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Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Shirlee Dodge collection of Mary Wigman materials

1922-1989

(S) *MGZMD 274

Compiled by Laura Slezak Karas, September 2011

Summary

Creator: Dodge, Shirlee, 1916-2008

Title: Shirlee Dodge collection of Mary Wigman materials, 1922-1989

Size: .67 linear foot (2 boxes)

Source: Donated by Pam McIlhenny, 2001.

Abstract: Shirlee Dodge (1916-2008) was a dancer, choreographer, and instructor who earned degrees in performance and instruction from the Mary Wigman School in Dresden, Germany in 1939. Mary Wigman (1886-1973) was a pioneer dancer, choreographer, and instructor in expressionist dance, often cited as a founder of modern dance in Europe. This collection documents Dodge's relationship with her former instructor, Mary Wigman, and contains materials collected to illustrate Wigman's dance and teaching career, including brochures, conference materials, correspondence, photographs, press clippings, programs, scrapbooks, printed materials, and miscellaneous materials in German.

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

Copyright information: Copyright retained by any document's creator.

Preferred citation: Shirlee Dodge collection of Mary Wigman materials, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Processing note

Prior to processing, the collection consisted of folders, scrapbooks, and loosely grouped materials. Existing folders and grouped materials remain intact. Materials not in folders have been grouped by document type and folder titles have been taken from the documents. The scrapbooks have been unbound, but remain in their original order. Post-it notes containing identifying information have been transcribed onto the scrapbook pages.

Related collections

Hanya Holm papers. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Mary Wigman letters to Margaret Erlanger. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Mary Wigman letters to Margaret Gage. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Mary Wigman letters to Walter Sorell. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Walter Sorell research files on Mary Wigman. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Creator history

Shirlee Dodge

Shirlee Helen Dodge was born on April 29, 1916, in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin. In the late 1920s, Dodge performed acrobatic dances in local vaudeville shows with her sister, Doris. Dodge attended the University of Wisconsin, the first university to offer a degree in dance, in 1934 where she studied with Margaret H'Doubler. In the late 1930s, Dodge studied at the Mary Wigman School in Dresden, Germany, where she graduated with degrees in education and performance in 1939. After graduation, Dodge studied with Harald Krutzberg, cofounded her own school in Gothenberg, Sweden with Ellen Lundström, and danced with the Hanya Holm Dance Company in New York City.

Although a dancer and choreographer, Dodge's legacy is as an instructor. In 1943, Dodge became the first dance professor at the University of Texas at Austin. There she founded the university's current dance program, housed within the Department of Theatre and Dance. Dodge taught modern dance, movement, and choreography at the University of Texas at Austin from 1943 to 1969. In total, Dodge taught dance for over fifty-one years, including at the University of Wisconsin, Northwestern University, Stanford University, and the University of Iowa.

On January 20, 2008, Shirlee Dodge died in Jeanerette, Louisiana.

Sources:

College of Fine Arts, University of Texas at Austin. "In Memoriam: Shirlee Dodge." *News*, February 1, 2008. Accessed September 28, 2011. http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/news/news_items/shirlee_dodge.cfm.

"Shirlee Dodge." *The Daily Iberian*, January 25, 2008. Accessed September 28, 2011. http://www.iberianet.com/obituaries/shirlee-dodge/article_57217db3-1277-5c20-a15d-aa944969e15b.html.

Mary Wigman

Born Karoline Sophie Marie Wiegmann in Hannover, Germany on November 13, 1886, Mary Wigman was a dancer, choreographer, and instructor known as a founder of European modern dance.

Wigman studied with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze at the School of Rhythmic Gymnastics at Hellerau (1910-1913) and then with Rudolf von Laban at Monte Verità (1913), later becoming an assistant at his school. Wigman opened her own school, the Mary Wigman School, in Dresden in 1920, where it operated until 1942. This school offered higher education degrees in dance, including performance and instruction. Yvonne Georgi, Hanya Holm, Harald Krutzberg, Gret Palucca, Max Terpis, Margarethe Wallman, and Inge Weiss number among Wigman's students and colleagues at the Dresden school. Under the

direction of Wigman's protégée Hanya Holm, another school operated in New York City from 1931 to 1936. Wigman also taught in Leipzig (1942-1949) and later in West Berlin (1950-1973).

