

Guide to the Jeff Duncan Papers, 1930 - 1989

(S)* MGZMD 161

Jerome Robbins Dance Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Jeff Duncan Papers
Collection ID:	(S)* MGZMD 161
Creator:	Duncan, Jeff
Extent:	6 linear feet (12 boxes)
Repository:	Jerome Robbins Dance Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Abstract:	The collection documents the career of choreographer, dancer, and teacher Jeff Duncan from 1956 – 1989. It contains correspondence, production material, photographs, oversized material, and personal material.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Preferred Citation

The Jeff Duncan Papers, (S)* MGZMD 161, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Jeff Duncan Papers were donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1998.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in November, 2005.

Biographical Note

Jeff Duncan began his dance training in college after seeing performances by the American Ballet Theatre, Martha Graham, and José Limon companies. Initially, he wanted to be concert pianist before realizing his dream to become a dancer. Duncan went on to study with Alwin Nikolais and José Limon. In 1953, He became an assistant for Dorothy Humphrey at the 92nd Street Y. After studying dance, Duncan became the principal dancer with Anna Sokolow for 12 years, before starting his own dance company, the Jeff Duncan Dance Company, in 1956.

Between 1964 and 1975 Duncan's main goal was to promote emerging choreographers. He started the Dance Theater Workshop, where he choreographed many shows, including *Diminishing Landscape* and *Statement*. The company eventually moved to the Jerome Robbins's American Theater Lab, which still exists today. Duncan helped a collective of choreographers – among them Martha Clarke, Deborah Jowitt, Linda Tarnay, Elizabeth Keene, Kathryn Posin, Lenore Latimer, Wendy Perron, Cliff Keuter, Kei Takai, Judith Dunn, Rudy Perez, James Cunningham, Frances Alenikoff, Ze'eva Cohen, and Tina Croll.

In 1977, Duncan expanded his role as promoter and teacher of dance. He accepted a position to teach dance at the University of Maryland and directed its resident touring company, Impetus, while managing to perform and produce in New York. During this time, he received two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Creative Artists Public Service Guild, the American College Dance Festival Association, and a Fulbright Fellowship in 1988 for his work in Mexico.

In the final months of Duncan's life, he performed his signature work *La Mesa Del Brujo*. He died from complications of AIDS in 1989.

Scope and Content Note

The Jeff Duncan Papers highlights his career from 1956 – 1989. The collection contains: biographical information, clippings, press releases, production material, and programs - along with a few personal papers, such as an address book, astrological reading, correspondence, and a dream diary. The collection includes photographs, which documents Duncan's career as a dancer, choreographer, and performer. There are some personal photographs and oversize material.

Organization

The collection is organized into 5 series. They are:

Series I: Correspondence, 1952 – 1989

Series II: Personal Papers, 1970 – 1987

Series III: Professional Papers, 1960 – 1988

Series IV: Photographs, 1930 – 1988

Series V: Oversized Material, 1956 - 1987

Series Descriptions

Series I: Correspondence

1 Box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

The series contains correspondence regarding Duncan's teaching career and a few inquiry letters.

Series II: Personal Papers

1 Box

Arrangement: By Subject

The series contains an address book, an astrological reading, a collection of postcards, and a dream diary.

Series III: Professional Papers

5 Boxes

Arrangement: By Subject

The series contains production material, artwork, biographical information, booking profiles, clippings, music scores, press releases, programs, and teaching material.

Series IV: Photographs

5 Boxes

Arrangement: By Subject

The series contains photographs of Jeff Duncan's dance career with Anna Sokolow, the Jeff Duncan Dance Company, Dance Theater Workshop, Impetus, and his years as a solo performer. There is large array of publicity shots, contact sheets, and negatives. The series also contains a few folders of personal photographs.

Series V: Oversized Material

1 Box

Arrangement: By Subject

The series contains posters of Jeff Duncan performances and photographs of an untitled production. There is one folder of an elevation plan for the production *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*.

