



The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Agnes de Mille honors and awards

1977-1992

(S) *MGZMD 79

Processed by Henley Haslam.

Summary

Creator: De Mille, Agnes

Title: Agnes de Mille honors and awards

Date: 1977-1992

Size: 2 oversize boxes 35 items

Source: Gift. Received: July 1992

Abstract: Contains certificates, citations, medals and diplomas awarded to Agnes De Mille.

Preferred citation: De Mille, Agnes. Honors and Awards, (S) *MGZMD 79, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

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Creator History

Agnes George de Mille, dancer, choreographer, writer and spokesperson for the arts, was born September 18, 1905 in New York. She was the daughter of playwright William Churchill de Mille (1879?-1955) and Anna George de Mille (1878-1947), who was in turn the daughter of writer and single-tax advocate, Henry George (1839-1897). Agnes' uncle was the film producer/director, Cecil B. de Mille (1881-1959). She had a younger sister, Margaret (1908-1978).

In 1914, the de Milles moved to Hollywood where William was joining forces with Cecil in the motion picture industry. Agnes attended the Hollywood School for Girls, graduating in 1922, and went on to graduate from University of California in 1926 with a degree in English. William and Anna separated that year, being divorced in 1927, and Agnes spent that summer after graduating traveling in western Europe with her mother and sister. William married Clara Beranger, a colleague in the movie industry, in 1928 and lived with her in California for the remainder of his life.

Agnes' formal dance training did not begin until early adolescence in California with Theodore Kosloff.

She did some performing in college shows although she did not train continuously during her college years. Soon after graduating, she began to give solo recitals and later with Warren Leonard in her own works. Her mother helped her produce these and accompanied her to concerts in various cities in the United States and in Europe. During this period, she settled once again in New York, at first living with her mother and sister, and then on her own.

Agnes moved to England in 1932 where she continued her dance training in ballet with Marie Rambert. She performed in her own work and those of her peers such as Antony Tudor under the auspices of Rambert.

Upon her permanent return to New York ca. 1939, she met Walter Prude (1909-) through Martha Graham who was under Prude's management. Agnes and Walter were married on June 14, 1943, in Hobbs, New Mexico during the time when Prude was in military service. The two were separated-except for infrequent visits-due to the war until 1945. Their son, Jonathan de Mille Prude, was born in 1946.

It was in this time in the early 1940's that de Mille's work as a choreographer began to be recognized in the United States. Her ballet "Rodeo" in 1942, created for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, brought her immediate acclaim and popularity as did her choreography for the Broadway show "Oklahoma!" the following year. She worked steadily for the next two decades both on Broadway and in the ballet, creating over a dozen works in each field. She had a long-enduring relationship with Ballet Theatre (American Ballet Theatre) and The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, for whom she created many of her ballets.

In 1953 she formed the Agnes de Mille Dance Theatre (Heritage Dance Theatre), which functioned most actively in 1953-1954 and 1973-1975. She strove to represent in its repertoire indigenous American dance forms by native choreographers and composers as well as folk forms.

On the eve of a major New York performance of her company in her lecture/performance of "Conversations About the Dance," she suffered a serious cerebral hemorrhage. From the day of the stroke, May 15, 1975, onward, she has remained partially paralyzed on the right side of her body although she recovered from some of the other initial losses of her faculties. On November 9, 1977, she went on stage to realize the performance of "Conversations About the Dance," and resumed an active, if limited, life in dance.

Agnes de Mille has long been a dominant figure in dance and the arts-as a creator as well as a spokesperson and writer. Before and since her appointment as a founding member of the National Council for the Arts in 1965, she took the cause of dance and the arts to millions of readers and viewers, hundreds of organizations and political conventions. She continues to do so.

In 1980, Agnes de Mille received the Kennedy Center Award - the highest nonmilitary award in the United States.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains some of the certificates, citations, medals and diplomas awarded to Agnes de Mille. There are also 17 academic hoods relating to her many honorary doctorates.

Key Terms

Titles

Agnes de Mille Collection

Subjects

Awards and honors

Medals

Names

De Mille, Agnes

Container List

b. 1 Honorary degrees:

- b. 1 Dr. of Humane Letters, College of Staten Island/CCNY 1982
- b. 1 Dr. of Fine Arts, Adelphi University 1988
- b. 1 Dr. of Fine Arts, The Juilliard School, [+ copy of the introduction and commencement program] 1989

Honors and awards:

- b. 1 New York City Handel Medalion 1976 July 8
[remarks by Mayor Abraham D. Beame at presentation]
- b. 1 Womans Pay Club, A National treasure [certificate] 1985 May 7.
- b. 1 Drama Desk Award, [certificate] 1985-86
- b. 1 Brandeis University, [medal of achievement, certificate, program] 1986
- b. 1 N.C. School of the Arts, [certificate] 1987
- b. 1 State of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations, [citation] 1987
- b. 1 Council on International Nontheatrical Events 1987
[citation to WNET/13 for *Agnes, the Indomitable de Mille*]
- b. 1 Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, [certificate] 1987
- b. 1 Compostela Award, St. James Cathedral-Basilica 1989
[medal, certificate]
- b. 1 City of Los Angeles, [resolution of congratulations] 1990
- b. 1 Dance/USA, [certificate] 1990
- b. 1 American Academy & Institute of Arts & Letters 1992
[honorary membership]
- b. 1 Drama League of New York, [citation] 1992

Miscellaneous

- b. 1 Guest register for Nov. 20, 1977, De Mille and Joffrey Ballet in
"Conversations about the Dance"
- b. 1 Agnes de Mille biographical information c. 1978

Academic hoods for honorary degrees

- b. 2 17 academic hoods

Awards & Honorary Degrees:

- b. 2 Hon. Litt--Mills College 1952
- b. 2 Alumni Medal--University of California 1953
- b. 2 Hon. Litt--Russel Sage College 1953
- b. 2 Dr. of Humane Letters--Smith College 1954
- b. 2 New York Critics Award 1943-44-45
- b. 2 Donaldson Award 1943-44-45-47
- b. 2 Antoinette Perry Award (for Brigadoon) 1947
- b. 2 Named Woman of the Year by Press Woman's Assn. 1946
- b. 2 Dance Magazine Award 1957
- b. 2 Spirit of Achievement Award--Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University 1958

Awards & Honorary Degrees: (cont.)

- b. 2 Dr. of Humane Letters--Hood College 1959
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Northwestern 1960
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--University of California 1962
- b. 2 Dr. of Letters--Clarke University 1962
- b. 2 Woman of the Year--ANTA 1962
- b. 2 Antoinette Perry Award (Kwamina Choreography) 1962
- b. 2 Dr. of Humane Letters--Western University 1955
- b. 2 Dr. of Humane Letters--Goucher College 1960
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Franklin & Marshall College 1965
- b. 2 Capezio Award 1966
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Western Michigan 1967
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Masson College 1971
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Duke University 1975
- b. 2 New York City Handel Medallion 1976
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Univeristy of North Carolina 1980
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--New York University 1981
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Staten Island 1982
- b. 2 Dr. of Fine Arts--Adelphi 1988