



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Jonnie Greene papers

1930s-2000

(S) *MGZMD 528

Processed by Nathan Evans in 2021.

Summary

Creator: Greene, Jonnie

Title: Jonnie Greene papers

Date: 1930s-2000

Size: 1.70 linear feet (5 boxes)

Source: Donated by Jonnie Greene in 2015.

Abstract: Jonnie Greene (1929-) is a retired American performing arts critic who directed two dance symposiums, *Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy* and *Classic Black*, at the New York Public Library in the 1990s. The Jonnie Greene papers date from the 1930s to 2000 and primarily document these symposiums and Dance Critics Association conferences with interview transcripts, photographs, grant proposals, correspondence, programs, 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). Audio and moving image materials will be subject to preservation assessment and migration prior to access.

Preferred citation: Jonnie Greene papers, (S) *MGZMD 528. 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 2021.

Creator History

Jonnie Greene is a retired American performing arts critic who directed two dance symposiums at the New York Public Library in the 1990s. Born in 1929, Greene wrote for King Features Syndicate and co-founded the Dance Critics Association, directing several of its conferences in the 1980s and 1990s. In

1993, her symposium on George Balanchine, *Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy*, took place at the New York Public Library as part of an ongoing series about the famed choreographer. The program consisted of two sessions, "Balanchine, Jazz, and Popular Dance" and "Fifty Years of Looking at Balanchine," that included discussions alongside film footage.

Greene also directed *Classic Black*, a symposium and photographic exhibition highlighting African-American ballet dancers from the 1930s to the 1960s. Research for the project began in 1989 when dance historian Dawn Lille Horwitz conducted oral history interviews, and continued through the 1990s when Greene and Horwitz located photographs. *Classic Black* premiered in 1996 at the New York Public Library in collaboration with the Dance Research Foundation and toured the country for several years afterwards.

As of 2021, Greene resides in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The Jonnie Greene papers date from the 1930s to 2000 and primarily document two symposiums directed by Greene in the 1990s: *Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy* and *Classic Black*. The collection contains interview transcripts, photographs, grant proposals, correspondence, programs, and audio and video recordings. The latter chiefly depict Dance Critics Association conferences directed by Greene.

Materials for *Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy* include drafts and proposals for a grant, budget lists and receipts, and release forms for films used at the event with accompanying correspondence. Programs, press releases, and clippings are contained here as well.

The *Classic Black* materials include transcripts of interviews with African-American dancers mostly conducted by Dawn Lille Horwitz, as well as photographs from the 1930s through the 1960s used in the exhibition with accompanying negatives, lists, and paneling notes by Greene. Talley Beatty, Joe Nash, and Raven Wilkinson are among those interviewed and photographed. There are also materials for several grants Greene applied to, notably from the National Initiative for the Preservation of Dance; these materials comprise drafts and proposals, budget lists, receipts, letters of support, and evaluations. Correspondence about *Classic Black* largely deals with permissions. Exhibition notes, two agreements, fliers and brochures, press releases, and news articles are also included.

Audio and video recordings mostly document Dance Critics Association conferences directed by Greene from 1982 to 1991. Additionally, there are recordings of *Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy* and several ballet performances and rehearsals not involving Greene.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in the following groups: *Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy*, *Classic Black*, and Audio and Video Recordings.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American dancers
Choreographers
Dance -- Congresses
Dance photography -- Exhibitions

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Business correspondence
Interviews
Negatives (photographs)
Photographs
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Occupations

Critics.

Names

Balanchine, George
Greene, Jonnie
Horwitz, Dawn Lille
Dance Critics Association (U.S.)

Container List

Rethinking the Balanchine Legacy

- b. 1 f. 1 New York Council for the Humanities Grant 1992-1993
- b. 1 f. 2 Financial Materials 1993
- b. 1 f. 3-6 Release Forms 1993
- b. 1 f. 7-8 Programs and Publicity 1993

Classic Black

- b. 1 f. 9-13 Interview Transcripts 1989-1991
- b. 2 f. 1-20 Alphabetical by interview subject.
- b. 3 f. 1-10 Photographs and Negatives 1930s-1996
 - b. 4 f. 1 Exhibition Text Drafts
 - b. 5
- b. 4 f. 2-8 Grants 1990-1997
- b. 4 f. 9 General Correspondence 1993-1998
- b. 4 f. 10 Agreements 1995-1996
- b. 4 f. 11-12 Programs and Publicity 1996-1998

Audio and Video Recordings

Primarily includes Dance Critics Association conferences directed by Jonnie Greene. Topics include Kasian Goleizovsky, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Rite of Spring*.

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