



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Serge Diaghilev papers

1910-1929

(S) *MGZMC-Res. 20

Processed by Nancy M. Shawcross.

Summary

Creator: Diaghilev, Serge, 1872-1929

Title: Serge Diaghilev papers

Date: 1910-1929

Size: 131 items in 25 folders

Source: Purchase (2 items were a gift from Lincoln Kirstein, 8/69). Dance Mart, 11/67, Sotheby Auction, 1967, Kenneth W. Rendell, Inc., 10/72 (received 1/73).

Abstract: This collection relates primarily to the last ten years of les Ballets Russes of Serge Dyagilev. There are a few items from 1910-1911 regarding Michel Fokine. The Papers have been divided into three sections and arranged chronologically. The first comprises holograph copies and some originals of letters written by Dyagilev to various correspondents, such as Michel Fokine, Guido Gatti, Désiré Inghelbrecht, Sergei Grigoriev, Serge Lifar, and Alicia Markova. The second section consists of letters from various correspondents to Dyagilev, as well as letters relating to Dyagilev but neither written to nor by him. The last section contains documents, contracts, and receipts. Some of the material concerns the process in judicial cases brought against Dyagilev by Rastorgoueff, Mme. Bewicke, Gulbenkian, and Nijinsky—various artists of les Ballets Russes—for failure to execute contracts. Other pieces are, by contrast, relative to the cases brought by Dyagilev against Fokine and de Palignac.

Alternative Form Available: Original materials shelved offsite: (S) *MGZMC-Res. 20

Preferred citation: Serge Diaghilev papers, (S) *MGZMC-Res. 20. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: French, Russian, and English English

Processing note: Processed by Nancy M. Shawcross.

Creator History

Sergei Pavlovich Dyagilev was born in the province of Novgorod on March 31, 1872. In 1890 he came to St. Petersburg as a law student and soon became a member of the circle of young musicians,

painters, and writers assembled around Alexander Benois and Léon Bakst. In the same year of 1899 in which he co-founded the progressive art magazine “Mir Iskoustva” (“The World of Art”), Dyagilev was appointed artistic advisor of the Maryinsky Theatre, where he was in charge of the publication of the theatre annual and of the highly successful productions of “Sadko” and “Sylvia.” He resigned from his post in 1901, and after the magazine stopped appearing in 1904, he concentrated on organizing exhibitions of Russian art in St. Petersburg and Paris.

In 1908 Dyagilev brought a production of “Boris Godunov” to Paris with Chaliapin and was then invited to present a Paris season of Russian opera and ballet in 1909. With some of the best dancers from St. Petersburg and Moscow he scored a unique triumph in May and June 1909 in Paris. Repeat visits during the following years led to the gradual formation of his Ballets Russes, which became an independent private company when Vaslav Nijinsky resigned from the Maryinsky Theatre. He directed les Ballets Russes until his death on August 19, 1929, in Venice. His company, financed solely by the European aristocracy, was often on the verge of bankruptcy and never returned to Russia after the October Revolution (nor did it ever perform there).

Scope and Content Note

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Key Terms

Subjects

Ballerinas
Ballet -- Europe
Ballet -- Soviet Union
Ballet companies
Ballet dancers
Choreographers
Manuscripts -- Collections

Occupations

Impresarios

Names

Diaghilev, Serge, 1872-1929
Fokine, Michel, 1880-1942
Gatti, Guido
Inghelbrecht, D. E. (De_sire_ E_mile), 1880-1965

Lifar, Serge, 1905-1986
Markova, Alicia, Dame, 1910-2004
Ballets russes

Container List

Letters from Serge Dyagilev

- f. 1 1910-1911 (3 items)
- f. 2 1921-1924 (3 items)
- f. 3 1925 (5 items)
- f. 4 1926 (6 items)
- f. 5 1927 (5 items)
- f. 6 1928 (9 items)
- f. 7 1929 & n.d (7 items)

Letters to Serge Dyagilev and others

- f. 8 1915 (2 items)
- f. 9 1918-1919 (5 items)
- f. 10 1923-1924 (4 items)
- f. 11 1925 Jan.-Apr (7 items)
- f. 12 1925 May-July (5 items)
- f. 13 1925 Sept.-Dec (9 items)
- f. 14 1926 (5 items)
- f. 15 1927 (4 items)
- f. 16 1928-1929 (6 items)

Documents, contracts, receipts

- f. 17 1910-1911 (3 items)
- f. 18 1915 (4 items)
- f. 19 1917-1918 (4 items)
- f. 20 1921 (5 items)
- f. 21 1922 (5 items)
- f. 22 1924-1925 (7 items)
- f. 23 1926-1927 (4 items)
- f. 24 1928-1929 & n.d (7 items)

Holograph notes & printed calling cards

- f. 25 1 folder of holograph notes and printed calling cards.