



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Deborah Zall papers**

1947-2017

(S) \*MGZMD 520

Processed by Nathan Evans in 2020.

## Summary

**Creator:** Zall, Deborah

**Title:** Deborah Zall papers

**Date:** 1947-2017

**Size:** 1.3 linear feet (3 boxes); 2.5 gigabytes (1469 computer files)

**Source:** Donated by Rona Affoumado, 2019.

**Abstract:** Deborah Zall (1933-2018) was an American dancer, choreographer, and teacher known for her dramatic solo works depicting historical and fictional women. The Deborah Zall papers contain materials from 1947 to 2017 that trace her career, including articles, programs, photographs, correspondence, professional documents, and audio and video recordings.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Inquiries regarding audio and moving image materials in the collection may be directed to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division ([dance@nypl.org](mailto:dance@nypl.org)). Audio and moving image materials will be subject to preservation assessment and migration prior to access.

**Preferred citation:** Deborah Zall papers, (S) \*MGZMD 520. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Nathan Evans in 2020.

## Creator History

Deborah Zall was an American dancer, choreographer, and teacher known for her dramatic solo works depicting historical and fictional women. Born in 1933, she trained at the Juilliard School, Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater, and Martha Graham School under Graham herself before pursuing an independent career. Zall's solo works include *La Bonne Dame*, about the author George Sand, and

*Mary Tyrone*, based on the character from Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. In addition to her independent work, she guested at dance companies, choreographed works for other dancers, and collaborated with Bertram Ross on several projects. Zall also performed works by fellow Graham students, such as Anna Sokolow's *Kaddish* and Yuriko's *The Cry*. In 2014, she formed her own ensemble, the Deborah Zall Project: In the Company of Women, consisting mostly of former members of the Graham School. Zall taught dance at various institutions throughout her career, notably Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts from 1994 to 2011. She died in 2018.

## Scope and Content Note

The Deborah Zall papers contain materials from 1947 to 2017 that trace her career, including articles, programs, photographs, professional documents, and correspondence. There are also video recordings of performances and audio recordings of music accompaniment, as well as some rehearsal videos and documentaries.

Articles include reviews of performances, profiles, and interviews with Zall about her dancing and choreographic work.

Programs are mostly for Zall's performances, including solo works, festival appearances, and collaborations with dance companies. There are several programs for schools where Zall taught or that she attended.

Photographs primarily include performance shots and in costume portraits. Some photographs show Zall teaching and rehearsing, as well as other dancers. A number of photographs feature Zall performing and rehearsing Martha Graham's *Lamentation*.

Professional documents consist of resumes, press releases, scripts, and teaching materials. Some of the documents relate to Zall's collaborations with Bertram Ross in the 1990s and *La Bonne Dame*.

Finally, the collection contains correspondence and notes. The correspondence is mostly incoming and concerns Zall's performances in the 1990s and 2000s.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by: Printed Matter; Professional Materials; Photographs; Correspondence and Notes; and Audio and Video Recordings.

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)  
Correspondence  
Dance programs  
Outlines and syllabi  
Photographs  
Sound recordings  
Video recordings

