



# **Guide to the Harper Theater Dance Festival Records, 1961-1992**

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This collection guide was produced in **2012**.

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American Dance Festival Archives

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Some materials and descriptions may include offensive content. [More info](#)

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

Harper Theater Dance Festival records, 1961-1984

**Creator:**

Harper Theater Dance Festival

**Abstract:**

The Harper Theater Dance Festival Records (1965-1979) presented Chicago audiences with more than a decade of annual performance seasons from a variety of celebrated dance companies. Originating in 1965 as the brainchild of Bruce and Judith Sagan, proprietors of a series of local, neighborhood newspapers in Chicago, the Festival also served as an important milestone in American modern dance as the pilot program for the National Endowment for the Arts Residency Touring program. Favorite performers included Merce Cunningham, Alwin Nikolais, Paul Taylor, José Limón, and Murray Louis. The collection includes financial records, production requirements, clippings, correspondence, posters, programs, tickets, photos, negatives, 35 mm slides, video and audio reels, and several small objects.

**Extent:**

11.3 Linear Feet

**Physical Location:**

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the ADF Archives.

**Language:**

English

**Language:**

Material in English

**Collection ID:**

ADF.010

**Permalink:**

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/adfharpertheater/>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Harper Theater Dance Festival Records, American Dance Festival Archives.

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## **Background**

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### **Scope and Content**

The collection contains the institutional records of the Harper Theater Dance Festival, public relations and publicity materials of dance companies, as well as the personal files of the collection's donor, Judith Sagan. The materials housed within the collection are in a variety of formats, including paper-based records, photographs, 35 mm slides, programs, newspaper clippings, large-format posters and publicity materials, audio reels, open reel video, and several objects.

The bulk of the materials were collected or created during the running of the Festival (1965-1979), with additional records (e.g. souvenir programs, professional membership records, financial records, etc.) collected by the donor following the Festival's demise.

### **Biographical/Historical**

No Subnote Content

### **Biographical/Historical**

The Harper Theater Dance Festival (1965-1979) presented Chicago audiences with more than a decade of annual performance seasons from a variety of celebrated dance companies. Originating in 1965 as the brainchild of Bruce and Judith Sagan, proprietors of a series of local, neighborhood newspapers in Chicago, the Festival also served as an important milestone in American modern dance as the pilot program for the National Endowment for the Arts Residency Touring program. Favorite performers included Merce Cunningham, Alwin Nikolais, Paul Taylor, José Limón, and Murray Louis.

Contemporary ballet companies, such as the Boston Ballet, Robert Joffrey's City Center Ballet, and the fledgling Pennsylvania Ballet Company, also found a place in the Festival in the early years (1965-1966). In later years, Judith Sagan, then sole producer of the Festival, brought newcomers such as Louis Falco, Bella Lewitzky, Wendy Perron, James Cunningham, Donald McKayle, Pilobolus Dance Theatre, and Viola Farber to Chicago (1970-1979). In an effort to diversify Festival offerings (and reach out to new donors), Mrs. Sagan also started the Chicago Dance Film Festival in 1974. Unfortunately, audiences in Chicago never reached the level necessary to continue funding the Festival and it was eventually abandoned in 1979.

## Chronology of Performers

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1965	Paul Taylor Robert Joffrey Ballet Company Alba-Reyes Spanish Dance Company Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Merce Cunningham Nala Najan Edward Villella and Patricia McBride
1966	Pennsylvania Ballet Company Paul Taylor Glen Tetley Lotte Goslar's Pantomime Circus Daniel Nagrin Murray Louis Boston Ballet Company
1967-1968	Paul Taylor José Limón Erick Hawkins Glen Tetley Paul Taylor Alwin Nikolais Merce Cunningham
1969	Alwin Nikolais Anna Sokolow Merce Cunningham
1970	José Limón Paul Taylor Alwin Nikolais
1970-1971	Alwin Nikolais Murray Louis Paul Taylor Merce Cunningham

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1972-1973	Louis Falco Acme Dance Company Viola Farber Inner City Dance Repertory Company
1973-1974	Manuel Alum Pilobolus Dance Theatre Perron and Jarosolow Murray Louis Bella Lewitzky Ze'eva Cohen
1975	Merce Cunningham
1979	Paul Taylor 5 by 2 Plus Pilobolus Dance Theatre Alwin Nikolais Laura Dean Bella Lewitzky

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## Arrangement

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Arranged into four series: Institutional Records, Company Files, Personal Files, and Photography.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

American Dance Festival Archives

## **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

Please contact the American Dance Festival Archives  
(adf@americandancefestival.org) to arrange for use of these materials.