Series I: Correspondence, 1952 - 1989

Box 1

- F. 1 American College Dance Festival Association, 1987
- F. 2 - 4 American Dance Guild, 1977 - 1986
- F. 6 Arizona State University, 1987
- F. 7 Arts Resources In Collaboration, 1985
- F. 8 The Baltimore Dance Network, 1987
- F. 9 Baltimore School for the Arts, 1988
- F. 10 Center Stage, 1988 (Includes original proposal from 1986.)
- F. 11 The City College, 1987
- F. 12 Dance Uptown, 1973 (Response to article in *Dance Magazine*.)
- F. 13 Denison University, 1976
- F. 14 Denison University, 1985
- F. 15 The Downtown Dance Company, 1988
- F. 16 Dunn, Judy, undated
- F. 17 Ella Lyman Cabot Trust, 1964
- F. 18 Greenfield, Lois, undated
- F. 19 Head, Howard, 1988
- F. 20 Head, Howard & Martha, 1987
- F. 21 Henry Street Playhouse, 1952
- F. 22 Instituto Nacional De Bellas Artes, 1986
- F. 23 Jose Limon Dance Foundation, undated
- F. 24 Jowitt, Deborah, 1989
- F. 25 Kansas State University, 1985
- F. 26 King, Kenneth, 1976
- F. 27 Krishnamurti Foundation of America, 1983
- F. 28 Library & Museum of the Performing Arts, 1970
- F. 29 - 30 National Council on the Arts, 1971 - 1973
- F. 31 New York State Council on the Arts, 1970
- F. 33 *New York Times*, 1968
- F. 34 New York University, 1973
- F. 35 Ross, Alice, 1981 (Letter from handwriting expert.)
- F. 36 Rouse Company Foundation, 1988
- F. 37 State University of New York at Binghamton, 1983
- F. 38 Stewart, J.S., 1956
- F. 39 Theatre Project Baltimore, 1984
- F. 40 The University of Maryland, 1987
- F. 41 The University of North Carolina, 1982
- F. 42 Virginia Commonwealth University, 1982
- F. 43 Wilner, Eleanor, undated
- F. 44 Yellow Springs Institute, 1987
- F. 45 Zero Moving Dance Company, 1989

Series II: Personal Papers, 1970 - 1987

- F. 46 Address book, undated
- F. 47 Astrological chart and reading, 1976
- F. 48 Collection of postcards, undated
- F. 49 Dream diary, 1970 - 1978

Series III: Professional Papers, 1960 - 1988

- Biographical information
- F. 50 Biographical information of dance theater workshop member, 1987
(includes fact sheet/teaching residencies.)
- F. 51 Published biography, 1987 (Biographical dictionary of *Dance*, list of dance books in which Jeff Duncan's Career is documented.)
- F. 52 Short biography, 1987 (Includes description of the Jeff Duncan Dance Repertory.)

Jeff Duncan Papers

- F. 53 Record of choreographed shows, 1987
Booking Profile
F. 54 The Eglevsky Ballet Company, 1960
F. 55 Jeff Duncan Dance Repertory Company, 1966
F. 56 Resume, 1987

Box 2

Clippings

- F. 1 1951 (*Family Circle*.)
F. 2 1952 (*Dance Observer magazine*.)
F. 3 1953 (*Dance Magazine, The New York Times, New York World*.)
F. 4 1955 (*The Christian Science Monitor, Dance News*.)
F. 5 1956 (*Mexico En La Cultura, New York Herald Tribune, The New York Times*.)
F. 6 1957 (*Dance, The Detroit News, The Detroit Times, The Flint Journal, The Providence Sunday Journal*.)
F. 7 1958 (*Impulse magazine*.)
F. 8 1959 (*Playboy magazine*.)
F. 9 1960 (*New York Herald Tribune, The New York Times*.)
F. 10 1961 (*Dance News, The News, Variety, Sarasota Herald Tribune*.)
F. 11 1962 (*Dance, Dance & Dancers, Dance Magazine, New York Herald Tribune, The New York Times*.)
F. 12 1962 – 1963 (Photocopy of scrapbook, *Backstage, Dance, The New York Times, The Village Voice*.)
F. 13 1963 (*Backstage, Baltimore News, Dance Magazine, Dance News, The New York Times, The Village Voice*.)
F. 14 1964 (*Dance News*.)
F. 15 1965 (*Dance Magazine, New York Herald Tribune, The New York Times*.)
F. 16 1969 (*The New York Times, Richmond Times, Stage*.)
F. 17 1969 (*After Dark magazine*.)

