

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

Letters to Lincoln Kirstein

1947-1976

(S) *MGZMD 254

Compiled by Maggie Long, Palmer School of Library and Information Science, class of 2011, June 2011

Summary

Creator: Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996

Title: Letters to Lincoln Kirstein, 1947-1976

Size: .63 linear foot (2 boxes)

Source: Transferred from Beinecke Library, Yale University, February 15, 2001

Abstract: This collection contains letters sent to Lincoln Kirstein between 1947 and 1976 by a range of friends, colleagues, and business associates. Correspondents include W. H. Auden, Sir Cecil Beaton, Rowland Burden-Muller, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Dame Edith and Sir Osbert Sitwell. The collection also contains a folder related to Kirstein's collection of art works depicting cats.

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

Preferred citation: Letters to Lincoln Kirstein, 1947-1976, (S) *MGZMD 254, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note

The collection was rehoused and a finding aid was created. No materials were discarded or removed.

Related collections

Lincoln Kirstein papers, ca. 1913-1994. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Lincoln Kirstein papers, ca. 1914-1991. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library

Creator history

Lincoln Edward Kirstein (1907-1996) was born on May 4, 1907 in Rochester, New York and educated at Harvard College (A.B. 1929, A.M. 1930). In 1934, he co-founded the School of American Ballet with George Balanchine and Edward M.M. Warburg. He also participated in the founding and/or direction of the American Ballet Company in 1935, Ballet Caravan 1936-1941, and the Ballet Society in 1946, and he became general director of the succeeding company, New York City Ballet, in 1948. Kirstein married Fidelma Cadmus, sister of artist Paul Cadmus, in 1941 and served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1945. His career included work with visual artists and writers on various projects, and his dance-related publications include: *Dance Index*; books on Michel Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky, and the New York City

Ballet; a history of theatrical dance; and writing assistance to Romola Nijinsky on a biography of her husband. He retired from New York City Ballet and School of American Ballet in 1989. The recipient of many distinguished awards, Lincoln Kirstein died on January 5, 1996.

Scope and content note

This collection contains letters sent to Lincoln Kirstein between 1947 and 1976 by friends, colleagues, and business associates. Most of the letters are personal in nature and were written between 1947 and 1955. Correspondents include the painter Jared French, English novelist E. M. (Edward Morgan) Forster, French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Dame Edith Sitwell and her brother, Sir Osbert Sitwell. The collection also includes letters from well-known ballet critic Richard Buckle and from the poet W. H. Auden.

Photographs are enclosed with several letters, including a portrait of Lady Christabel Aberconway with her cat, taken by Sir Cecil Barton around 1950. Also of note is a letter sent to Kirstein in 1950 by the law firm Beer, Richards, Lane & Haller, requesting his assistance in the defense of Alger Hiss.

Arrangement

The letters to Lincoln Kirstein are arranged alphabetically by the sender's last name.

Key terms

Subjects

Ballet -- History -- 20th century

Ballet -- United States

Names

Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973

Buckle, Richard, 1916-2001

Cartier-Bresson, Henri, 1908-2004

Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996

Sitwell, Edith, Dame, 1887-1964

Sitwell, Osbert, 1892-1969

Container list

- b.1 f.1 Aa-Az, 1947-1951, undated
- b.1 f.2 Aberconway, Lady Christabel, 1950-1953, undated
- b.1 f.3-5 Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1943-1973, undated
- b.1 f.6 Ba-Bz, 1949-1953, undated
- b.1 f.7 Beaton, Sir Cecil, 1951-1953, undated
- b.1 f.8 Bonner, Douglas, 1949-1951, undated
- b.1 f.9 Buckle, Richard, 1951-1974, undated
- b.1 f.10 Burden-Mueller, Rowland, 1949-1951
- b.1 f.11 Ca-Cz, 1949-1951, undated
- b.1 f.12 Cartier-Bresson, Henri, 1947-1954, undated
- b.1 f.13 Cats (art objects), 1952-1971, undated
- b.1 f.14 Fa-Fz, 1950-1952, undated
- b.1 f.15 Forster, E. M. (Edward Morgan), 1949-1952, undated
- b.1 f.16 French, Jared, 1949-1952, undated
- b.1 f.17 Gallup, Donald C., 1949-1951
- b.1 f.18 Ha-Hz, 1949-1953, undated
- b.1 f.19 Horner, David, 1949-1951
- b.1 f.20 Pleydell-Bouvier, Alice and David, 1951-1953, undated
- b.1 f.21 Sitwell, Dame Edith and Sir Osbert, 1950-1955, 1976, undated
- b.2 f.1 Sitwell, Dame Edith and Sir Osbert, 1950-1955, 1976, undated
Includes a note of thanks from author John Pearson, who wrote a biography of the Sitwells and with whom Kirstein apparently shared the personal correspondence in this collection.