

# **Guide to the Daniel Nagrin Papers, 1920-1996**

**(S)\*MGZMD 212**

**Jerome Robbins Dance Division**

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts  
New York, New York**

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Daniel Nagrin Papers, 1920-1996</b>
<b>Collection ID:</b>	<b>(S)*MGZMD 212</b>
<b>Creator:</b>	<b>Nagrin, Daniel</b>
<b>Extent:</b>	<b>11 linear feet (28 boxes)</b>
<b>Repository:</b>	<b>Jerome Robbins Dance Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts</b>

### **Abstract:**

The Daniel Nagrin papers contain correspondence, business records, writings, teaching materials, programs and clippings, and personal items relating to the career of noted choreographer and dancer, Daniel Nagrin.

## Administrative Information

### **Access**

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

### **Publication Rights**

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

### **Preferred Citation**

Daniel Nagrin Papers, (S)\*MGZMD 212, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

### **Source**

The Daniel Nagrin Papers were donated to the library as a gift from Daniel Nagrin, 1998

### **Processing Information**

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2008.

## Biographical Note

Daniel Nagrin was born in 1917 in New York City. Though interested in movement as a child, he did not begin formal dance training until his college years. He designed his own program while attending City College New York, where he met his future wife, choreographer Helen Tamiris. Nagrin appeared as a featured dancer in many of Tamiris' early Broadway shows. As early as 1948 Nagrin was working on choreographing solo pieces for himself to perform. His focus was on creating characters – often deeply conflicted men caught between outside forces. He also used his choreography and dance to explore social issues. In 1960 he formed the Tamiris-Nagrin dance company with his wife – which toured to modest success. After Tamiris' death in 1966, Nagrin became preoccupied with exploring the issues surrounding the Vietnam War through dance. In 1971 he founded "The Workgroup" – a company focused on performing improvisational pieces – both with audience interaction and without. Nagrin currently resides in Arizona.

## Scope and Content Note

The Daniel Nagrin Papers primarily consist of correspondence and business records pertaining to Nagrin's work both as choreographer and dancer. The collection also includes photographs of his works being performed, records for tours, writings and teaching materials, and production notes. Materials relating to the Tamiris-Nagrin Dance Company and The Workgroup, including notes and programs are also represented. A small selection of items relating to Helen Tamiris are included.

## Organization

The collection is divided into eleven series. They are:

Series I: Correspondence, 1943-1981  
Series II: Personal Papers, 1927-1958  
Series III: Performances, 1942-1975  
Series IV: Choreographic Notes, 1929-1996  
Series V: Dance Companies, 1960-1972  
Series VI: Writings, 1946-1981  
Series VII: Teaching Materials, 1961-1979  
Series VIII: Business Records, 1960-1982  
Series IX: Travel Records, 1952-1968  
Series X: Programs and Clippings, 1941-1985  
Series XI: Helen Tamiris, 1920-1968

## Series Descriptions

### Series I: Correspondence, 1943-1981

5 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Correspondence contains both letters of a personal and business nature – often within the same letter since Nagrin's professional and personal relationships often overlapped. Much of the correspondence focuses on touring and teaching – there are letters from venues and schools interested in booking Nagrin and his various dance companies, personal letters from students who experienced a master class, and correspondence with other dancers and choreographers – sharing dance ideas and personal information.

**Series II: Personal Papers, 1927-1958**

3 boxes

Arrangement: Chronological

Includes childhood school work, service records, and other items of a personal nature. These papers are arranged chronologically because of their highly varied nature. Astrological readings, report cards, and a few items relating to Nagrin's war work are included.

**Series III: Performances, 1942-1975**

4 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Contains contracts, notes and other materials dealing with specific performances Nagrin participated in, either as dancer, choreographer, or both. These materials mostly reflect the contractual side of Nagrin's career – reflected in various drafts of contracts with changes and formal requests for appearances.

**Series IV: Choreographic Notes, 1929-1996**

2 boxes

Arrangement: Chronological

Dance notes include handwritten notations referring to choreography or dance performances given by or overseen by Nagrin. These items reflect an almost free flow of ideas to paper. All are unlabeled, but most are dated. Usually there is no indication to which work the notes correspond.

**Series V: Dance Companies, 1960-1972**

2 boxes

Arrangement: Chronological

This series includes the records of both the Tamiris-Nagrin Dance Company and The Workgroup. Materials include promotional items, articles directly referencing the companies and other memorabilia. Standard flyers, biographies of the group to be used in print media, and advertising compose the bulk of this series.

**Series VI: Writings, 1946-1981**

1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Include papers, articles and speeches written by Nagrin for various events and publications. Nagrin was occasionally asked to speak at commencements or compose articles for various dance magazines on technique, the art of choreography, or dance itself. Some of the speeches remain in a handwritten, informal format.

