



The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Ruth Page papers, Additions

1904-1977

(S) *MGZMD 416

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014 and 2015.

Summary

Creator: Page, Ruth, 1899-1991

Title: Ruth Page papers, Additions

Date: 1904-1977

Size: 10.2 linear feet (26 boxes)

Source: Donated by Ruth Page.

Abstract: The Ruth Page papers, Additions (1904-1977) contain correspondence, business records, photographs, awards, programs, and other publicity materials relating to American dancer and choreographer Ruth Page.

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Creator History

Ruth Page (1899-1991) was an American dancer and choreographer best known for her contributions to modern dance in the United States. Page's style was highly experimental, often combining elements of poetry, opera, avant-garde, classical, and modernist expressions. Her innovative approach placed her among the pioneering choreographers in the United States.

Page trained with Adolph Bolm in New York City and performed in his Ballet Intime and Allied Arts Ballet during the 1920s. During the 1930s, she and Bentley Stone choreographed and danced ballets for the Federal Dance Project in Chicago, including Frankie and Johnny and American Pattern, an early feminist ballet. She danced, choreographed, and directed ballets independently and with several companies and festivals, including Ravinia Opera Festival, Chicago Grand Opera Company, Chicago

Opera Ballet, the Lyric Opera Company, and Ruth Page's International Ballet (previously known as Ruth Page's Chicago Ballet). Page choreographed and directed the Chicago Ballet's annual production of the *Nutcracker* from 1965 through the 1980s. Among her best known works are her opera ballets, most notably *Revanche*, a ballet version of *Il Trovatore*, and *The Merry Widow*.

Page married Thomas Hart Fisher, a lawyer, who worked as her business manager until his death in 1969. In 1983, she married longtime friend, colleague, and artist Andre Delfau. Upon her retirement in the early 1970s, she established the Ruth Page Foundation, now known as the Ruth Page Center for the Arts. Ruth Page died in 1991.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from 1904 to 1977 and contains correspondence, awards, professional files, programs, and other publicity materials relating to the professional career of Ruth Page. Correspondence and publicity materials comprise the bulk of the collection.

Correspondence dates from the 1920s to the 1970s and is both personal and professional in nature. Some correspondence dating from 1971 to 1977 was previously arranged alphabetically by correspondent. All remaining correspondence is arranged chronologically. Researchers should consult both the alphabetical and chronological correspondence files in order to locate letters to or from individuals listed in the alphabetical run. Correspondence is sometimes interspersed with professional files; researchers should consult both the correspondence files and the professional files for administrative or business-related documents.

A wide variety of projects and subjects are addressed in the correspondence, including credit and rights issues surrounding the design, musical composition, and choreography of Page's works; royalties; production and tour planning, specifically orchestration, set design, costume design, and casting; and the development of the Ruth Page Foundation. Ballets discussed in the correspondence include *The Bells*, *Frankie and Johnny*, *Billy Sunday*, *Revanche*, *The Merry Widow*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and the *Nutcracker*. Correspondents include composers, such as Isaac Van Grove, Friedrich Wilckens, and Remi Gassmann; artist and designers, such as Isamu Noguchi, Alexander Calder, Clive Rickabaugh, Nicolai Remisoff, Andre Delfau, and Paul du Pont; and other dancers and choreographers, including Belinda Wright, Kenneth Johnson, Katherine Dunham, and Harald Kreutzberg. Many of the letters dating between the 1940s and 1950s are carbon copies of outgoing letters from Page's husband and business manager, Thomas Hart Fisher, on her behalf. Some of Fisher's correspondence during this time also discusses his concerns with government funding to dance, dance criticism, and the subjectivity of artistic standards in the United States. Personal correspondence from January 1977 consists of condolence and get-well letters to Page after she was mugged in front of her apartment in Chicago. There are also personal letters from composer Isidor Philipp while he was in Hollywood, California with his family at the onset of World War II. Correspondence from Andre Delfau is mostly in French.

Professional files in the collection consist of schedules, agreements, contracts, memorandums, and other legal documents. Tour and repertoire schedules for the Chicago Grand Opera Ballet from 1957 to 1965 and Ruth Page's International Ballet from the 1960s to the 1970s are present. Material relating to the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers dates from 1959 to 1962 and consists of reports, memorandums, proposed contract stipulations, bi-laws, and other notices and agreements. An outline for a lecture Page gave entitled "The Creative World of Ballet" as part of a cultural enrichment project for the Chicago Public Schools in 1967 is also present.

