



The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Gelsey Kirkland papers

1968-1989

(S) *MGZMD 369

Compiled by Lea Jordan, 2014

Summary

Creator: Kirkland, Gelsey

Title: Gelsey Kirkland papers

Date: 1968-1989

Size: .42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Donated by Jill Kroesen, 2011

Abstract: Gelsey Kirkland is an American dancer, teacher, and author. The Gelsey Kirkland papers hold photocopied correspondence and writings, some of which detail her trip to Moscow in 1972 with the New York City Ballet.

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Creator History

Gelsey Kirkland is an American dancer, teacher and author. Kirkland joined the New York City Ballet in 1968 at age fifteen. She was promoted to soloist in 1969 and principal in 1972. In 1974, she joined the American Ballet Theater. She went on to create leading roles for many great 20th century choreographers, including Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, and Antony Tudor. She also danced the role of "Clara" in Baryshnikov's 1977 televised production of *The Nutcracker*. Kirkland ended her career with American Ballet Theatre in 1984.

Kirkland is the author of two memoirs, *Dancing on My Grave* (1986) and *The Shape of Love* (1990), as well as the children's book *The Little Ballerina and Her Dancing Horse* (1993).

In 2010, Ms. Kirkland established the Gelsey Kirkland Academy of Classical Ballet where she serves as

a co-artistic director alongside her husband Michael Chernov.

Scope and Content Note

The Gelsey Kirkland papers (1968-1989) hold photocopied correspondence and writings. The correspondence is from colleagues, friends, family and fans. The bulk of the correspondence is congratulatory responses to her performances. There is limited correspondence regarding the publication of *Dancing on My Grave*. Writings are notes on her trip to Russia with the New York City Ballet in 1972, as well as thoughts on Balanchine's *Don Quixote* and *Symphony in C*.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by file type

Key Terms

Subjects

Ballet -- 20th century
Ballet -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence

Names

American Ballet Theatre
New York City Ballet