



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

David S. Berlin photographs of the Nikolais Dance Theatre

1950s-1960s

*MGZEB 22-0014

Processed by Heather Lember in 2022.

Summary

Creator: Berlin, David S.

Title: David S. Berlin photographs of the Nikolais Dance Theatre

Date: 1950s-1960s

Size: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Donated by David S. Berlin in 1994.

Abstract: David S. Berlin was the staff photographer for the Nikolais Dance Theatre, the dance company founded by modern dance choreographer, Alwin Nikolais. Berlin's collection contains color transparencies and slides depicting performances choreographed by Nikolais between 1959 and 1962.

Preferred citation: David S. Berlin photographs of the Nikolais Dance Theatre, *MGZEB 22-0014. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Heather Lember in 2022.

Creator History

Alwin Nikolais (1910-1993) was a modern dance choreographer, composer, and designer. He began his performing arts career as a silent film piano accompanist and puppeteer, and then trained in dance at Bennington College in the 1930s. Nikolais moved to New York City in the 1940s, and was appointed director of the Henry Street Playhouse in 1948. He formed the Playhouse Dance Company (later renamed the Nikolais Dance Theatre) in 1951, and pursued choreography that utilized sound collage, innovative lighting techniques, stage props, and unconventional costume designs. Nikolais' works include *Masks, Props, and Mobiles* (1953), *Kaleidoscope* (1956), *Allegory* (1959), *Totem* (1960), *Tent* (1968), *Scenario* (1971), *Guignol* (1977), *Count Down* (1979), and *Talisman* (1981).

David S. Berlin was the staff photographer for the Nikolais Dance Theatre. He photographed the company's performances during the 1950s and 1960s.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from 1959 to 1962, and contains color slides and color transparencies depicting Nikolais Dance Theatre performances photographed by David S. Berlin. Many of the slides and transparencies were labeled by Berlin, and have been arranged alphabetically by the name, title, or topic that Berlin assigned. Performances depicted include *Allegory*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Tent*, and *Totem*. There is also a selection of transparencies featuring Phyllis Lamhut, who was a principal performer with the company.

Key Terms

Subjects

Choreographers
Dance companies -- United States
Modern dance

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Color transparencies
Slides (photographs)

Occupations

Dancers.
Photographers.

Names

Berlin, David S.
Lamhut, Phyllis
Nikolais, Alwin
Nikolais Dance Theatre

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-8 1959-1962
Contains unlabeled and unidentified slides and transparencies.
- b. 1 f. 9-10 *Allegory* 1959-1962
- b. 1 f. 11 *Aztecs and Navajo*
- b. 1 f. 12 *Kaleidoscope* 1962
- b. 1 f. 13 *Kaleidoscope, Kites, Mirrors* 1959
- b. 1 f. 14 *Kites* 1959
- b. 1 f. 15-16 Lamhut, Phyllis
- b. 1 f. 17 *Mirros* 1962
- b. 1 f. 18 *Stratus* 1962
- b. 1 f. 19-24 *Totem* 1962
- b. 1 f. 25 *Web* 1962