Box 3

- F. 1 1970 (*Ballet Today, Dance News, Gay, The New Haven Register, The New York Times, The News, Theater Design and Technology, The Village Voice*.)
F. 2 1971 (*The Tuscaloosa News*.)
F. 3 1972 (*Civil Liberties, Houston Chronicle, Longview Morning Journal*.)
F. 4 1972 (*The Performer Magazine*.)
F. 5 1973 (*The Daily Iowan, The Village Voice*.)
F. 6 1975 (*Dance, The New York Times, The Princeton Arts Journal, The SoHo Weekly News, The Village Voice*.)
F. 7 1976 (*The Advocate Network, Columbus Dispatch, The Daily Iowan, Dance, Dance Magazine, Denison, Denisonian, Iowa City Press Citizen, The New York Times*.)
F. 8 1976 (*Dance Magazine*.)
F. 9 1977 (*Denison, Guild of Performing Arts, The New York Times, Village Voice*.)
F. 10 1977 (*Michael's Thing magazine*.)
F. 11 1978 (*Dance News, The Sun, Towerlight, Unicorn News*.)
F. 12 1978 (*Baltimore magazine, Maryland magazine*.)
F. 13 1978 (*Food & Fine Living, Forecast magazine*.)
F. 14 1979 (*Aura, City Paper, The News, News American, The Sun*.)
F. 15 1979 (*Forecast magazine*.)
F. 16 1980 (*Dance Magazine, The New York Times, Other Stages, The SoHo Weekly, The Village Voice*.)
F. 17 1980 (*Michael's Thing magazine*.)
F. 18 1981 (*City Paper, The Daily Mail, The Gay Paper, The Sun*.)
F. 19 1981 (*Forecast magazine*.)
F. 20 1982 (*Accent, Dance, The Diamond Back, The Sun*.)

Jeff Duncan Papers

- F. 21 1983 (*The Baltimore Gay Paper, The Gay Paper.*)
F. 22 1984 (*The News American, The Washington Post.*)
F. 23 1985 (*Ballet News, The Baltimore Chronicle, The City Paper, Critics Place*
(television show), *The Evening Sun, The New York Times, The Sun, The*
Washington Post.)
F. 24 1985 (*Ballet News* magazine.)
F. 25 1986 (*Boston Globe, The Guide, The New York Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer,*
The Plain Dealer, Review, The Sun, The Village Voice.)
F. 26 1986 (*Press in Mexico, El Nacional, El Sol de Mexico, Excelsior, Impacto Magazine,*
La Jornada, The Mexico City News, Novedades, Uno Mas Uno, includes
seminar schedules.)
F. 27 1986 (Mexican magazines.)
F. 28 1987 (*Accent Plus, The Baltimore Weekly, City Paper, Green & Grey, The Sun.*)
F. 28 1987 (*Tiempo Libre* magazines.)
F. 29 1988 (*People, The Sun.*)
F. 30 1989 (*The Baltimore Alternative, City Paper.*)

Box 4

- F. 1 Contact List, 1982 – 1983 (Dance Theater Workshop board of directors.)
F. 2 Press Releases, 1973 – 1987
Programs
F. 3 – 34 1953 – 1988, undated

