



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Laura Foreman and John Watts papers**

1965-1984

(S) \*MGZMD 472

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2017.

## Summary

**Creator:** Foreman, Laura, 1936-2001

**Title:** Laura Foreman and John Watts papers

**Date:** 1965-1984

**Size:** 1.34 linear feet (4 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Laura Foreman, date unknown.

**Abstract:** Laura Foreman (1937-2001) was a dancer, choreographer, founder of the Laura Foreman Dance Company and director of dance at the New School. John Watts (1929-1982) was an American composer, pioneer of electronic music, and director of The New School. Foreman and Watts frequently collaborated on artistic performances. The collection, dated 1965 to 1984, consists mostly of printed matter generated from Laura Foreman and John Watts' work at The New School's The Composers' and Choreographers' Theatre. The collection holds clippings, flyers, photographs, posters, and programs.

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**Preferred citation:** Laura Foreman and John Watts papers, (S) \*MGZMD 472. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2017.

## **Creator History**

Laura Foreman (1937-2001) was a dancer, choreographer, founder of the Laura Foreman Dance Company and director of dance at the New School.

John Watts (1929-1982) was an American composer and pioneer of electronic music; founder of the Composers Cooperative Society; and director of the New School from 1962 to 1982. Watts also accepted a residency at the Yaddo Colony a fact that he would often publish in biographical press releases.

Foreman and Watts blended their respective companies to form The Composers' and Choreographers' Theatre at the New School, a renowned venue for music and dance.

One of their most remarkable works entitled *Wallwork* was a conceptual piece developed in 1981. A monotone brown poster advertising non-existent performances had been posted around New York City. The image for the poster was taken from a Bartush and Shimazaki performance held in the Foreman Theatre in 1977. The *Wallwork* poster led the public to believe that there would be actual performances for two nights. The poster listed a telephone number and in bold red letters the words "Sold Out." The public began to call the telephone number asking about the show.

Their collaborative works continued until Watts' death in 1982. Foreman broadened her skills as a writer and fine artist. She died in New York City in 2001.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Laura Foreman and John Watts papers, 1965 to 1984, reflect the artistic productions in music and dance of John Watts and Laura Foreman's collaborative work at the New School's *Composers' and Choreographers' Theatre*. The files of mostly printed matter include the *Wallwork* poster, the Bartush and Shimazaki poster; an interview with Watts, press releases, and photographs of dance performances. The collection holds clippings, flyers, photographs, posters, and programs.

## **Key Terms**

### **Occupations**

Choreographers  
Dance teachers  
Dancers  
Directors (performing arts)

### **Subjects**

Choreographers -- United States  
Dance companies -- United States  
Dance in education -- New York State -- New York, N.Y.  
Electronic music

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)  
Flyers  
Photographs

Posters  
Programs

**Geographic Names**

New York -- New York (N.Y.)

**Names**

Watts, John, 1930-1982

Composers & Choreographers Theatre

Laura Foreman Dance Company

New School for Social Research (New York, N.Y. : 1919-1997)

## Container List

- (The) Composers' and Choreographers' Theatre* 1965-1984
- b. 1 f. 1 Clippings 1970-1982
  - b. 1 f. 2 Concert Artist Participants 1977
  - b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence, Press Releases 1972-1982
  - b. 1 f. 4-5 Courses in the Choreographers and Music Programs 1976-1984
  - b. 1 f. 6 Flyers 1976-1980
  - b. 1 f. 7 Foreman, Laura. Biographical 1978-1982
  - b. 1 f. 8 Notes for Music Programs 1970s-1980s
- Photographs 1970-1976
- b. 2 f. 1 Foreman, Laura Circa 1971  
Undated portrait, Galley Proof.
- Photographs from Programs  
Laura Foreman was the choreographer. Some of the images are proofs.
- b. 2 f. 2-3 *City of Angels* 1974  
Performed at the Kennedy Center. Hank O'Neal was the featured performer.
  - b. 2 f. 4 *Glass and Shadows* 1971
  - b. 2 f. 5 *Laura's Dance* 1971
  - b. 2 f. 6 *Program* 1976  
Performed at the Ward-Nasse Gallery in Soho and televised on cable television. John Watts choreographed the music.
  - b. 2 f. 7-8 *Signals* 1970  
Performances also includes *Signals II*.
  - b. 2 f. 9 *Spaces* 1973
  - b. 2 f. 10-11 *Untitled* 1975-1976  
The photographs were used to apply for a Guggenheim grant.
  - b. 2 f. 12-13 Unidentified Dances undated
  - b. 2 f. 14 Assorted Photographs 1973  
Settings were at different social events.
- Posters 1976-1981
- b. 3 f. 1 *John Watts and Laura Foreman Presents Wallwork* 1981
  - b. 3 f. 2 Laura Foreman Dance Theatre Featuring Roxanne Bartush and Satoru Shimazaki 1977  
Original sound score by John Watts.
  - b. 3 f. 3 New Music Concert I 1976  
Bucknell University. John Watts presented his work.
  - b. 3 f. 4 *(The) Watts Electric Company* 1978  
Bucknell New Music presented the company.

(The) Composers' and Choreographers' Theatre (cont.)  
Posters (cont.)

Works by Hisachika T and Laura Foreman 1979  
Sound by John Watts.

Projects and Music Presentations 1965-1981

The programs document the musicians and their musical performances at the New School, the annual May festival, and unrelated video projects.

- b. 1 f. 9-11 1965-1980
- b. 1 f. 12-15 Annual May Festival 1973-1975
- b. 1 f. 16 *Glass and Shadow* 1978  
Video project.
- b. 1 f. 17 *Timecoded Woman* 1979-1980  
Video Project
- b. 1 f. 18 *Wallwork* 1981
- b. 1 f. 19 Services 1975  
Services offered to the public.

Watts, John

- b. 4 f. 1 *365 Days Of Sodom* 1971
- b. 4 f. 2 Biographical, Obituary, Photograph 1975-1982
- b. 4 f. 3 *Interview for Mensa* 1981
- b. 4 f. 4 Recording Lists 1982

Related Files 1965-1982

- b. 4 f. 5 Assorted Music and Dance Publications 1974-1982
- b. 3 f. 6 Mock-Up for Theatre Brochure Undated
- b. 4 f. 6-8 Venues. A.I.R. Gallery - University of North Carolina 1965-1982  
Foreman and Watts performances.