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

In off-site storage; 48 hours advance notice is required for use.

## **Use Restrictions**

Copyright for official American Dance Festival administrative records is held by the American Dance Festival; all other copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

## **Acquisition Information**

The Harper Theater Dance Festival Records were received by the American Dance Festival Archives as a gift in 1999.

## **Processing Information**

Processed by Amanda Wick, July 2012

Encoded by Amanda Wick, July 2012

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## **Names and Subjects**

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- Modern dance
- Chicago (Ill.)
- Modern dance -- United States -- History
- Cunningham, Merce
- Nikolais, Alwin
- Louis, Murray
- Limón, José.
- Taylor, Paul, 1930-
- Sagan, Bruce

- Sagan, Judith

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## Collection Inventory

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### Institutional Records, 1961-1984, undated

**Physical Description:** 4 Boxes

**Scope and Contents note**

The Institutional Records series of the Harper Festival Dance Collection is arranged alphabetically by organizational function and date. Records are specific to the Festival and include advertising proofs and ads, professional correspondence, invoices, bank statements, checks, bulk mailing contents, IRS documentation, grant applications, newspaper reviews of performances, press kits (for companies performing and for entire Festival), contracts with companies and vendors, technical production records, programs and tickets, school programming records, and notes. Original item labels on the audio and video reel boxes are transcribed here, even though spelling is particular to original usage and creator agency (e.g. WorkPring collection).

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Printer's Plates

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Advertising, undated	Box 1
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**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper advertisements

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**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper advertisements

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**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper advertisements

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Advertising, 1965	Box 1
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**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper advertisements

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Advertising, 1965-1979, undated

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper advertisements

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Advertising, 1966

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Print proofs

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Advertising, 1966

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Print ad placements in "Chimera" and brochure

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Advertising, 1966

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper advertisements

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Advertising, 1967

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper advertisements

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Advertising, 1968

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper advertisements

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Advertising, 1969

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Photocopied newspaper advertisements and radio spot script

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Advertising, 1970

Box 1

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Newspaper advertisements and radio spot script

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Advertising, 1979

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper advertisements and radio spot script

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Box 1

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Manuscript draft fundraising letter

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Correspondence, undated

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, undated

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1965

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1966

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1966

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1966

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1970

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**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1970

Box 1

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed professional correspondence

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Correspondence, 1970

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**Scope and Contents note**

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Correspondence, 1970

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Correspondence, 1971

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Correspondence, 1971

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Mixed professional correspondence

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Mixed professional correspondence

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**Scope and Contents note**

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Finance, undated

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Mixed financial documentation

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**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed financial documentation

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Finance, undated

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Mixed financial documentation

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Fundraising: Local, undated

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Grants: National Endowment for the Arts,  
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**Scope and Contents note**

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**Scope and Contents note**

Venue contract

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Legal, 1978

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**Scope and Contents note**

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**Scope and Contents note**

Handwritten notes, internal memos

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Notes, 1973

Box 2

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Handwritten notes, internal memos

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**Scope and Contents note**

Handwritten notes, internal memos

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Box 2

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper articles and performance reviews

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Press, undated

Box 2

**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper articles and performance reviews

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Press, 1961

Box 2

**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper articles and performance reviews

---

Press, 1965

Box 2

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper articles and performance reviews

---

Press, 1965

Box 2

**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper articles and performance reviews

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**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper articles and performance reviews

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Programs, 1965

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Programs, 1965

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Programs, 1965

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## **Company Files, 1964-1992, undated**

**Physical Description:** 2 Boxes

### **Scope and Contents note**

The Company Files series is composed of publicity and marketing materials, posters, and newspaper clippings of dance companies and/or performers. It is divided into two sub-series: Festival Performers and Non-Festival Performers.

