



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Selma Jeanne Cohen photographs**

1947-1989

\*MGZEB 22-0024

Processed by Em Longan in 2022.

## Summary

**Creator:** Cohen, Selma Jeanne, 1920-2005

**Title:** Selma Jeanne Cohen photographs

**Date:** 1947-1989

**Size:** 1.08 linear feet (3 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Selma Jeanne Cohen in 1989.

**Abstract:** Selma Jeanne Cohen (1920-2005) was a dance historian best known for editing the International Encyclopedia of Dance (1998). The collection, dated from 1947 to 1989, contains photographs of dance companies, stage productions, and dancers that Cohen utilized in her work.

**Preferred citation:** Selma Jeanne Cohen photographs, \*MGZEB 22-0024. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Language of the Material:** Multiple languages Collection is predominantly in English. Some materials are in Russian, which is indicated in the container list.

**Processing note:** Processed by Em Longan in 2022.

### Related Materials:

Selma Jeanne Cohen Papers, (S)\*MGZMD 145, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Selma Jeanne Cohen papers, (S) \*MGZMD 258, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Selma Jean Cohen Papers Relating to Dance Perspectives, (S) \*MGZMD 56, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

International Encyclopedia of Dance Records, (S) \*MGZMD 151, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Selma Jeanne Cohen Papers, (S)\*MGZMD 62, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

## Creator History

Selma Jeanne Cohen (1920-2005) was an author, editor, and scholar of dance history who advocated that dance receive the same scholarly respect as that given to literature or painting. Cohen earned a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Chicago in 1946, and moved to New York City in 1953. She worked as a dance critic and reviewer for *Dance Observer*, *The New York Times* (1955-1958) and *The Saturday Review* (1965-1966).

In 1966, Cohen founded the Dance Perspectives Foundation, along with Karl Leabo, Martha Hill, José Rollins de la Torre Bueno, and Edwin Derby. The organization was devoted to supporting dance scholarship, publishing academic and reference works, sponsoring lectures and conferences, and providing research and travel grants to dance scholars. From 1966 to 1976, the Foundation published *Dance Perspectives*, originally founded by Cohen with A.J. Pischl in 1959. *Dance Perspectives* was a quarterly journal specializing in scholarly monographs on a wide variety of dance topics, and was one of the first journals dedicated to international dance history. Cohen served as an editor for *Perspectives* from 1966 until 1976, when it ceased publication.

In the same year, the Foundation earned a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant to create a comprehensive scholarly reference work covering the history of dance. Cohen was selected to be the editor-in-chief of the project. The six-volume, 4,000 page *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (Oxford University Press, 1998) took two decades to complete and was her last major project, though she continued working, writing, and teaching after *Dance Encyclopedia* was published.

Selma Jeanne Cohen died December 23, 2005, at her home in New York.

## Scope and Content Note

The collection, dated 1947 to 1989, contains prints and negatives Cohen used to support and illustrate her dance history scholarship. Cohen expanded this field through her work with the *Dance Perspectives* academic journal; the Dance Perspectives Foundation; and the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*. The collection is arranged topically into photographs that depict dance companies; dance performances; individual dancers and choreographers; and unsourced scans of dance artwork. All images are arranged alphabetically by name or title within each grouping.

The Companies grouping contains photography of American and European dance companies, with a particular focus on American and Soviet ballet companies. Some companies included are the Royal Ballet, the New York City Ballet, the Denishawn School, and the Kirov Ballet of Leningrad (now the Mariinsky Ballet). Images of Asian story dance-dramas, such as Japanese *Noh*, Korean *talchum*, and southern Indian *kathakali*, are also included.

Performances contains photographs of festivals and events, such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music Next Wave Festival and images from the 1979 season at Jacob's Pillow. Items in this grouping were not associated with a specific company.

Dancers and Choreographers includes photographs of Ze'eva Cohen, George Balanchine, Bella

Lewitzky, and Doris Humphrey, among others. Items in this grouping were not associated with a specific company or a particular performance.

Dance Artwork contains negatives of illustrations and prints of abstract art that are inspired by dance.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Dance -- History

Dance -- Photographs

Dance companies -- Photographs

### **Occupations**

Dancers.