Noted for its juxtaposition of percussion and silence; its use of non-Western instruments, such as bells, gongs, and drums; and non-Western masks, Wigman's choreography pioneered expressionist dance.

On September 18, 1973, Mary Wigman died in Berlin, Germany.

Sources:

"Mary Wigman, Dance Innovator, Dies," *New York Times*, September 20, 1973, 50. Proquest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1857-Current file) with Index (1851-1993).

Wikipedia. "Mary Wigman." Accessed September 28, 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Wigman

Scope and content note

This collection documents Shirlee Dodge's relationship with her former instructor, Mary Wigman, and contains materials collected to illustrate Wigman's dance and teaching career. The Shirlee Dodge collection of Mary Wigman materials contains personal correspondence with Mary Wigman, Harald Kreutzberg, and Margaret (Marge) H'Doubler, as well as letters recommending Dodge as an instructor, photographs, and scrapbooks.

The majority of the photographs concern Wigman's professional career: choreographic stills from *Lament*, *Dance in the Stillness*, *Rites of Spring*, *Prophetess*, and *Orpheus*; dance instruction with students; and headshots. The collection also contains personal photographs of Wigman, including photographs of her with Shirlee Dodge and others, childhood, and candid photographs. Photographs not picturing Wigman include images of Harald Kreutzberg, Dodge, and unidentified individuals.

Two scrapbooks containing photographs, press clippings, programs, class notes, and drawings are also included in the collection. Both scrapbooks concern Dodge's studies with Wigman in Germany, as well as document aspects of Wigman's career. Individuals identified in the scrapbook photographs include Catherine Austin, Jean Houloose, Gisela Sonntag, Ellen Lundström, Gundel Eplinius, Walter Reck, Kurt Paudler, Lisa Schjerbeck, Birgit Gjessing LaMothe, Dore Hoyer, and Harald Kreutzberg.

The collection also holds conference materials relating to the study and appreciation of Wigman's work, press clippings, brochures and programs concerning the Wigman Schools, printed materials regarding Wigman, and miscellaneous materials in German.

Additional archival collections, books, interviews, and video recordings concerning both Dodge and Wigman can be found by conducting separate subject and author searches for "Dodge, Shirlee" and "Wigman, Mary" in the catalog (www.nypl.org/catalog).

Arrangement

Alphabetical by subject.

Key terms

Subjects

Dance -- Study and teaching
Modern dance -- Germany

Occupations

Choreographers
Dance teachers

Names

Dodge, Shirlee, 1916-2008

H'Doubler, Margaret Newell, b. 1889

Kreutzberg, Harald, 1902-

Wigman, Mary, 1886-1973

Special formats

Photographs

Scrapbooks

Container list

- b.1 f.1 Böhme, Fritz. "Fritz Böhme über: Albert Talhoff *Totenmal: Dramatisch-Chorische Vision für Wort Tanz Licht.*" Herausgeber: Chorische Bühne München, undated (Signed by Juana de Laban.)
- b.1 f.2 Conferences, 1986-1989
Correspondence
- b.1 f.3 General, 1947-1975, undated
The majority of the correspondence is from Mary Wigman, but letters from Harald Kreutzberg and Anni Hesschen are also included.
- b.1 f.4 H'Doubler, Marge, 1957-1977, undated
- b.1 f.5 Letters of Recommendation for Dodge, 1971 (Photocopies)
- b.1 f.6 Photographs, 1942-1968, undated
- b.1 f.7 Press Clippings, 1956-1986, undated
- b.2 f.1-7 Scrapbook, 1937-1939
- b.2 f.8-11 Scrapbook, 1937-1940
- b.1 f.8 Wigman, Mary. *The Language of Dance*. Translated by Walter Sorell. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1966 (Inscribed to Dodge by her students.)
- b.1 f.9 Wigman School, 1932-1938, undated
Includes brochures and programs for both the Dresden and New York City schools.
- b.1 f.10 Zivier, Georg. *Harmonie und Ekstase: Mary Wigman*. Berlin-Dahlem: Akademie der Künste, 1956 (Signed by Juana de Laban.)
- b.1 f.11 Miscellaneous Materials, 1922-1926, undated (Calendar pages, drawings, notes, programs.)
Materials are in German.