

Inventory of the Maya Plisetskaya Papers, 1956-1990

(S) *MGZMD 153

Jerome Robbins Dance Division

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

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Maya Plisetskaya Papers
Collection ID:	(S) *MGZMD 153
Creator:	Vrbsky, Alice
Extent:	3 linear feet, 8 boxes
Repository:	Jerome Robbins Dance Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract

This collection documents the career of Maya Plisetskaya, Prima Ballerina Assoluta. The collection spans the years 1956-1990. It consists of correspondence, clippings, photographs, slides and negatives.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice is required.

Publication Rights

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

Preferred Citation

Maya Plisetskaya Papers, (S) *MGZMD 153, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Maya Plisetskaya Papers were donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1996 by Helen Atlas.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2005.

Biographical Note

Maya Plisetskaya was born in Moscow in 1925, the oldest in a family of three children.

In 1932 the family was sent to Spitzbergen off the coast of Norway, in the Arctic Circle, where her father worked for Arktikugal (Arctic Coal). Plisetskaya returned to Moscow by herself in ca. 1934, so that she could study ballet. The rest of her family returned to Moscow in the summer of 1935. On April 30, 1937 her father was arrested. This was the last time she saw him, and in 1989 she learned that he had been executed by firing squad January 7, 1938. Her mother was considered an enemy of the state because of her husband and was arrested in 1937 while pregnant with their youngest child. She was finally released and returned to Moscow in April 1941.

Plisetskaya graduated from school June 21, 1941. She began her professional life in ballet the next day, the same day that Germany invaded its former ally the Soviet Union. The family evacuated to Sverdlovsk in September that same year. At some point Plisetskaya left (without permission) and returned to Moscow and her ballet studies. A second set of examinations and graduation were held in March 1943. She passed. But admission into the Bolshoi contained endless petty harassments from envious colleagues and party officials.

She was refused permission to tour with the company for six years, but in 1959 was finally permitted to tour in the United States of America. She eventually performed all over the world.

Plisetskaya married the Russian composer, Rodin Shchedrin, on October 2, 1958. The couple had no children.

Plisetskaya travels the world extensively lecturing and performing. She was director of the Teatro Lirico Nacional de España. In 1991, King Juan Carlos of Spain awarded her the Gold Medal of Fine Arts. In 2000 at the Bolshoi's gala celebrating her 75th birthday, President Vladimir Putin presented her with Russia's highest civilian honor, the medal for service to the Russian state, second degree.

She and Shchedrin currently live in Herradura, Spain.

Scope and Content Note

The Maya Plisetskaya papers span the years 1956-1990 and consist of correspondence, clippings, photographs, slides and negatives.

Alice Vrbsky, a fan of Maya Plisetskaya, created the collection. Vrbsky made scrapbooks of Plisetskaya's career. The correspondence is from Plisetskaya to Vrbsky and is all in Russian as Plisetskaya did not learn English. The clippings are mostly from North American publications, although there are foreign language clippings also included. There are equal amounts of publicity photographs and candid shots of both ballet productions and Plisetskaya playing the part of a tourist. Vrbsky also took the slides and negatives.

The collection is important in its documentation of the Cold War era career of Maya Plisetskaya, who danced in several tours with the Bolshoi Ballet. The collection does not have any personal anecdotes from either Vrbsky or Plisetskaya.

Organization

The collection is organized into 5 series and 2 sub-series. They are:

- Series I: Correspondence, ca. 1968-1972
- Series II: Photographs, 1958-1988
 - Sub-series 1 – Stills, 1958-ca. 1988
 - Sub-series 2 – Slides and Negatives, 1959-1987
- Series III: Programs, 1956-1990
- Series IV: Clippings, ca. 1962-1966
- Series V: Oversized Material, 1970-1979

Series Descriptions

Series I: Correspondence, ca. 1968-1972

1 Folder

This series consists of correspondence from Maya Plisetskaya to Alice Vrbsky. There are letters, postcards and greeting cards. All correspondence is in Russian.

Series II: Photographs, 1958-1988

4 Boxes

This series consists of photographs, slides and negatives. The majority of this series consists of ballet performances, with limited photographs about life off stage.

Sub-series 1 – Stills, 1958-ca. 1988

90 folders

This sub-series consists of photographs from ballet performances by Maya Plisetskaya. Some photos are publicity stills, some taken by professional photographers and snapshots. Also included are photos of Plisetskaya away from the ballet, including her home and family. There are also prints from slides and/or films. The majority of the photographs are black and white.

Sub-series 2 – Slides and Negatives, 1959-1987

48 folders

This sub-series consists of slides of ballet performances by Maya Plisetskaya. There are also slides of Plisetskaya away from the stage.

Series III: Programs, 1956-1990

1 Box

This series contains programs from performances of Maya Plisetskaya and the Bolshoi Ballet. Some are in languages other than English.

Series IV: Clippings, ca. 1962-1966

1 Box

This series contains clippings. There are reviews of performances of Maya Plisetskaya and the Bolshoi Ballet. There are also “human interest” stories about Plisetskaya’s life away from the ballet.

