *Evnika and Petronii*.
  - b. 1 f. 8 And Anna Pavlova circa 1910-1911?
  - b. 1 f. 9 And Various Partners circa 1910-1917  
Includes photographs of Mordkin with Aleksandra Balashova, Margarita Froman, Margarita Kandaurova, Viktorina Kriger, Elena Liukom, Bronislava Pozhitskaia (Mordkin).
  - b. 1 f. 10 *(The) Arrow Dance* circa 1909  
Several photographs autographed.
  - b. 1 f. 11 As Mercury circa 1910?  
Several photographs autographed.
  - b. 1 f. 12 *L'Automne Bacchanale* circa 1910-1928  
*Aziade ( The Legend of Azyiade)* circa 1910-1927
  - b. 1 f. 13 *Aziade* circa 1914-1927  
Some possibly *Le Corsaire*.
  - v. 1 *(The) Legend of Azyiade - With Anna Pavlova* circa 1910  
Reproduction of White Studio photograph mounted on wood.
  - b. 2 f. 1-2 Family Photographs circa 1860s-1960
  - b. 6 f. 3-5 Family Scrapbook Pages circa 1890s-1924
  - b. 2 f. 3 Friends and Miscellaneous circa 1920s-1940s  
Includes photographs of David Belasco, Maria Ouspenskaya, Anatolii Petrytski, Nikolai Semenov, Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky (drawing and bust).
  - b. 2 f. 4 In Costume circa 1905-1939  
Also includes photograph of Moscow Ballet Theatre Auditorium.
- See also Other Dancers.
- Portraits 1901-circa 1940
- b. 2 f. 5 circa 1901-1940
  - b. 6 f. 6 circa 1920s-1930s
  - b. 2 f. 6 Publicity Photographs circa 1905-1940
  - b. 6 f. 7 *Salammbo - with Viktorina Kriger; Aziade (Russian Clippings)* circa 1910
  - b. 2 f. 7 Students circa 1930s-1950s  
Also includes 1 student of Bronislava Pozhitskaia Mordkin and possibly others.
- Mordkin Ballet circa 1937-1939

Mordkin Ballet (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 8-11 *Dionysus* 1937  
Includes photographs by Delar, Carell(?) and photographs of Serge Soudeikine sketches.
- b. 2 f. 12-13 *La Fille Mal Gardée* 1938, circa 1938  
Includes some photographs by Delar.
- Giselle* 1937-1938
- b. 3 f. 1-5 *Lucia Chase* 1937  
Includes some photographs by Delar, Lucas-Pritchard; 1 photograph stamped 1938 on verso.
- b. 3 f. 6 *Patricia Bowman* 1938  
Includes some photographs by Ira L. Hill's Studio.
- b. 3 f. 7-11 *(The) Goldfish* 1937  
Includes some photographs by Carell(?), Delar, Lucas-Pritchard, Harold Swahn, Samuel Woolf; 2 photographs at Lewisohn Stadium.
- b. 4 f. 1 *Hudson Theatre Opening Night Party - Publicity* 1939 January 8-1939 January 9  
Includes photographs of celebrity audience members Philip Merivale, Isme O'Brien, Ezra Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Swing (Red Norvo, Mildred Bailey), Cobina Wright; also includes note from Cosmo-Sileo Co., photographer, January 9, 1939.
- b. 4 f. 2 *Pas d'Orange* circa 1937-1939  
Includes photographs by Delar.
- b. 4 f. 3 *Publicity Photographs and Snapshot* 1938, circa 1938  
Includes photographs by Ira L. Hill's Studio.
- b. 4 f. 4-5 *Rehearsal* circa 1938  
Includes photographs by Ira L. Hill's Studio.
- b. 4 f. 6-7 *(The) Sleeping Beauty* 1937  
Includes photographs by Delar.
- b. 4 f. 8 *Swan Lake* 1938  
Includes photographs by Ira L. Hill's Studio, Maurice Seymour, Harold Swahn, Samuel Woolf; also includes photograph of Lee Simonson set design.
- b. 4 f. 9 *Trepak* 1938  
Includes photographs by Ira L. Hill's Studio.
- b. 4 f. 10 *Voices of Spring* 1938  
Includes photographs by Movietone News, Harold Swahn, Samuel Woolf.
- b. 4 f. 11 *Other Dancers* circa 1890s-1920  
Includes photographs of Hilda Butsova (reproduction), Michel Fokine, Margarita Kandaurova, Matil'da Kshesinskaia, Tatiana Kutasova, Elena Liukom, Florence L. Myers (autographed), Vera Mosolova, Liubov Roslavleva.
- b. 5 f. 1-4 *Pozhitskaia, Bronislava (Mrs. Mikhail Mordkin)* circa 1881-1978  
Includes some photographs with Serge Lifar and Michael Morkin, Jr.
- b. 6 f. 8 *Soudeikine, Serge - Photograph of Drawing* circa 1930s?  
Includes photograph of abstract drawing of female nudes.

- b. 5 f. 5 **Unidentified** circa 1890s-1910  
Includes 1 photograph of woman (possibly family member).