Box 5

Production Material

- F. 1 *Baltimore Theatre Project*, 1987 – 1988 (Development plan with budget
proposal.)
F. 2 *Ceremonies – A Structured Improv*, 1984 (Dance notes.)
F. 3 *The Downtown Dance Company Project*, 1988 (Includes member list, project
description, and contact information.)
F. 4 *Five Points at the Antipodes*, 1974 (Dance notes, includes request for
fellowship award.)
F. 5 *The Goddess*, 1985 (Dance notes.)
F. 6 *Phases of the Oracle*, 1986 (Dance notes.)
F. 7 *View*, 1973 (Dance notes, completed work, includes photocopy of original folder
with annotations.)
F. 8 *View*, 1973 (Rehearsal schedule)
F. 9 *Vinculum*, 1969 (Dance notes.)
F. 10 *Vinculum*, 1969 (Prop list.)
F. 11 Winesburg Portraits Revival, 1988 (Project summary.)
F. 12 Receipt for Exposures/Contact Sheet, 1973

Teaching material

- F. 13 Attendance sheet, undated
F. 14 Class schedules, 1980 – 1982
F. 15 Exams, 1980 – 1982
F. 16 Dance exercises, 1980 – 1982
F. 17 Fulbright award to Mexico, 1986 – 1987 (Includes application, grant report,
grant award, correspondence.)
F. 18 Lecture demonstration, 1980 – 1982
F. 19 Lecture notes, 1980 – 1982
F. 20 Lecture notes, undated

Box 6

Artwork

Correspondence

- F. 1 Gabrielle, Nicole, undated
F. 2 Georgia, Olivia, 1987 – 1988

Jeff Duncan Papers

- F. 3 Hechinger, John, 1984 (Necklace artwork.)
 - F. 4 Unidentified, Bet, 1981
 - F. 5 Contract, 1987
 - F. 6 Expenditures, 1984
 - F. 7 Flyers, 1984
 - F. 8 Inventory of Art Pieces, 1987 (Includes quote from John Simon, *NY Magazine*, September 29, 1989.)
 - F. 9 Press Release, 1983 (Includes photocopy of clipping from *The News American*.)
- Music Scores
- F. 10 *Canituge Des Qantiques*, 1973
 - F. 11 *Combattimento Di Tancredi E Clorinda*, 1954
 - F. 12 *Sonata...Piano Four Hands*, 1948 (Annotations.)
 - F. 13 *Invitations*, 1963 - 1986

Series IV: Photographs, 1930 – 1988

Box 7

Personal Photos

- F. 1 – 11 Family Portraits, 1940 – 1986, undated
- F. 12 Friends, 1947 – 1966
- F. 13 Houses, 1967 – Undated
- F. 14 – 16 Self-Portraits, 1930 – 1988
- F. 17 Negatives, undated

Box 8

Professional Photos

Shows

- F. 1 *Bach Clavier Concerto #5*, 1975
- F. 2 *Brigadoon*, 1957 (Summer stock.)
- F. 3 *Diminishing Landscape*, 1965 (Includes solo performance.)
- F. 4 *Dreams*, 1955 (Includes solo performance, choreographed by Anna Sokolow.)
- F. 5 *Grand Spectacle*, 1957 (Choreographed by Anna Sokolow.)
- F. 6 *Red Roses For Me*, 1955 (Paul Sanasardo in the Broadway production of *Red Roses For Me*, choreographed by Anna Sokolow.)
- F. 7- 8 *Resonance's*, 1969
- F. 9 – 12 *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, 1969
- F. 13 *Space Test*, 1971 (Includes original version for the Merce Cunningham studio.)
- F. 14 – 15 *View*, 1973
- F. 16 – 17 *Vinculum*, 1968
- F. 18 – 21 *Winesburg Portraits*, 1963 - 1976 (Annotations, folder 18 premiere production 1963.)
- F. 22 – 24 Untitled Productions, 1964 – 1973
- F. 25 – 27 Untitled Productions, undated (Folder 25 performance in Baltimore.)