Series V: Oversized Materials, 1970-1979

1 Box

This series contains clippings, photographs and programs.

Box/Folder	Description
Box 1	
<u>Series I: Correspondence, 1968-1972</u>	
F 1	Correspondence from Maya Plisetskaya to Alice Vrbsky, 1968-1972 (All the correspondence is in Russian.)
<u>Series II: Photographs, 1958-ca. 1988</u>	
Sub-series I: Prints	
<i>Anna Karenina</i>	
F 2	1973 (Munich, Germany. May 10 th . Some photos taken by Alice Vrbsky.)
F 3	1988
F 4	undated
F 5	<i>Bach Prelude</i> , 1968-1971
F 6	<i>Ballet School</i> , Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1962, Mar.
F 7	<i>Best of Bolshoi</i> , Channel 7, New York City, 1965, Mar.
F 8	Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, 1958
<i>Carmen</i>	
F 9	Covent Garden, London, 1969, July
F 10	“Outside”, undated
F 11	Palais du Papes, Avignon, France, 1971, Aug. 10
F 12	Royal Opera House, London, 1969, July
F 13	Theatre Royale, Sidney, Australia, 1970, July
F 14	1988
F 15-17	Undated
F 18	<i>Carmen Suite</i> , 1970
F 19-21	Contact sheets
F 22	Dianora Niccoli, photographer, undated
<i>Don Quixote</i>	
F 23	Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA, 1968
F 24	Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, 1958
F 25	Covent Garden, London, 1963, July
F 26	Metropolitan Opera, 1966, Apr. (At the new Lincoln Center.)
F 27	San Francisco Opera, 1966, June
F 28	Undated
<i>Dying Swan</i>	
Box 2	
F 1	Covent Garden, London, 1963, July
F 2	<i>Ed Sullivan Show</i> , 1963, Dec.
F 3	Metropolitan Opera, 1962, Sept.
F 4	Other places (Hollywood Bowl, 1966, July and Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, 1962, July.)
F 5	Undated
F 6	<i>Fountains of Bakhchisarai</i> Film, Cameo Theatre, Miami, 1964, July
F 7	<i>Khovanschina</i> , undated
F 8	<i>Kohek Popbohok</i> , Cameo Theatre, Miami, 1962, Oct.
F 9	<i>Laurencia</i> , 1962
<i>Little Humpbacked Horse</i>	
F 10	Covent Garden, London, 1963, July
F 11	Theatre Royal, Sydney Australia, 1970, July
F 12	Undated
F 13	Male Fan, undated
F 14	Metropolitan Opera, 1962
F 15-16	<i>Plisetskaya Dances</i> , Cameo Theatre, Miami, 1965, Apr.

Box/Folder	Description
F 17	Plisetskaya, Maya at home, 1964
F 18	Plisetskaya, Maya with puppies, London, 1963
F 19	Plisetskaya, Maya off duty, undated
F 20	Plisetskaya, Maya in rehearsal, undated
F 21	Plisetskaya, Maya the tourist, undated
F 22	Plisetskaya, Maya at the party, undated
F 23	Prints from Film, undated
	<i>Raimonda</i> ,
F 24	1966 (Metropolitan Opera, NYC and Music Hall, Boston.)
F 25	undated
	<i>The Rose Malade</i> ,
F 26	1973 Premiere, Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, USSR, Jun. 13
F 27	undated
F 28	Sculptures of Maya Plisetskaya
	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> ,
F 29	Academy of Music, Philadelphia, 1968, May
F 30	Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1968, June
F 31	undated
F 32	<i>Spartacus</i> , Metropolitan Opera, 1962 (Old opera house.)
F 33	<i>Stone Flower</i> , undated
	<i>Swan Lake</i>
Box 3	
F 1	Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, 1958
F 2	Cameo Theatre, 1964, June
F 3	Covent Garden, London, 1963, July
F 4	Madison Square Garden, New York City, 1962, 1966
	Metropolitan Opera, New York City
F 5	1962 (Old opera house.)
F 6	1968, Sept. (Lincoln Center.)
F 7	Music Hall, Boston, 1962, Nov.
F 8	Paris Opera, 1962, Apr.
F 9	Theatre Royal, Sidney, Australia, 1970, Jul. 21
	Unidentified Place
F 10	1988
F 11-12	Act III, undated
F 13-14	undated
	Trips, 1959-1970
F 15	Boston, 1966-1968
F 16	Melbourne, Australia, 1970
F 17	Montreal, undated
	New York City
F 18	1959, May
F 19	1962, May
F 20	Vbrsky, Alice, ca. 1963 (Trip to Covent Garden, London.)
F 21	<i>Walpurgis Night</i> , undated
F 22-30	Unidentified productions, undated
	Sub-series 2: Slides, 1969-1987
Box 4	
F 1	<i>Bakhchisarai</i> , Cameo Theatre, Miami, 1964, July 11
F 2	<i>Ballet School</i> , Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1962
F 3	<i>Bayaderka</i> , Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1962, Sep. 21
F 4	<i>Cttaptak</i> , Metropolitan Opera, 1962, Sep. 12

