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Guide to the

Martha Graham Dance Company Tour records

1941-1957

(S) *MGZMD 290

Compiled by Lea Jordan, October 2011

Summary

Creator: Martha Graham Dance Company

Title: Martha Graham Dance Company Tour records, 1941-1957

Size: 1.26 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source:

Abstract: The Martha Graham Dance Company has remained a leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926. The Martha Graham Dance Company Tour records (1941-1957) document specific venues and American tours from 1942 to 1950, as well as a 1950 European Tour and the 1955-1956 goodwill tour of Asia.

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Related collections

Letters from Martha Graham to David Zellmer, 1942-1945. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Martha Graham Center of Dance records, 1944-1955. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Creator history

The Martha Graham Dance Company has remained a leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926. Its first headquarters consisted of a small dance studio on Broadway. The center later moved to a two story building at 316 East 63rd Street, New York. The Company has performed in over 50 countries, as well as giving lectures and performances throughout the United States. The Martha Graham Dance Company has nurtured many of the leading choreographers and dancers of the 20th and 21st centuries, including Merce Cunningham, Erick Hawkins, Pearl Lang, Pascal Rioult, and Paul Taylor.

Martha Graham (1894-1991) was a pioneer of modern dance and one of the most influential choreographers of the 20th century. She had her first independent recital in New York in 1926, after studying in Los Angeles at the Denishawn School; by the 1930s she had her own school and had founded the Martha Graham Dance Company. Her most famous early ballets include *Lamentation* (1930), *Frontier* (1935) and *Appalachian Spring* (1944). Her later works were informed by tales of North American lore, Greek mythology, the Bible and historical figures, including Joan of Arc and Emily Dickinson. Graham continued dancing to the age of 75.

Graham received Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime achievement in 1978, and was awarded the French Legion of Honor in 1984. She published her memoir, *Blood Memory* in 1991.

Scope and content note

The Martha Graham Dance Company Tour records (1941-1957) document specific venues and American tours from 1942 to 1950, as well as a 1950 European Tour and the 1955-1956 goodwill tour of Asia.

In November of 1955, as fears intensified that Asian nations might turn Communist, the United States State Department sent Graham and her dance company on a performance and lecture tour of Asian cities. Although modern dance was unfamiliar to most of the audiences, the State Department judged the tour an overwhelming success.

The materials consist of correspondence, schedules, telegrams, stage diagrams, and shipping documents. In the case of files concerning the Asian tour, there are detailed reports from the company's advance man Craig Barton, outlining the conditions of the venues, accommodations, and the city in general. Based on his reports, money would be arranged to fix the stage, install dressing areas, and rebook hotels. Barton also arranged for publicity in each city. His advance letters served to warn the company as to what their next venue would bring – problems that could range from no separate dressing room for Graham to lack of toilets. All folders from the goodwill tour contain copies of follow up letters sent to each city a year after the performance, as well as congratulatory correspondence from local fans and American Embassy workers.

Users should note that all folders may contain material created before and after the date of booking related to each tour stop. These include letters of introduction, financial summaries, and other pre and post performance arrangements.

Arrangement

Chronological by date of tour booking.

Key terms

Subjects

Choreographers -- United States

Dance companies

Modern dance

Names

Martha Graham Dance Company

Special formats

Correspondence

Financial records

Container list

- b.1 f.1 Washington Irving High School - 1942 January, 1941-1942
- b.1 f.2 Guild Theatre - 1942 February, 1941-1942
- b.1 f.3 American Tour - 1942 February - March, 1941-1942
- b.1 f.4 Guild Theatre - 1942 March, 1941-1942
- b.1 f.5 Central High School - 1943 March, 1942-1943
- b.1 f.6 YMHA - 1943 April, 1943
- b.1 f.7 46th St. Theatre - 1944 January, 1943-1944
- b.1 f.8 National Theatre - 1944 May, 1943-1944
- b.1 f.9 National Theatre - 1945 May, 1944-1945
- b.1 f.10 Plymouth Theatre - 1946 January - February, 1945-1946
- b.1 f.11 Hurok Tour - 1946 March - April, 1945-1946
- b.1 f.12 Columbia University - 1946 May, 1945-1946
- b.1 f.13 Hurok Tour - 1947 February, 1946-1947
- b.1 f.14 Ziegfeld Theatre -1947 February - March, 1946-1947
- b.1 f.15 Connecticut College - 1948 August, 1948
- b.1 f.16-17 American Tour - 1949 January - March, 1948-1949
- b.2 f.1 American Tour - 1949 January - March, 1948-1949
- b.2 f.2 American Tour - 1949 October - December, 1948-1949
- b.2 f.3 American Tour - 1950 February - March, 1949-1950
- b.2 f.4 European Tour - 1950 April - May, 1949-1950
- Asian Goodwill Tour
- b.2 f.5 Japan - 1955 September - November, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.6 Bangkok - 1955 November, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.7 Seoul - 1955 November, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.8 Manila - 1955 November, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.9 Singapore - 1955 November - December, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.10 Kuala Lumpur - 1955 December, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.11 Djakarta - 1955 December, 1955-1957
- b.2 f.12 Rangoon - 1955 December, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.1 Dacca - 1955, December, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.2 Calcutta - 1955 December - 1956 January, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.3 Madras - 1956 January, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.4 Columbo - 1956 January, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.5 Bombay - 1956 January, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.6 New Delhi - 1956 January, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.7 Karachi - 1956 January, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.8 Abadan - 1956 February, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.9 Teheran - 1956 February, 1955-1957
- b.3 f.10 Israel - 1956 February - March, 1955-1957