**Series VII: Teaching Materials, 1961-1979**

1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series includes lecture notes and other items pertaining to Nagrin's engagements as a teacher or lecturer at various institutions. The materials are sorted by school name and include but are not limited to: class lists, schedules, lecture notes, forms for grading, handbooks for teaching at a specific institution, and advertising materials sent out by the universities, colleges, and dance academies. Nagrin often took guest teaching positions for only a semester or two, often working around his touring schedule.

**Series VIII: Business Records, 1960-1982**

2 boxes

Arrangement: Chronological

Business Records include contracts, bills, payment agreements and other materials relating to the financial aspect of Daniel Nagrin's career. Expenses relating to space rental, costuming, basic travel, housing and lodging, and even materials relating to the subletting of Nagrin's apartment are covered within this series. Invoices for services (both Nagrin's and others), notices and other items of a financial nature are represented.

**Series IX: Travel Records, 1952-1968**

2 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Includes itineraries, hotel bookings, notations and programs from Nagrin's various overseas tours. Often Nagrin's maps and guides he personally used remain with the materials. Thank you notes from the schools and venues visited and souvenir post cards are typically included. Of interest are the occasional hand written notations about how a specific audience received a program. Arranged by the country or city visited on each stop.

**Series X: Programs and Clippings, 1941-1985**

2 boxes

Arrangement: Chronological

Programs and clippings contain theatrical playbills, flyers, and performance lists for shows in which Daniel Nagrin was a participant. Some, but not many reviews are included. The bulk of the materials are programs – from Nagrin's solo shows as well as those in which he appeared as a featured dancer, including *Annie Get Your Gun* on Broadway. Newspaper clippings advertising these performances and reviews are also contained in this series.

**Series XI: Helen Tamiris Papers, 1920-1968**

5 boxes

Arrangement: Chronological

This series contains documents belonging to Daniel Nagrin's wife, Helen Tamiris. Organized chronologically, it includes personal items, flyers, and limited correspondence. Personal photographs are also contained in this series – some dating back to Tamiris' childhood and her time as a dancer as a very young adult. A large number of Tamiris's work contracts are also included, and are separated and arranged chronologically.

**Box List****I. Correspondence, 1943-1981**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Burns, A., 1970
		Business Correspondence
	2	1965
	3	1966
	4	1967
	5	1980
	6	1981

	7	Cratty, William, 1980
		General, 1950-1979
2	1	A - C
	2	D-F
	3	G
	4	H
	5	I - K
3	1	L
	2	M - P
	3	R
	4	S
	5	T
	6	Unidentified
	7	U - V
	8	W - Z
4	1	Grodowitz, Judith, 1962
	2	Hayward, Charles, 1970-1972
	3	Holmes, Steve, 1966
	4	International Relations, 1966-1972
	5	Karas, Sylvia, 1968-1971
	6	Katz , 1960-1965
	7	Keuter, Cliff, 1960-1980
	8	Lewis, Daniel, 1979
	9	Mabrey, Iris, 1951
	10	Margoles, Mark, 1968
	11	Matthews, Willard, 1966
	12	Moore, Carol Lynn, 1981
5	1	Pimsler, Stuart, 1980
	2	Snyder, Gary, 1966
		Tamiris, Helen, 1943-1963
	3	1943
	4	1947
	5	1952
	6	1957
	7	1958-1963
	8	Ungor, Ruth, 1967

## II. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1927-1958

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
6	1	1927 (School work)
	2	1928 (School work)
	3	1929 (School work, papers)
	4	1930 (School work, papers)
	5	1933 (School work, papers)
	6	1935 (School work, papers)
	7	1937 (School work, papers)
	8	1938-1940 (School work, transcripts, notes, sketches)
	9	1941-1945 (World War II documents, activities)
	10	1946 (Personal notes and writings)
	11	1948 (Tax forms, drafts of bio notes)
	12	1949 (Astrological forecast, personal notes)
	13	1952 (Notes to self, travel brochures with notations)
	14	1953-1955 (Equity materials, notes about clipping services)