Box 9

Solo Shows

- F. 1 *La Mesa Del Brujo*, 1980
- F. 2 *Phases of the Oracle*, 1977
- F. 3 *Shore Song*, 1973
- F. 4 – 5 Untitled, undated

Dance Companies

- F. 1 – 4 Dance Theater Workshop, 1963 – 1975, undated (Includes shows: *Diminishing Landscape*, *Statement*.)
- F. 5 Impetus Dance Company, 1973 (Includes shows: *Canticles*, *Stoneway*.)
- F. 6 – 13 Jeff Duncan Dance Company, 1956 – 1965 (Includes shows: *Diversions of Five*, *F.I.T program*, *Glimpse*, *Poem*, *Statement*.)

Box 10

- F. 1 – 2 Headshots, undated

Jeff Duncan Papers

Publicity Shots

- F. 3 1957 (New York Debut *Antique Epigrams*, includes photocopy of insert, includes picture of summer work in Paris/Las Vegas.)
F. 4 1967 (Production of *View* in New York.)
F. 5 1970 (Production of *Glade*.)
F. 6 – 7 1975 – Undated (Photos for *Dance Magazine*, folder 6 include productions: *Bach Clavier Concerto #5*, *Resonance's*, folder 7 include productions: *Dreams*, *The Glade*, *Winesburg Portraits* and 1 negative.)
F. 8 1976 (Untitled show, dancers: Duncan, Judy, Wendy, Art.)
F. 9 1982 (Production of *Men Together*.)
F. 10 1987 (Mexico City.)
F. 11 – 12 Undated
F. 13 – 18 Rehearsal Shots, 1973 – 1977, undated (Includes productions of *View* and productions from the Jeff Duncan Dance Company.)
F. 19 – 23 Self-Portraits, undated
F. 24 – 25 Modeling Years, undated

Box 11

Contact Sheets

- F. 1 1956 (Includes production of Poem.)
F. 2 - 3 1963 (Includes production of Statement.)
F. 4 1965 – 1966 (Includes show choreographed by Anna Sokolow, *Tumble Dance* choreographed by Elaine Summers, *Antique Epigrams* choreographed by Jeff Duncan, *Cup/Saucer* choreographed by Kenneth King.)
F. 5 1965 – 1966 (Includes show choreographed by Anna Sokolow, *Cup/Saucer* choreographed by Kenneth King, includes shows *Duet* choreographed by Ronny Johnston, *Duet* danced by Kathy Posin and R. Johnston, *Summer Trio* choreographed by Jeff Duncan, *Summer Trio* danced by Kathy Posin, Kenneth King, and R. Johnston, and *Rue* choreographed and danced by Kathy Posin, includes pictures of Alvin Nikolais, includes pictures of Stand Vaudebeek's film of live dancers, includes pictures of Murray Louis.)
F. 6 1970 (Production of *Glade*.)
F. 7 1973 (Rehearsal of *View*.)
F. 8 1973 (Publicity shots for *View*.)
F. 9 - 14 1975 (Productions of *Bach Clave Concerto #5*, *Errands*, *Phases of the Oracle*, *Resonance's*, *Winesburg Portraits*, includes publicity shots of Dance Theater Workshop.)
F. 15 – 23 Negatives, 1953 – 1980, undated (folder 15 Playhouse fo the Henry Street Settlement, folder 16 Dance Theater Workshop, folder 17 *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, folder 18 *View*, folder 19 solo performances, folder 20 headshots, folder 21 – 22 publicity shots.)
F. 24 – 26 Artwork, 1983 (Folder 24 slides.)
F. 27 – 28 Benefit party, 1968 – Undated (folder 27 – 28 includes pictures with Anna Sokolow.)
F. 29 – 30 Dancers, Undated
F. 31 Group Photos, (Includes production of *Peter Pan*.)
F. 32 Teaching Material, undated

Series V: Over-sized Material, 1956 - 1987

Box 12

- F. 1 Elevation Plan, 1968 (Production of *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*.)
F. 2 – 7 Photographs, 1973 – 1975, undated (Folders 2 – 3 *View*, folder 4 *Phases of the Oracle*, folders 5 – 7 untitled)
F. 8 – 22 Posters, 1956 – 1987, undated (Folder 8 Anna Sokolow Program, folder 9 *View*.)