## **Festival Performers, 1962-1979, undated**

### **Scope and Contents note**

The Festival Performers sub-series is arranged alphabetically by performer. Records include posters, programs, articles, and reviews of non-Festival performances, as well as general press kits.

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Ailey, Alvin: Press Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper articles and non-Harper Theater Dance Festival performance reviews

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Alba-Reyes Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed public relations records, programs

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Alba-Reyes: Press Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Newspaper articles and non-Harper Theater Dance Festival performance reviews

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Alba-Reyes: Press Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper articles and non-Harper Theater Dance Festival performance reviews

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Alum, Maunel Box 5

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Alum, Maunel: Press Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

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Boston Ballet Company Box 5

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Mixed public relations records, programs

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Boston Ballet Company: Press

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Cage, John

Box 5

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Cage, John: Press

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Cunningham, Merce

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**Scope and Contents note**

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Press Clippings: Merce Cunningham,  
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Dean, Laura

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**Scope and Contents note**

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**Scope and Contents note**

Photocopied newspaper articles and non-Harper Theater Dance Festival performance reviews

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Farber, Viola

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Goslar, Lotte: Posters, 1965

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Hawkins, Erick: Press

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Inner City Dance Repertory Company: Press

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Inner City Dance Repertory Company: Press

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Jaroslow and Perron

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Jaroslow and Perron: Press

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Joffrey, Robert: Press

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Joffrey, Robert: Press

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Lewitzky, Bella

Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed public relations records, programs

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Lewitzky, Bella

Box 5

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Lewitzky, Bella: Press

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Non-Harper Theater Dance Festival posters (7)

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Newspaper articles and non-Harper Theater Dance Festival performance reviews

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Louis, Murray

Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

Mixed public relations records

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Louis, Murray: Press

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**Scope and Contents note**

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Louis, Murray: Press

Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

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Nikolais and Murray

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Nikolais, Alwin: Press

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Nikolais, Alwin: Press

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Pennsylvania Ballet Company Box 5

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Pennsylvania Ballet Company: Press Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

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Pennsylvania Ballet Company: Press Box 5

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Pilobolus Dance Theatre Box 5

**Scope and Contents note**

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**Scope and Contents note**

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Box 5

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Taylor, Paul

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The Personal Files series is composed of the personal records of collection donor, Judith Sagan, and includes membership records from professional

associations, unsorted press clippings, personal correspondence, and souvenir programs from non-Festival performances. It is arranged alphabetically by institution name and record type.

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National Association for Regional Ballet	Box 7
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Membership records	

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National Association for Regional Ballet	Box 7
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Non-Festival Programs, 1971

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Non-Festival Programs, 1972

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**Scope and Contents note**

Programs

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Non-Festival Programs, 1972

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**Scope and Contents note**

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Non-Festival Programs, 1973

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Programs

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Non-Festival Programs, 1973

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Newspaper articles and non-Harper Theater Dance Festival performance reviews	
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Nijinsky / Pavlova: Posters, undated	Box 10
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Non-Harper Theater Dance Festival posters from Joffrey Collection	

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### **Photography, 1962-1992, undated**

**Physical Description:** 1 Box

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The Photography series is arranged alphabetically by company or performer name. Records include photographic prints, 35 mm slides, and negatives, largely provided by dance companies.

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Unidentified Photos: Performance, undated	Box 4
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Public Relations: Dance Gram Promotion, 1979

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Cunningham, James / Acme Dance Company,  
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**Scope and Contents note**

Prints

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Airaudo, Malon, undated

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Ailey, Alvin, 1965, undated

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Alba-Reyes Spanish Dance Company, 1965,  
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Prints and negatives

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Alum, Manuel, undated

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American Mime Theatre, undated

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Cunningham, Merce / Cage, John / Tudor, David, 1965-1975, undated	Box 4
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Hawkins, Erick / Dlugoszewski, Lucia, undated	Box 4
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Pennsylvania Ballet Company, 1966, undated

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Prints

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Pilobolus Dance Theatre, undated

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Prints

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Ormiston, Gale, undated

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Prints

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Posin, Kathryn, undated

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Redlich, Don, undated

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Richardson, Larry, undated

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Prints

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