### Subjects

Dance teachers -- United States  
Dancers -- United States

Women choreographers -- United States

**Names**

Zall, Deborah

## Container List

### Printed Matter 1947-2017

- b. 1 f. 1-5 Articles and Clippings 1961-2017
- Programs 1947-2016
  - b. 1 f. 6 Bertram Ross Collaborations 1990-1994
  - b. 1 f. 6 Deborah Zall Project: In the Company of Women 2016
  - b. 1 f. 6 Informal Showing of Deborah Zall Works 2014  
Works performed: *Mary Tyrone*, *Sonnet*, *Amanda*, and *Shadow of Her Sister*.
  - b. 1 f. 6 *Jewish Voices* 1995
  - b. 1 f. 6 *La Bonne Dame* 1995-2001
  - b. 1 f. 6 *One Woman's Journey* 1984
  - b. 1 f. 6 *Then and Now: Dances by Jane Dudley* 1987  
Performed by Zall and nine other dancers.
  - b. 1 f. 6 *Women: A Celebration* 1983  
Presented by the Committee on the United Nations Decade for Women. Performed by Zall and four other dancers.
  - b. 1 f. 7 Dance Companies 1947-2008  
Includes programs for the Martha Graham Dance Company, Repertory Dancers of New Jersey, Arkansas Ballet Company, Center Dance Collective, and Denishawn Repertory Dancers.
  - b. 1 f. 8 Festivals 1961-1982  
Includes programs for Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, New York Dance Festival, and Riverside Dance Festival.
  - b. 1 f. 9 School Concerts 1966-2013  
Includes programs for elementary school, high school, and college performances, either danced or choreographed by Zall.
  - b. 1 f. 10 Solo Concerts 1978-1990
  - b. 1 f. 10 Memorials and Tributes 1984-2004
  - b. 1 f. 10 Others 1987-2013  
Includes programs for performances not featuring Zall.

### Professional Materials 1952-2003

- b. 2 f. 1 Resumes and Biographies 1980s-1990s
- b. 2 f. 2-3 Press Releases 1952-2016
- b. 2 f. 4 Bertram Ross Collaborations 1993-1994  
Includes project descriptions, invoices, and a sponsorship proposal for Zall's Judaic dance collaborations with Bertram Ross.
- b. 2 f. 5 *La Bonne Dame* 1995-2002  
Includes project descriptions, program and budget notes, invoices, and resumes for Mary Humphrey Baldrige and Harold Baldrige.
- Scripts 1988-2001
  - b. 2 f. 6 *La Bonne Dame* 2001  
Compiled and edited by Mary Humphrey Baldrige for a performance at the Kaye Playhouse.
  - b. 2 f. 6 *Liebestraum* 1988  
Choreographed by Ruth St. Denis and reconstructed by Jane Sherman.
  - b. 2 f. 6 *The Next Step*
  - b. 2 f. 7 Teaching 1980s-2003  
Includes workshop fliers, syllabi, calendars, and receipts.

Professional Materials (cont.)

b. 2 f. 8      **Miscellaneous**

Includes meeting minutes, certificates, and Zall's transcript from the Juilliard School of Music.

**Photographs 1960s-2016**

**Performing and Rehearsing 1960s-2016**

b. 2 f. 9-11      *La Bonne Dame* 1996, 1998

Includes negatives.

er. 6      **Deborah Zall Project: In the Company of Women 2014**  
(230 computer files 643 megabytes)

er. 5      **Deborah Zall Project: In the Company of Women 2016**  
(73 computer files 34.2 megabytes)

er. 1      *Kaddish* 2005  
(191 computer files 15.3 megabytes)

b. 2 f. 12er. 2      *Lamentation* 2005  
(129 computer files 18.2 megabytes)

er. 4      *Lamentation* 2007 June 16  
(310 computer files 980 megabytes)

er. 3      *Lamentation* 2007 August 11  
(210 computer files 810 megabytes)

b. 2 f. 12      **Various 1960s-2000s**

b. 2 f. 13      **Teaching 1980s-2000s**

**Portraits 1982-2005**

b. 3 f. 1      *Incense*

b. 3 f. 1er. 7      *Kaddish* 1990s, 2005  
(326 computer files 2.56 megabytes)

b. 3 f. 1      *La Bonne Dame* 1990s

b. 1 f. 2      *Mary, Queen of Scots* 1990s

b. 3 f. 2      *Mary, the Bag Lady* 1990s

b. 3 f. 2      *Mary Tyrone* 1982

b. 3 f. 3      **Collaborations 1990s**  
Primarily features Zall with Bertram Ross.

b. 3 f. 3      **Headshots**

b. 3 f. 4      **Personal 1980s-2002**  
A large portion of photographs are from the 2002 Martha Hill Awards Gala.

b. 3 f. 5      **Others**  
Photographs of people other than Zall. Subjects include Martha Graham, Bertram Ross, and Yuriko.

**Correspondence and Notes 1979-2013**

b. 3 f. 6-10      **1979-2013**

b. 3 f. 11      **Jottings and Lists Undated**