Robert J. McLeod Photography Collection 002.087

Finding aid prepared by Katlin Cunningham and Supriya Wronkiewicz
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San Francisco, CA
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Title: Robert J. McLeod Photography Collection,
Identifier/Call Number: 002.087
Contributing Institution: Museum of Performance and Design, Performing Arts Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 7.0 Linear feet 7 records cartons
Date (inclusive): 1980-2002
Abstract: The Robert J. McLeod Photography Collection is comprised of McLeod's photography in various formats such as printed photographs, film negatives, and 35mm slides, most of which were taken during the 1970’s-1980’s. McLeod worked for the San Francisco Examiner and the San Francisco Chronicle as a photographer and a photo editor for almost forty years, photographing several significant figures and events in the Bay Area. McLeod had a passion for photographing dancers taking classes, in rehearsals and during performances. The collection focuses primarily on ballet dancers and companies from the Bay Area including San Francisco Ballet. The collection also features work by his wife, Beth Witrogen and includes images from other photographers. The collection is arranged in the following series: San Francisco Ballet; Dancers and Choreographers; Individuals; Photographic Materials; and Print Materials.
Creator: McLeod, Robert
Copyright
Copyright has been assigned to the Museum of Performance + Design.
Restrictions
Entire collection is open for research use.
Provenance
Collection was donated by Beth Witrogen in 2002 with additional accessions made in 2014 and 2016.
Biographical Note
Robert J. (Bob) McLeod (1946-2006) was a San Francisco Bay Area native, growing up in Daly City. When McLeod was 12 years old, his father passed away. His older brother George then gave him his first camera, a Brownie Hawkeye. McLeod began taking photos around his neighborhood and processed the photographs in the small darkroom that he had made in the family's basement closet. After attending San Francisco State University for a limited time, McLeod began to work at the San Francisco Examiner in 1967, first as a copy boy, working his way up to Director of Photography in 1989. He worked with both the San Francisco Examiner and the San Francisco Chronicle as a photographer and photo editor. Throughout his career, McLeod photographed significant events and figures in San Francisco history such as Harvey Milk, Patty Hearst, and the aftermath of the Loma Prieta earthquake.
McLeod was married to photographer, reporter, and San Francisco Examiner copy editor, Beth Witrogen for 25 years. Together they completed a series of images entitled The Caregivers, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1995. The series also won second place in the Peninsula Press Awards and other awards and accolades.
McLeod’s passion was photographing dancers in the Bay Area, from novices to professionals, including but not limited to Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rudolf Nureyev, and Gelsey Kirkland. McLeod also chronicled the rise of San Francisco Ballet principal Joanna Berman from her time at Marin Ballet School to the early years of her career at San Francisco Ballet. He photographed several other Bay Area companies such as Oakland Ballet, San Francisco Moving Company, and SF Dance Spectrum. His photographs offer a unique view of dancers in rehearsal and during performances. McLeod was diagnosed with lung cancer, though he was never a smoker. He retired a few months before his death on January 3, 2006 at his home in Antioch, California at the age of 59.
Scope and Contents
The collection is comprised of: photographic prints, negatives, and 35mm slides, majority of which were taken by Bob McLeod and Beth Witrogen. The bulk of this collection was created between the 1970’s-1980’s from McLeod's personal collection and works published for the San Francisco Chronicle. Bob McLeod worked for the San Francisco Examiner and the San Francisco Chronicle as a photographer and a photo editor for almost forty years.
McLeod photographed multiple significant figures and events in the Bay Area. However, his passion was taking pictures of dancers. The collection focuses primarily on ballet dancers from the San Francisco Ballet as well as other Bay Area companies including Oakland Ballet, Marin Civic Ballet, and San Francisco Moving Company. This collection includes images of dancers in performances, rehearsals, and for promotional materials.
The photographs taken by McLeod are evidence of the great changes that were happening in the San Francisco dance culture, such as the emergence of San Francisco Ballet becoming a high profile company. McLeod and his wife Beth Witrogen photographed works by Lew Christensen and Michael Sumin, as well as documenting some of the first
performances of Helgi Tomasson as the San Francisco Ballet artistic director. The collection is arranged in the following series: San Francisco Ballet; Dancers and Choreographers; Individuals; Photographic Materials; and Print Materials.

Related Materials

Related collections include: American Ballet Theatre Collection; San Francisco Ballet Archives; Dance Companies Collection.

1. San Francisco Ballet
2. Dancers and Choreographers
3. Individuals
4. Photographic Materials
5. Print Materials

Subjects and Indexing Terms

American Ballet Theatre.
Balanchine, George
Baryshnikov, Mikhail
Berman, Joanna
Christensen, Lew, 1909-1984
Cisneros, Evelyn
Gil, Jean-Charles
Oakland Ballet Company.
Robbins, Jerome
Smuin, Michael
Stowell, Christopher
Tomasson, Helgi, 1942-
Witrogen, Beth, 1948-
Choreographers--United States.
Dance
Dance--Ballet
Dance--United States
Dancers--United States
Photographic Materials
San Francisco Ballet Association (San Francisco, Calif.)--History.
San Francisco Ballet--History.

SERIES I: San Francisco Ballet

Scope and Contents note

This series contains photographic materials related to San Francisco Ballet. This includes performance images, portraits, and rehearsal images of the company. The series is arranged by format.