15 1958  
Datebook, addresses, schedules, luncheon seating lists, personal notes

### III. Performances, 1942-1975

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
7	1	<i>L'Amant</i> , 1959
	2-3	American Dance Festival, 1954-1955
	4-6	<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> , 1946-1947
	7	<i>Bless You All</i> , 1950
	8	Chanukah Festival for Israel, 1956
	9	<i>Dance, Drum and Piano Trio</i> , 1954
	10	<i>A Dolls House</i> , 1954
	11	<i>The Edge is Also a Center</i> , 1975
	12	<i>Emperor Jones</i> , 1964
	13	<i>The Golden Standard</i> , 1963
8	1	<i>Hary Janos</i> , undated
	2	<i>Lend an Ear</i> , 1949
	3	<i>Light</i> , undated
	4	<i>Lincoln Mercury Show</i> , 1964
	5	<i>Marianne</i> , 1944
	6	New Dance Group Concert, 1954
9	1	<i>Of "V" We Sing</i> , 1942
		<i>Peloponnesian War</i> , 1969-1972
	2	1969
	3	1972
	4	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i> , 1954
	5	Perry Mansfield Theater Festival, 1957
	6	<i>Plain and Fancy</i> , 1955
	7	<i>Please a Woman</i> , 1959
	8	The Rainbow Room, 1942
	9	Robert Shaw Chorale, 1952
10	1	Solo Show Presets, undated
	2	<i>Stove Pipe Hat</i> , 1944
	3	<i>Tis of Thee</i> , 1940
	4	<i>Touch and Go</i> , 1949
	5	<i>United States Steel Hour</i> , 1959
	6	<i>Up in Central Park</i> , 1944
	7	<i>Volpone</i> , 1957
	8	<i>Walt Whitman</i> , 1950
	9	Westchester Playhouse, 1956
	10	YMCA Concert, 1959

### IV. CHOREOGRAPHIC NOTES, 1929-1996

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
11	1	1929
	2	1930-1939
	3	1944
	4	1945
	5	1947
	6	1948
	7	1949
	8	1950
	9	1953
	10	1956

	11	1957
	12	1958
	13	1959
	14	1965
	15	1967
	16	1969
	17	1971
	18	1972
12	1	1973
	2	1974
	3	1975
	4	1978
	5	1979
	6	1985
	7	1986
	8	1989
	9	1992
	10	1996
	11-	Undated
	12	

## V. Dance Companies

		Tamiris-Nagrin Dance Company, 1960-1964
13	1	1960
	2	1962
	3	1963
	4	1964
	5	Light plots, undated
	6	Stage preparations, undated
		The Workgroup, 1971-1972
14	1-2	1971
	3-4	1972

## VI. Writings, 1946-1981

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
15	1	<i>Apartment in Athens</i> , 1946
	2	<i>Interview</i> , 1978
	3	<i>Introduction to the Open Ritual</i> , 1980
	4	<i>The Piece of Paper</i> , 1947
	5	<i>The Whales of August</i> , 1981
	6	Unidentified writings

## VII. TEACHING MATERIALS, 1961-1979

		Brockport, 1970-1972
16	1	1970
	2	1971-1972
	3	City College, 1974
	4	CW Post College, 1972
	5	Jacob's Pillow, 1964
	6	National Dance Teacher's Guild, 1974-1975
	7	Summer Dance Workshop, 1963
	8	University of Utah, 1961
	9	Workshops, 1979

## VIII. BUSINESS RECORDS, 1960-1982



<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
17	1	1960
	2	1962
	3	1963
	4	1965
	5-6	1966
18	1	1969
	2	1970
	3	1971
	4	1974
	5	1975
19	1	1976
	2	1977
	3	1978
	4	1979
	5	1980
	6	1981
	7	1982

## **IX. TRAVEL RECORDS, 1952-1968**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
20	1	Amiens, 1967
	2	Brussels, 1967
	3	English College Tour, 1967
	4-6	General, 1967
21	1	Fiji, 1952
	2	Germany, 1967
	3	Great Britain, 1968
	4	London, 1967
	5	Paris, 1967
	6	Rotterdam, 1967
	7	Switzerland, 1967
	8	Turkey, 1967
	9	Vienna, 1967

## **X. PROGRAMS AND CLIPPINGS, 1941-1985**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
22	1	1941
	2	1942
	3	1943
	4	1946
	5	1951
	6	1963
	7-8	1965
	9-10	1974
	11	1975
23	1	1977
	2	1978
	3	1979
	4	1980
	5	1983-1984
	6	1985

## **XI. Helen Tamiris Papers, 1920-1968**

		Contracts, 1920-1966
24	1	1920-1939
	2	1940-1949
	3	1950-1959
	4	1960-1966
	5	Undated work materials
		Photographs, undated
		Family Photographs
25	1	1930-1939
	2	1940-1949
	3-5	Undated
	6	Fiji trip, undated
	7	Performances, undated
		Professional Papers, 1927-1968
26	1	1927
	2	1928
	3	1929
	4	1930
	5	1931
	6	1933-1934
	7	1935
	8	1936
	9	1937-1939
	10	1941
	11	1942
	12-	1943
	13	
	14	1944
	15	1945
	16	1946
	17	1947
	18	1948
	19	1949
	20	1950
	21	1951
	22	1952
	23	1954
27	1	1955
	2	1956
	3-4	1957
	5-6	1958
	7	1959
28	1-2	1960
	3	1962
	4	1963
	5-6	1966
	7	1968