



The New York Public Library
Music Division

Guide to the

Katherine Litz collection

ca. 1945-1952

JPB 86-15

Processed by .

Summary

Creator: Litz, Katherine, -1978

Title: Katherine Litz collection

Date: ca. 1945-1952

Source: The Katherine Litz Collection was a gift from her estate.

Abstract: The Katherine Litz Collection contains manuscript music and photostats which were used in some of her choreographed dances.

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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Preferred citation: Katherine Litz Collection, JPB 86-15, Music Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by ; machine-readable finding aid created by Robert Kosovsky.

Related Materials:

Another portion of the estate of Katherine Litz is The Katherine Litz Collection at the Harvard Theatre Collection, Special Collections, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Creator History

Katherine Litz, a modern dancer, teacher and choreographer, was born on July 26, 1912 in Denver, Colorado. While in high school she studied dance with Martha Wilcox at the Perry Mansfield Camp. Upon graduation, she left Denver to pursue her career as a dancer. In New York Litz studied dance with

Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. She also studied composition, ballet, music, acting, and voice. Outside of New York she took courses with Hanya Holm and Martha Graham. Litz performed with the Humphrey-Weidman Concert Company and with Agnes DeMille's concert company. During the 1940s she danced in the Broadway musicals "Oklahoma!" and "Carousel," and she also choreographed and danced the leading role in "Susanna and the Elders," a section of Ballet Ballads. In 1960 she had an acting-dancing role in The Crystal Heart, an off-Broadway musical. She worked with Al Carmines on several productions at Judson Memorial Church in New York. Beginning with a concert in 1948, Litz presented programs of her own works, both solos and for groups, in New York and around the country. She was known for her use of satire and humor in dances such as "The Glyph," created with Lou Harrison and first performed at Black Mountain College in 1951. Over the course of many years Litz taught and lectured at colleges and universities, including Bennington College, Columbia University, and Black Mountain College. During her career, Litz was the recipient of grants from several organizations, including the Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Lena Robbins Foundation. In 1947, Litz married the American artist and set designer Charles Oscar. They eventually separated. Katherine Litz died in New York City on December 19, 1978, three weeks after her last performance.

Custodial History

Transferred from the Dance Collection to the Music Division, The New York Public Library, Nov. 8, 1979.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains manuscript music used and annotated by Katherine Litz.

Arrangement: The collection is organized in a single series. Arrangement is generally chronological

Key Terms

Subjects

Ballets

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scores

Names

Litz, Katherine, -1978

Banks, Dick

Bauer, Marion, 1882-1955

Bergersen, Baldwin, 1914-2000

Feldman, Morton, 1926-1987

Harrison, Lou, 1917-2003

Horst, Louis

Kleiner, Arthur

Nicolait, Eugene

Richter, Marga

American Music Collection

Container List

- f. 1 *Bergersen, Baldwin Basket-makin' basket* 1945
For voice and piano. Lyric by William Archibald, from *Carib song*. Litz had this song because Bergersen was a friend. To his knowledge she never used it for a dance.
- f. 2 *Kleiner, Arthur [Untitled piano solo]* Feb. 1948 (Holograph.)
Used for *How I wasted time, and now doth time waste me*. Solo dance, choreography by Litz.
- f. 3 *Banks, Dick Hayshaker* Oct. 17, 1948 (Photostat of ms. with pencil notes.)
Dedication: for Countess Helena Morsztyn. Used for the dance *Hayshakers*. Choreography by Litz. First performed April 23, 1950.
- f. 4 *Banks, Dick Celebration* Aug. 29, 1948 (Photostat with pencil notes.) (Ms. in ink.)
These are the same composition but with different titles. Used for *Celebrations*.
- f. 5 *Banks, Dick [Untitled piano solo]* Sept. 1949 (Photostats of ms., 2 copies.)
Possibly used for *Celebrations*.
- f. 6 *Banks, Dick A Valentine* February 14, 1951 (Holograph[?] in ink.)
Written for Litz. Not used for a dance.
- f. 7 *Bauer, Marion Moods, op. 46* June 1950 (Photostat of ms. with pencil notes.)
Used for *Moods for dance interpretation*. Choreography by Litz. First performed May 8, 1951.
- f. 8 *Harrison, Lou. A thought on the anniversary of Katherine Litz and Charles Oscar* July 26, 1951 (Holograph in ink.)
- f. 9 *Harrison, Lou. Little gamelon for Katherine Litz to teach with, Black Mountain College* March 23, 1952 (Holograph in ink.)
- f. 10 *Harrison, Lou. Adjustable chorale* 1951 (Holograph in ink.)
Used for *Chorales for spring*, choreography by Litz. First performed at Black Mountain College, November 29, 1951.
- f. 11 *Harrison, Lou. Chorale for spring* March 22, 1951 (Holograph in ink.)
Dedicated to Litz. Used for *Chorales for spring*, first performed at Black Mountain College, November 29, 1951.
- f. 12 *Harrison, Lou. The glyph* n.d. (Holograph in ink and pencil.)
For prepared piano. Used for *The glyph*, choreography by Litz. First performed at Black Mountain College, August 24, 1951.
- f. 13 *Nicolait, Eugene. Four studies* n.d. (Blueprints, 3 copies.)
Piano arrangement. Used for *Studies*, choreography by Litz, 1949. Copy 3 contains Studies nos. 1-2 only and includes 3 leaves of pencil notes by Litz.
- f. 14 *Nicolait, Eugene. Blood of the lamb* Easter 1950 (2 blueprints copies of ms.)
Used for *Blood of the lamb*, choreography by Litz, 1950.
- f. 15 *Feldman, Morton. Blood of the lamb* n.d. (Holograph[?] in ink.)
For piano. Used for a later version of *Blood of the lamb*, choreography by Litz in the 1970s.
- f. 16 *Horst, Louis. [Piano music for dance exercises]* n.d. (Photostat of 8 ms. leaves.)
For piano.
- f. 17 *[Unidentified sketch for woodwinds and strings]* n.d. (1 ms. leaf in pencil.)
- f. 18 *[Unidentified composition for prepared piano]* n.d. (3 ms. p. in ink.)

- f. 19 **Scarlatti, Domenico. Sonata 209 (Longo) 1951** (2 ms. copies, 1 in ink, 1 in pencil.)
Used for *The long night*, choreography by Litz, 1951.
- f. 20 **Corelli, Arcangelo. Sarabande from Sonata VII ; Giga from Sonata IX ;
Badinerie ca.1949** (Ms. copies in ink and pencil with pencil notes by Litz.)
Used for *Suite for a woman*, choreography by Litz, 1949.
- f. 21 **Richter, Marga. All desire is sad** April 1951 (Holograph in ink and photocopy.)
For piano. Used for *All desire is sad*, choreography by Litz, and first performed at The Juilliard School, May 16, 1961.