Photographs in the collection document the entire span of Page's career, as a dancer in the 1920s through the 1950s, and as a choreographer up until the 1970s. Photographs are arranged alphabetically by person, subject, or format (i.e. slides and negatives). Researchers should also consult miscellaneous files in order to view photographs of other dancers. Publicity photographs make up a large amount of the photographs of Page during her active dancing career. Nearly all of Page's early work is documented, including *Music Box Revue* (Broadway), *Coq d'Or*, *Peter Pan*, *Cinderella*, *Barnum and Bailey*, Gershwin's *Preludes*; and Adolph Bolm's *Birthday of the Infanta*, *The Girl with the Flaxen Hair*, *La Gitanette*, and *The Poisoned Flower*. Photographs of Page also document her work with Bentley Stone during and after the Federal Dance Project; performances with Harald Kreutzberg; her "Dances with Words and Music" programs; and many solo and partnered ballets, such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Flapper and the Quarterback*, *Petrouchka*, *Lovesong*, *Harlequinade*, *Ballet Scaffolding*, *Expanding Universe*, *An American Pattern*, *The Bells*, and *Frankie and Johnny*.

Photographs of ballets choreographed by Page, including those for the Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet (also referred to The Chicago Lyric Opera in this collection; known as Ruth Page's International Ballet after 1966) consist of performance stills, headshots, publicity photographs, and images from rehearsals on and off stage dating from 1935 to the 1970s. Dancers depicted in these photographs include Kenneth Johnson, Patricia Klekovic, Orrin Kayan, Melissa Hayden, Sonia Arova, and Dolores Lipinski. Among the better represented ballets are *Carmen*, *Camille*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *The Merry Widow*. Images of Page instructing her dancers in the studio are also present. Researchers interested in photographs that depict ballets Page choreographed and danced in, such as *The Bells* and *Gold Standard*, should consult alphabetical files for Ruth Page, as well as the choreography files. Also present are stereotype printing flongs (molds) for photographs most likely published in newspapers and magazines.

Programs and publicity materials date from 1915 to the 1970s and consist of announcements, reviews, articles, press releases, posters, press books, program notes, and programs for productions and performances Page danced in, choreographed, and directed. Many of Page's dance partnerships are documented through the programs, including those with Adolph Bolm, Harald Kreutzberg, and Bentley Stone. The materials provide a thorough survey of Page's solo dance performances in the United States, Japan, Cuba, and Europe, as well as performances with the Metropolitan Opera; Adolph Bolm's Ballet Intime and Allied Arts; the Lyric Opera of Chicago; the Federal Dance Project; and the Chicago Opera Ballet. Her choreography for and directorship of Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet is documented through a variety of press materials and programs. Press releases summarize many of Page's ballets and contain biographical information on Page and other dancers.

Awards, certificates, and degrees in the collection were given to Page from the Ballet Guild of Chicago and the Adult Education Council of Greater Chicago. Also present are two doctoral degrees from Columbia College and Lake Forest College.

The majority of the collection is in English, with some materials in French and Spanish.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged into five groups: Correspondence; Professional Files; Photographs; Programs and Publicity; and Awards, Certificates, and Degrees. Correspondence is partially arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Photographs are arranged alphabetically by person, subject, or format.

Key Terms

Subjects

Ballet -- United States

Occupations

Choreographers

Dancers

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs

Programs (documents)

