

Charles Girvin Papers
San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum

INTRODUCTION

Provenance

The Charles Girvin Papers were donated to S.F. PALM in April 1992 by Girvin's mother.

Restrictions

Entire collection is open for research use.

Publication Rights

Vary with material.

Collection Number

992.039

Size

No. of containers: 1 hollinger box; 1 oversize box

Linear feet: 0.75

Processed by

Marianne Carden

Date completed

August 30, 1994

Related collections

Biographical files

Dance companies files: Dimensions Dance Theatre; East Bay Ballet Theatre; Dancer's Theatre

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Charles Frederick Girvin was born on September 15, 1935. His study of ballet began at age 13 in Sacramento, California. Between the ages of 14 and 18, Girvin received instruction from Dean Crockett, a former pupil of Michael Fokine, Michael Mordkin, and Adolph Bolm.

After graduation from McClatchy High School in 1953, Girvin studied at the School of American Ballet under the direction of George Balanchine. Among his instructors numbered Anatole Oboukhoff and Pierre Vladimiroff, graduates of the Imperial Ballet School; Antonina Tumkovsky, former dancer with the Kirov and Bolshoi Theatres; Felia Doubrovskaya, a soloist with the Maryinsky Theatre and Diaghilev Ballet; Muriel Stuart, who studied with Pavlova and Cecchetti; and Yurek Lazowski, a specialist in character dancing.

Girvin made his professional debut with the New York City Ballet, partnering Maria Tallchief in *The Firebird*. Other appearances included performances with the American Ballet Theatre at the Phoenix Theatre and with the School of American Ballet at Carnegie Hall. Girvin enriched his ballet study in New York through classes with Maria Swoboda, Edward Caton, Mia Slavenska, Frederick Franklin, and Leon Danielian at the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo School and with Robert Joffrey, Anatole Vilzak, and Valentina Pereyslavec at the American Ballet Theatre School.

In 1957, Girvin retired from professional ballet dancing and joined the U.S. Coast Guard at the U.S. Customs House in New York. Between 1957 and 1961, when he received an honorable discharge, Girvin served as a Second Class Petty Officer in the Naval Engineering Department. Girvin moved back to California in 1961 and began working for O.N.C. Motor Freight Systems. Between 1963 and 1973, Girvin worked as a Claims Investigator for Pacific Intermountain Express Co.

Girvin returned to dance in 1973, when he began teaching for the Sacramento Ballet Company. Between 1975 and 1980, Girvin worked as a self-employed dance teacher in cooperation with the following Bay Area companies:

1975-76	Menlo Park Academy of Dance
1976	Dancer's Theatre, Berkeley
1977-78	East Bay Ballet Theatre, Albany
1977-78	Academy of Ballet, San Francisco
1978	U.C. Berkeley Dance Department
1978-79	Shawl/Anderson Dance Center
1979-80	Classical Ballet Center of Berkeley
1978-80	Dimensions Dance Theatre, Oakland

In 1980, Girvin returned to working as a Claims Manager for System 99 Trucking Co. in Oakland.

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The Charles Girvin Papers document the professional ballet career and teaching activities of Charles Girvin. It encompasses biographical materials in the form of resumes, photos, and awards and materials relating to his affiliations with various ballet schools in the Bay Area.

Although the bulk of this collection covers Girvin's role as a ballet instructor, a few files reveal aspects of his early years as a professional ballet dancer. Girvin's early training in Sacramento is documented in photographs from performances. His later training in New York is listed in resumes and biographical sketches. The collection does not contain any information about his professional appearances in New York between 1953 and 1957.

Girvin's contributions as a ballet teacher are most thoroughly documented in programs and flyers from dance companies or schools and in letters of appreciation received from students. The collection includes both loose programs and correspondence and materials which have been assembled into scrapbooks. Another important part of the collection which reveals Girvin's teaching methods are a series of dance class notebooks compiled by Girvin while attending workshops at various dance companies. These include notes on Girvin's classes in the 1950s at the School of American Ballet, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo; and the Ballet Theatre School; notes on teachers' courses at the Royal Academy of Dance and the Cecchetti Society; and notes for courses he taught in Sacramento. The notebooks contain lists of exercises performed in classes, including warm-ups at the barre and floor routines; impressions of different teaching styles; and observations about performances. Newsclippings and photos provide additional information about Girvin's approach to teaching ballet.

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SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES I. BIOGRAPHICAL
3 folders

Consists of photos, resumes, and awards which provide biographical information about Girvin's career as a dancer, as well as his military service and claims investigation work. Arranged by format and thereunder chronologically.

SERIES II. TEACHING ACTIVITIES
10 folders; two scrapbooks

Contains photos, news clippings, correspondence, scrapbooks, notebooks, posters, programs, and sketches which relate to Girvin's contributions as a ballet teacher in the Bay Area. Arranged by format and thereunder chronologically.

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CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I. BIOGRAPHICAL

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Resumes	1980s
	2	Photos	1950s
	3	Award	n.d.

SERIES II. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

	4	Correspondence	1970s
	5	Programs	1974-80
	6	Newsclippings	n.d.
	7	Costume sketches	
	8	Posters: Attitude & Arabesque Poses; Positions of the Body	
	9	Photos of classes	1970s
	10	Dance classes notebook-School of American Ballet; Ballet Russe; Ballet Theatre School	1955-1956
	11	Dance classes notebook-Royal Academy of Dance	1974
	12	Dance classes notebook-Sacramento	1975
	13	Dance classes notebook-Cecchetti Society Summer School	1977
	14	Dance classes notebook-School of American Ballet	1978
2	1	Scrapbook on Classical Ballet Center; Orinda School of Ballet; Dimensions Dance Theatre; Royal Academy of Dance	
	2	Scrapbook on Dancers'Repertory Theater, Menlo Park; Sacramento Junior Ballet Co.; Sacramento Civic Ballet; East Bay Ballet Theatre; Orinda Academy of Ballet	