



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Igor Schwezoff papers

1931-1983

(S) *MGZMD 415

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Summary

Creator: Shvetzov, Igor_ Aleksandrovich, 1904-1982

Title: Igor Schwezoff papers

Date: 1931-1983

Size: 1.26 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: Donated by Igor Shwezoff and Helio DeSoto, 1979 and 1987.

Abstract: Igor Schwezoff was a ballet dancer, teacher, and choreographer. The Igor Schwezoff papers date from 1931 to 1983 and contain correspondence, ballet scenarios, articles, resumes, and contracts. The collection includes material concerning Schwezoff's time in the United States army in 1942 and his work in Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s, where he was artistic director of the Theatro Municipal and founded the Ballet da Juventude. The collection also contains personal memorabilia and official documents such as citizenship papers.

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Processing note: Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Creator History

Igor Schwezoff was a ballet dancer, teacher, and choreographer. He was born in Russia in 1904 and trained at the school of the Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet in Leningrad. He left the Soviet Union in 1930. During the 1930s, he performed in Europe and South America, dancing with Colonel W. de Basil's Original Ballet Russe and other companies. He taught ballet in the Netherlands and in London.

In 1935, Schwezoff published his autobiography, *Borzoi*. He also wrote articles about dance and the arts for publications in the United States and Europe.

Schwezoﬀ traveled to the United States in 1940. He was drafted into the United States Army in 1942 and honorably discharged later that same year. In 1945, he was granted American citizenship.

He taught ballet in New York through much of the 1940s. He was artistic director at the Teatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro in 1945, and in 1947 returned to establish a dance company, the Ballet da Juventude. His works as a choreographer included *Eternal Struggle*, first performed in 1940, and *The Red Poppy*, performed in 1943.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Schwezoﬀ taught at the Tachibana Ballet School in Japan and at the American Ballet Theater in Washington, DC. He continued to teach until his death in New York City in 1982.

Scope and Content Note

The Igor Schwezoﬀ papers document his career as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer from 1931 to 1982. The bulk of the material dates from the 1930s to the 1960s. The collection contains correspondence, writings by Schwezoﬀ, articles, ballet scenarios, contracts, press notices, and Schwezoﬀ's resume. The collection also contains personal memorabilia and official documents such as Schwezoﬀ's citizenship papers and passports.

The correspondence mostly concerns Schwezoﬀ's work in the field of dance, though personal subjects are also discussed. His writings include drafts of articles and essays about dance, as well as scenarios for ballets, untitled draft scripts, and handwritten notes. Ballet scenarios written by others are also present. The collection contains one small floor plan for a staging of *The Red Poppy* at the Nissei Theater.

Material documenting Schwezoﬀ's work in Brazil includes travel documents, letters from colleagues, articles about his work with the Teatro Municipal, and documents concerning the establishment of the Ballet da Juventude. Some of the material is in Portuguese.

Papers related to Schwezoﬀ's military service include official correspondence and discharge papers, as well as letters sent to the army by Schwezoﬀ's colleagues and friends, suggesting that Schwezoﬀ would be best-suited to morale work. The materials also include a letter Schwezoﬀ sent to the president, in which he proposes that camp entertainments could be used to educate servicemen about art.

Personal memorabilia in the collection include Schwezoﬀ's artwork, photographs of unidentified people from Japan, and prize ribbons from dog shows.

Key Terms

Occupations

Ballet dancers
Choreographers

Names

Ballet da Juventude (Company)

Container List

- b. 1 f. 8 Army Material 1942-1943
- b. 2 f. 1-4 Brazil Material 1945-1956
- b. 2 f. 5 Contracts 1936-1982
- b. 1 f. 1-7 Correspondence 1935-1983
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- b. 2 f. 9-13 Writings and Ballet Scenarios circa 1940s
 - b. 3 f. 1 The Red Poppy Floor Plan (Nissei Theater) circa 1960s
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