Names

Bolm, Adolph, 1884-1951

Fisher, Thomas Hart

Van Grove, Isaac

Chicago Opera Ballet

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1-10 1927-1975
- b. 2 f. 1-11 1962-1974
- b. 3 f. 1-7 1974-1976
- b. 4 f. 1-8 1976-January 1977
- b. 5 f. 1-6 January 1977
- b. 6 f. 1-7 1977
- b. 7 f. 1-5 1977
- b. 7 f. 6 Arensky, Daniel 1972, 1975
- b. 7 f. 7 Bell, Robert 1972
- b. 7 f. 8 Cassidy, Claudia 1972-1974
- b. 7 f. 9 Chicago Public Television 1973
- b. 7 f. 10 Clavé, Antoni 1972-1974
- b. 8 f. 1 Cohen, Selma Jeanne 1973
- b. 8 f. 2 Crane, John 1972-1976
- b. 8 f. 3 Delfau, Andre 1973-1976
- b. 8 f. 4 Ekstrom, Parmenia 1975
- b. 8 f. 5 Engel, Lehman 1973
- b. 8 f. 6 Esser, Grace Denton 1972-1973
- b. 8 f. 7 Ford, George 1972
- b. 8 f. 8 Gordon, Lonny 1973
- b. 8 f. 9 Grantzeva, Tania 1974
- b. 8 f. 10 Ibert, Rosette-Jacques 1973-1974
- b. 8 f. 11 Johnson, Kenneth 1972-1975
- b. 8 f. 12 Kerensky, Oleg 1972, 1974
- b. 8 f. 13 Ketelaar, Gerald 1973
- b. 8 f. 14 Klekovic, Patricia 1972
- b. 8 f. 15 Koegler, Horst 1974
- b. 8 f. 16 Lee, Raya 1974
- b. 8 f. 17 Lidova, Irene 1974
- b. 8 f. 18 Long, Larry 1972-1973
- b. 8 f. 19 Lust, Herbert 1974
- b. 8 f. 20 Martin, John 1973-1974
- b. 8 f. 21 McDonagh, Don 1975
- b. 8 f. 22 Oenslager, Donald 1973
- b. 8 f. 23 Pierson, Thomas 1974
- b. 8 f. 24 Rorem, Ned 1974
- b. 8 f. 25 Roy, Richard 1973
- b. 8 f. 26 Turbyfill, Mark 1973

Correspondence (cont.)

- b. 8 f. 27 Van Grove, Isaac 1971-1976
- b. 8 f. 28-29 Wilckens, Friedrich 1972-1977

Professional Files

- b. 20 f. 5 1922
Thomas Fisher's certificate to practice law.
- b. 9 f. 1-10 1926-1971
- b. 10 f. 1-5 1957-1969

Photographs

- b. 10 f. 6 Cartier, Jacques circa 1927

Choreography

Photographs of ballet performances and rehearsals choreographed by Page.

- b. 10 f. 7-9 1935-1972
Includes photographs of ballets which Page choreographed and of ballets she choreographed and danced in.
- b. 10 f. 10-16 Chicago Lyric Opera 1935-1966
- b. 11 f. 1-4 Chicago Opera Ballet 1946-1969
 - b. 11 f. 5 Fasting, Jorge 1920s
 - b. 11 f. 6 Gerard, Rolf 1960s
 - b. 11 f. 7 Kayan, Orrin 1963-1966
 - b. 11 f. 8 Klekovic, Patricia 1964
 - b. 11 f. 9 Koner, Pauline 1950
 - b. 11 f. 10 Landowsky, John circa 1964
 - b. 11 f. 11 Leeras, Margit 1919-1921
 - b. 11 f. 12 Limón, José circa 1950
 - b. 11 f. 13 Lipinski, Dolores 1963-1966
 - b. 11 f. 14 Markova, Alicia 1959
 - b. 11 f. 15 McKenzie, Kenneth 1950

Miscellaneous and Other Dancers

Photographs of other dancers, individuals, and miscellaneous ballets.

- b. 11 f. 16-18 1915-1972
- b. 21 f. 4-5 1925-1951
- b. 12 f. 1-2 1951-1978
- b. 12 f. 3 Musil, Karl 1965

Page, Ruth

- b. 12 f. 4-7 1904-1973
- b. 13 f. 1-9 1920-1967
- b. 14 f. 1-7 1930-1953
 - b. 14 f. 8 Parker, Frank 1929
 - b. 14 f. 9 Pavley, Andreas 1915
 - b. 14 f. 10 Preble, Marcia 1924
 - b. 22 f. 1 Printing Flongs (Molds) circa 1950s
 - b. 14 f. 11 Remisoff, Nicolai 1924-1962
- b. 14 f. 12-14 Slides and Negatives 1939-1960s

Photographs (cont.)

b. 14 f. 15 Turbyfill, Mark 1920s

b. 14 f. 16 Wright, Belinda 1953

Programs and Publicity

b. 14 f. 17-18 1915-1929

b. 15 f. 1-10 1918-1966

b. 20 f. 1-4 1920-1965

b. 21 f. 6-10 1922-1966

b. 16 f. 1-9 1933-1965

b. 17 f. 1-10 1941-1969

b. 18 f. 1-9 1960-1969

b. 19 f. 1-3 1964-1977

Ballet Theater at Chicago Opera Company, Civic Opera House

Programs

b. 23 f. 1-18 1940 November

b. 24 f. 1-13 1940 November- December

b. 25 f. 1-18 1940 December

b. 25 f. 19-22 Announcements 1940

b. 26 f. 1-34 Program Copy 1940

b. 20 f. 5 Awards, Certificates, and Degrees 1963

b. 21 f. 1-3 Awards, Certificates, and Degrees 1968-1975