

Collection #
P 0011

BALLET PHOTOGRAPHS, INDIANAPOLIS CA. 1940S–1970S

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: One half-size document case of photographs

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1940s–1970s

PROVENANCE: Purchased in April 2003 from Stephen T. Rose, Indianapolis.

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2003.0526

NOTES: *See also:* P 0338, the Bretzman Photograph Studio Collection

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:

Butler University Department of Dance: <<http://www.butler.edu/dance/>> Accessed 16 January 2013.

Corn, Kevin. "Jordan, Arthur." In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: 852. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

Donnelly, Cathleen F. "Bretzman, Charles and C. Noble." In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: 348-49. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

Eaton, Jack L. *Butler University Jordan College of Fine Arts: A Chronological History of the Development of the College, 1895-1995*. Indianapolis: Butler University, 1995. General Collection: [NX405.I4 B8 1995](#)

Eaton, Jack L. "Jordan College of Fine Arts, Butler University." In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: 852-53. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

FuneralNet. "Eileen Poston Dollens."

<http://obit.memorialobituaries.com/obit_display.cgi?id=225833&listing=Current>

Accessed 21 May 2013.

Miller, Betty Stone. *Jordan Ballet: Portfolio*. Images With Impact [1978 or 1979].

General Collection Folio: [LD701.B865 J655 1978](#)

Obits for Life. "Jack Copeland Obituary."

<<http://www.obitsforlife.com/obituary/191941/Copeland-Jack.php>> Accessed 21 May

2013.

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 CONTENTS

Series 1: Identified Dancers and Ballets

CONTENTS

Lila **Hellier**, n.d. Frances **Barbour**, March 1962. Gay **Parkinson**, Charles **Stone**, Dick **Anderson**, and Celia **Turner** -- polka from *The Bartered Bride* opera, n.d. Mary K. **Meyer** and Stephen **Jenkins** in "Your Violin" section of *X, or the James Whitcomb Riley Sampler*, Butler Ballet Co., n.d. [2 photos]

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.

CONTAINER

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 4

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 5

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 6

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 7

[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.

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 8

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 9

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 10

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 11

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.

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 12

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 13

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].

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 14

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 15

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 16

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

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 17

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.