

The New York Public Library
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Louis Horst Course Materials and Research

1929-1992

(S) *MGZMD 286

Compiled by Lea Jordan, October 2011

Summary

Creator: Horst, Louis

Title: Louis Horst Course Materials and Research, 1929-1992

Size: .84 linear foot (2 boxes)

Source: Gift of Janet Mansfield Soares, 2008, Gift of Evelyn Bird, 2010

Abstract: Louis Horst (1884-1964) was a composer, choreographer and pianist who pioneered the use of contemporary music for dance scores. The Louis Horst Course Materials and Research collection consists of copied sheet music and notes used by Horst in conducting his classes at Juilliard and other institutions, as well as research materials on Louis Horst compiled by Janet Mansfield Soares.

Access: To request materials, please contact the Jerome Robbins Dance Division (dance@nypl.org) in advance.

Copyright information: Inquiries regarding audio and video materials in the collection may be directed to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Preferred citation: Louis Horst Course Materials and Research, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Custodial history

The bulk of the course materials were given to Janet Mansfield Soares upon the death of Louis Horst in 1964. The Body Power materials were given to Evelyn Bird in 1949. She received the papers from Marjorie Davidson, who was the Assistant Supervisor of Physical Education of the Edmonton, Alberta school board. Davidson took a course from Horst in New York City some time before his tenure at Juilliard began.

Related collections

Louis Horst collection, 1892-1953. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Louis Horst collection, 1928-1964. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Louis Horst papers, 1935-1964. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Creator history

Louis Horst (1884-1964) was a composer, choreographer and pianist who pioneered the use of contemporary music for dance scores. He was born and educated in Kansas City, Missouri. He studied piano from an early age and became a professional accompanist; playing for silent films, stock theater companies, Broadway rehearsals, and later for many of the emerging modern dance personalities of the time. After moving to New York City, he began working as musical director and composer for many dance companies and individuals.

From 1916 to 1925 he was the musical director of the Denishawn Dance Company, before moving on to be the music director and dance composition teacher for Martha Graham's dance school and company. Horst wrote and arranged scores for many prominent choreographers including Agnes DeMille, Martha Hill, Helen Tamiris, Pearl Lang and Ruth St. Denis.

Horst taught the art of choreography at The Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater (1928-1964), Bennington College (1934-1945), Mills College, Connecticut College (1948-1963), Barnard College, Sarah Lawrence College, Columbia University, and The Juilliard School (1951-1964). He also delivered lectures at many other institutions across the country.

Horst remained in New York City until his death in 1964.

Janet Mansfield Soares is a dancer, choreographer, and author of *Louis Horst: A Musician in a Dancer's World*. She was a student, colleague, and teacher of dance composition with Louis Horst in the Juilliard School Dance Division. She is a professor emerita of dance at Barnard College, Columbia University, and lives in Tucson, Arizona, and Lyme, Connecticut.

Scope and content note

The Louis Horst Course Materials and Research collection consists of copied sheet music and notes used by Horst to conduct his classes at Juilliard, as well as research materials on Louis Horst compiled by Janet Mansfield Soares.

The course materials consist primarily of copied music used in lecture and dance classes. This includes Horst's original compositions for classroom activity, as well as his adaptations of the works of others and commercial sheet music. There are often notes in the margins of the music. Accompanying these documents are two roll books for Horst's Juilliard classes, one of which is begun by Horst and completed by Soares, who took over his courses immediately after his death. The teaching materials also hold a set of music and instructions from a course Horst taught in the 1930s entitled *Body Power*. There is no indication as to the institution at which this course was offered. These materials include copies of original Horst compositions as well as a detailed list of what exercises were to be performed to what music. The *Body Power* materials were donated independently of the Soares gift.

Music holds two examples of published Horst sheet compositions. These are his work for Martha Graham's *El Penitente* and his *Rhythmic Design*, which includes diagrams of the Perry-Mansfield exercises.

The research materials are composed of genealogical research, photocopied articles, and transcripts of interviews collected by Soares in the course of researching her book *Louis Horst: A Musician in a Dancer's World*. The bulk of the material is photocopied.

Arrangement

Alphabetical by subject.

Key terms

Subjects

Dance -- Education

Dance -- History -- 20th century

Dance music.

Names

Horst, Louis

Juilliard School. Dance Division

Special formats

Notes

Sheet music

Container list

Course Materials

- b.1 f.1 Body Power, c. 1930
- b.1 f.2-8 Course Music for Pre-Classic and Modern Forms, 1960-1964
- b.2 f.1 Roll Book, 1963-1964

Music

- b.2 f.2 *El Penitente*, 1960 (for Martha Graham)
- b.2 f.3 *Rhythmic-Design*, 1929

Research

- b.2 f.4 Photographs, undated
- b.2 f.5-9 Reasearch Notes, 1988-1992