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Negatives (photographs)

Photographs

### **Names**

Cohen, Selma Jeanne, 1920-2005

Dance Perspectives Foundation

## Container List

### Companies

- b. 1 f. 1 American Ballet Theatre
- b. 1 f. 2 The Asia Society Performing Arts Department 1989
- b. 1 f. 3 Ballet of Los Angeles
- b. 1 f. 4 Ballet de Santiago
- b. 1 f. 5 Basel Ballet
- b. 3 f. 1 Bennington School of the Dance
- b. 1 f. 6 Bolshoi Ballet 1987
- b. 1 f. 7 Central Ballet of China 1986
- b. 1 f. 8 Cullberg Ballet
- b. 1 f. 9 Dance Theatre of Harlem
- b. 1 f. 10 David Gordon/Pick Up Performance Company 1981
- b. 1 f. 11 Denishawn School
- b. 1 f. 12 Douglas Dunn and Dancers 1976
- b. 1 f. 13 Dutch National Ballet
- b. 1 f. 14 Elise Monte Dance Company 1986
- b. 1 f. 15 Hamburg Ballet 1983
- b. 1 f. 16 Henry Street Playhouse Dance Company
- b. 1 f. 17 Joffrey Ballet
- b. 1 f. 18 Julliard School of Music
- b. 1 f. 19 Kirov Ballet of Leningrad 1989  
This file contains some captions and handwritten notations in Russian.
- b. 1 f. 20 Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians
- b. 1 f. 21 Limón Dance Company
- b. 3 f. 2
- b. 1 f. 22 London Contemporary Dance Theatre
- b. 1 f. 23 Martha Graham Dance Company 1955
- b. 3 f. 3 Mary Wigman Dance Troupe
- b. 1 f. 24 Merce Cunningham Dance Company 1968-1979
- b. 1 f. 25 Nederlands Dans Theatre
- b. 1 f. 26 New York Baroque Dance Company
- b. 1 f. 27 New York City Ballet 1984
- b. 1 f. 28 Nikolais Dance Company
- b. 1 f. 29 Norwegian National Ballet
- b. 1 f. 30 Paul Taylor Dance Company
- b. 1 f. 31 Pilobolus Dance Theatre
- b. 1 f. 32 Royal Ballet
- b. 1 f. 33 Royal Danish Ballet
- b. 1 f. 34 Royal Opera House
- b. 3 f. 4 Sara Mildred Strauss School of Dance

Companies (cont.)

b. 1 f. 35 Stuttgart Ballet 1979

Performances

b. 2 f. 1 *The Art of Isadora*

b. 2 f. 2 *The Coach with the Six Insides*

b. 2 f. 3 *Coucou Bazar (Le Bal de l'Hourloupe)*

b. 2 f. 4 *Degrees of Freedom* 1984

b. 2 f. 5 *O Rangasayee*

b. 2 f. 6 *Primitive Mysteries*

b. 2 f. 7 *Swine Lake*

b. 2 f. 8 Brooklyn Academy of Music Next Wave Festival 1984-1985

b. 2 f. 9 Jacob's Pillow 1979

b. 2 f. 10 Summercast Live

b. 2 f. 11 Unidentified Duet Performances

Dancers and Choreographers

b. 2 f. 12 Armour, Toby

b. 2 f. 13 Brown, Trisha

b. 2 f. 14 Cohen, Ze'eva

b. 2 f. 15 Dietz, Margaret

b. 2 f. 16 Duncan, Kathy

b. 2 f. 17 Humphrey, Doris 1947-1956

b. 2 f. 18 Lewitzky, Bella 1950-1976

b. 2 f. 19 Loring, Eugene

b. 2 f. 20 Moulton, Charles 1979

b. 2 f. 21 Oukrainsky, Serge

b. 2 f. 22 Pavley, Andreas

b. 2 f. 23 Reitz, Dana 1978

b. 2 f. 24 Streb, Elizabeth

b. 2 f. 25 Tharp, Twyla 1974

b. 2 f. 26 Unidentified Dancers

b. 3 f. 5

b. 2 f. 27 Dance Art

b. 3 f. 6