Box/Folder	Description
F 5	Dance Magazine Awards, New York City, 1966, Apr. 25 <i>Don Quixote</i>
F 6	Covent Garden, London, 1963, Jul. 22
F 7	Hollywood Bowl, 1966, Jul. 10
F 8	Madison Square Garden, New York City, 1966, May 21
F 9	Metropolitan Opera, 1966, Apr. 20-May 5
F 10	Metropolitan Opera Gala, 1966, May 8
F 11	San Francisco Opera, 1966, Jun. 30
F 12	Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, 1966, Jun. 22 <i>Dying Swan</i>
F 13	Academy of Music, Philadelphia, 1966, May 15
F 14	Covent Garden, London, 1963, Jul. 20
F 15	Hollywood Bowl, 1966, Jul. 9
F 16	Madison Square Garden, New York City, 1966, May 22
F 17	Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1962, Sep. 20-21
F 18	Metropolitan Opera Gala, New York City, 1966, May 8
F 19	San Francisco Opera, 1966, Jul. 2
F 20	Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, 1966, Jun. 26
F 21	<i>Konek Topbohok</i> , Cameo Theatre, 1962, Sep. 12
F 22	<i>Lady with a Small Dog</i> , 1988, Mar. 20 (Boston.)
F 23	<i>Little Humpbacked Horse</i> , Covent Garden, London, 1963, Jul. 4
Box 5	
F 1	Maya and Alice Vbrsky, Boston, 1968
F 2	Maya after hours, New York City, 1966 (Times Square.)
F 3	Maya memorabilia, 1962-1987
F 4	Maya off duty, New York City, 1959, May (Gov. Clinton Hotel. Outside Madison Square Garden. Outside Metropolitan Opera House.)
F 5	Maya and Puppies, Strand Plaza Hotel, London, 1963, Jul. 5
F 6	Maya teaching ballet class at Metropolitan Opera, 1966, May 8 (Roof stage.)
F 7	Maya the tourist, New York City, 1962 (Gov. Clinton Hotel. Outside Metropolitan Opera House. Late night Times Square.)
F 8	<i>Plisetskaya Dances</i> , undated <i>Raimonda</i>
F 9	California and Oregon, 1966, Jun –Jul. (Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, San Francisco Opera, Coliseum, Portland.)
F 10	Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1966, Apr. 27
F 11	Music Hall, Boston, 1966, Jun. 4
F 12	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , Covent Garden, London, 1963, Jul. 24 <i>Swan Lake</i>
F 13	Cameo Theatre, 1964, Jun. 3
F 14	Covent Garden, 1963, Jul. 13
F 15	Hollywood Bowl, 1966, Jul. 7 Madison Square Garden,
F 16	1962, Dec. 2
F 17	1966, May 18
F 18-19	Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1962, Sep.
F 20	Music Hall, Boston, 1962, ca. Nov. 20
F 21	Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, 1966, Jun. 24
F 22	Thalia Theatre, 1964
F 23	Wilson, Julie, 1987
F 24	Negatives, undated

Box/Folder Description

Series III: Programs, 1956-1990

Box 6

- F 1-2 Bolshoi Ballet, 1959-1976
- F 3 Deutsche Oper Berlin, 1978-1979
- F 4 German Language, 1965-1967
- F 5 International Gala of Opera and Ballet, 1990
- F 6-7 Plisetskaya, Maya, 1956-
- F 8 Stars of the Bolshoi Ballet, 1962-1974
- F 9 *Swan Lake*, 1971
- F 10 Various, 1959-1972

Series IV: Clippings, ca. 1962-1966

Box 7

- F 1 *Anna Karenina*, undated
- F 2-4 Bolshoi Ballet
- F 5 Brochures
- F 6 *Carmen Suite*, undated
- F 7 *Don Quixote*, undated
- F 8 Foreign language, undated
- F 9 *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, undated
- F 10 *Laurencia*, undated
- F 11 *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, undated
- F 12 *Love Legend*
- F 13 Magazine covers, 1962-1966
- F 14-18 Plisetskaya, Maya
- F 19 *Raimonda*, undated
- F 20 *Romeo and Juliet*, undated
- F 21 Samoilova, Tania, undated
- F 22 Saturday Review, 1968
- F 23 Shchedrin, Rodin, undated
- F 24 *Shurale*, undated
- F 25 *The Sleeping Beauty*, undated
- F 26 *Spartacus*, undated
- F 27-28 *Swan Lake*
- F 29 *Walpurgisnacht*, undated (From the opera Faust.)

Series IV: Oversized Material, 1970-1979

Clippings, undated

Box 8

- F 1 Foreign Language, undated
- F 2 General, undated
- F 3 Plisetskaya, Maya, undated
- F 4 *Swan Lake*, undated
- Photographs, undated
- F 5 General, undated
- F 6 *Swan Lake*, undated
- F 7 Programs, 1970-1979