BALLET PHOTOGRAPHS, INDIANAPOLIS
CA. 1940S–1970S

Collection Information

Historical/Biographical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Barbara Quigley
21 May 2013

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org
**COLLECTION INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</th>
<th>One half-size document case of photographs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTION DATES:</td>
<td>Ca. 1940s–1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESTRICTIONS:</td>
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<td>NOTES:</td>
<td><em>See also:</em> P 0338, the Bretzman Photograph Studio Collection</td>
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HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In Indianapolis the Metropolitan School of Music began offering dance classes in 1913, and in 1922 the school officially announced the establishment of a “department of dancing.”

In June 1928, Indianapolis businessman and philanthropist Arthur Jordan (1855-1934) purchased two competing schools, which were both affiliated with Butler University – the Metropolitan School of Music and the Indiana College of Music and Fine Arts – and consolidated them into the Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music. In 1949 the conservatory’s name was changed to Jordan College of Music. The college merged with Butler University to become a college within the university in 1951. To reflect the broader scope of the college’s actual offerings (dance, music, radio and television, theater, and art history), the name of the college changed again in 1978 to the Jordan College of Fine Arts.

In 1953 there were six dance majors, with no dance studios on the Butler campus. Sixty years later Butler's dance department has more than a hundred dance majors and five state-of-the-art dance studios.

Eileen Poston (1911–2005), of Martinsville, Indiana, was hired to develop a curriculum for college dance majors at the Jordan Conservatory of Music in 1941. She also became responsible for non-collegiate dancing programs in 1943. She organized the first Jordan Ballet Company in 1944, and organized the Jordan Junior Ballet Company as well. Coppelia, Nutcracker, and Les Sylphides were some of the ballets in the repertoire. She choreographed and produced her last ballet in 1963 but continued to teach at Jordan until her retirement in 1976. She continued teaching children after that.

Jack Copeland (1932–2005), of Muncie, Indiana, was a prisoner of war for three and a half years during the Korean War and overcame severe leg wounds to study dance at Butler. He then went to Hollywood and performed in several films, including three with Esther Williams. He then continued his dance studies at Butler and in Europe. He began his career as a ballet teacher at Jordan in 1961 and remained there for more than thirty years.

Photographer C. Noble Bretzman (1909-1986) became passionately interested in ballet in his later years. He was a cofounding board member of Indianapolis’s first professional ballet company and later served as vice president and general manager for the Indianapolis Ballet Theatre.

Sources:


SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of 79 black-and-white photographs and one color photograph that show ballet scenes and portraits taken by Max Galloway, Noble Bretzman, Fitch Studio, Holland Studio, and Times Engraving. Most are from the 1950s–1970s, but some may be earlier; many are not dated. Most, if not all, are likely associated with the Jordan College of Fine Arts at Butler University in Indianapolis.

The majority came with little or no identifying information. However, Michelle Jarvis, Jordan College of Fine Arts Associate Dean and Professor of Dance at Butler University, was able to identify some of the dancers in some of the photographs on 14 October 2010. Also, a consultation on 13 April 2013 with librarian Jill Cirasella of the City University of New York, formerly of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York City, helped to identify some of the ballets represented in these photographs.

Whether unidentified or tentatively identified, an effort was made to group together photographs that appear to be from the same performance, as determined primarily from the costuming and/or the presence of some of the same dancers.
Series 1: Identified Dancers and Ballets

CONTENTS


Marcy Dirnberger, ca. 1950s. [3 photos]

Shirley Weishaar as Giselle, Richard Anderson as the Duke, and Linda Hale as the Queen of the Wilis, from the ballet Giselle, 1957. [5 photos]

Jack Copeland and others, ca. 1960s. [4 photos] (See also: folders 8, 13, and 14.)

Barry Srage and others, early 1970s. Amy Gage, Sally Meeker, Michelle Jarvis, and Karen Mahoney of the Butler Ballet, early 1970s. Eileen Poston (chair of the dance department, Jordan College, Butler University) with six young girls as cherubs appearing in The Prayer, a ballet plastique, 3 December [no year] at Caleb Mills Hall [Shortridge High School] [ca. 1940s?]. Peter Humphrey, Stephen Jenkins, and others, early 1970s. Diane Downes as a doll and others [possibly characters from The Nutcracker or Coppelia], late 1970s.

Photos of female dancers probably from Don Quixote: one unidentified dancer holding fan, 6 April 1962; two photos of two unidentified dancers, n.d.

Two unidentified photos showing three female dancers in poses suggestive of the Wilis in Giselle, n.d.
[Jack Copeland's *Circus Ballet*, 1962–1972]: two panoramic photos showing the cast of male and female dancers; four photos showing male/female pairs of dancers in folk costumes; one photo showing five dancers in folk costumes.

Photos from *Job*: five photos, including dancers as Satan and the daughters of Job [ca. 1957].

*[Pas de Quatre]*: two photos of four female dancers [ca. 1950s].

*[Les Sylphides]*: five unidentified photos of dancers [ca. 1960s].

Photos from other identified ballets: one panoramic photo possibly from *Coppelia* [ca. 1950s–early 1960s]; cast of *Peter and the Wolf* [ca. 1950s]; three female dancers from *The Nutcracker*, 1961; duplicate photos of male dancer from *Old King Cole*, n.d.

Three unidentified photos of dancers in costumes with wigs and pointy hats. Jack Copeland appears in one photo [ca. 1960s].

Six unidentified photos of dancers in similar costumes. One dancer has been identified as possibly being Susie Beeton and another dancer has been identified as Jack Copeland [ca. early 1960s].

Four unidentified photos of dancers, grouped by similarity of costume or by including some of the same dancers, n.d.

Unidentified male and female pair of dancers, n.d. [2 photos]

Unidentified photos [13 b/w; 1 color]. Some of these are of dancers in various ethnic costumes. n.d.
CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
   http://opac.indianahistory.org/

2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.

3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.

4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P 0011).

5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.