Box 1, Folder 2

Negatives and contact sheets, 1986-1989

Scope and Contents note

Works included: George Balachine's Symphony in C (1989 April 4); Michael Smuin's Medea (1986 April 29); Alexander Gorsky's Le Corsaire(? (1988 January 30); Medea and Michael Smuin's Q.A.V [Quatro a Verdi (1986 April 28); Val Caniparoli's Connotations (1989 April 12); and George Balanchine's Bugaku(? (undated).

Also included are negatives from rehearsals, portraits, and unidentified performances.
Box 2, Folder 3

**Negatives and contact sheets, 1989**

**Scope and Contents note**
Includes negatives of Val Caniparoli's *Connotations*, performed 4/12/1989

Box 2, Folder 4

**Negatives and contact sheets, 1989 January-April**

**Scope and Contents note**

Box 2, Folder 7

**Negatives and contact sheets, circa 1977-1978**

**Scope and Contents note**
Includes images from Lew Christensen and Michael Smuin's *Cinderella*. Also includes an image of Dennis Marshall in Lew Christensen's *Filling Station*, circa 1978.

Box 2, Folder 9

**Negatives and contact sheets, 1989, undated**

**Scope and Contents note**
Work included: Robert North and Wayne Sleep's *David and Goliath*, 1986. Also included are negatives from unidentified performances.

Box 2, Folder 10

**Negatives and contact sheets, 1989-1992**

**Scope and Contents note**
Also included are negatives from unidentified rehearsals and performances.

Box 2, Folder 11

**Negatives and contact sheets, 1986-1989**

**Scope and Contents note**

Box 2, Folder 12

**Negatives and contact sheets, 1984, 1986, 1988**

**Scope and Contents note**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3, Folder 1</th>
<th><strong>Negatives and contact sheets, 1988</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Contents note</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works included: Helgi Tomasson's <em>Nutcracker</em> (1988 December 13); Helgi Tomasson's <em>Swan Lake</em> (1988 April 22); David Kudelka's <em>Dreams of Harmony</em> (1988 February 5); Sir Frederick Ashton's <em>Monotones</em> (1988 February 5); Lew Christensen's <em>Jinx</em> (1988 February 5); David Bintley's <em>Sons of Horus</em>; Also included are negatives from rehearsals, portraits, and unidentified performances, circa 1988 January.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3, Folder 3</th>
<th><strong>Negatives and contact sheets, circa 1978, 1987 January-April</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Contents note</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3, Folder 4</th>
<th><strong>Negatives and contact sheets, 1986-1987</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Contents note</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 1</th>
<th><strong>Negatives and contact sheets, 1990-1991</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Contents note</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 5</th>
<th><strong>Negatives and contact sheets, circa 1970s, 1987</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Contents note</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work included: San Francisco Ballet's <em>Nutcracker</em> (undated) Also included are images from the San Francisco Ballet School (1987 May), War Memorial Opera House, and other unidentified images (circa 1970s, undated).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 6</th>
<th><strong>Negatives and contact sheets, Undated</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Contents note</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work included: San Francisco Ballet's <em>Nutcracker</em> (undated)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SERIES I: San Francisco Ballet
Photographic prints, circa 1970s-1980s

**Box 4, Folder 7**

**Negatives and contact sheets, circa 1980s-1990**

Scope and Contents note

Works included: Helgi Tomasson's *Sleeping Beauty* (1990 March); Michael Smuin's *Songs of Mahler*; Lew Christensen's *The Ice Maiden*; Jerome Weis's *Orpheus*; Lew Christensen's *Scarlatti Portfolio*; Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardée*; Julie Arenal's *The Referee*; Lew Christensen's *Danses Concertantes*; Michael Smuin's *Scherzo*; Tomm Rudd's *Richmond Diary*; Jerome Robbins's *Moves*; Michael Smuin's *Mozart's C Minor Mass*; Tomm Rudd's *Trilogy*; and Todd Bolender's *Souvenirs*.

Also included are images from San Francisco Ballet classes, and other unidentified performance and rehearsal images.

**Box 1, Folder 3**

**Photographic prints, circa 1987-1988, undated**

Scope and Contents note

Works included: Val Caniparoli's *Hamlet and Ophelia*; George Balanchine's *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*; Lisa De Ribere's *Dreams of Harmony*; William Christensen and Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*; and Helgi Tomasson's *Swan Lake* (1988).

Also included are images from a San Francisco Ballet School performance and unidentified San Francisco Ballet performance prints.

**Box 1, Folder 5**

**Photographic prints, circa 1980s**

**Box 1, Folder 6**

**Photographic prints, 1986-1987**

Scope and Contents note

Works included: George Balanchine's *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*; Willam Christensen and Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*; and Val Caniparoli's *Hamlet and Ophelia* (1986 January).

Also includes unidentified rehearsal images.

**Box 2, Folder 7**

**Photographic prints and negatives, circa 1977, 1978**

Scope and Contents note


**Box 5, Folder 1**

**Photographic prints, circa 1980s-1990s**

Scope and Contents note

Works included: Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardée* and George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Also included are images from other unidentified performances.

**Box 5, Folder 2**

**Photographic prints, circa 1980s-1990s**

Scope and Contents note

Work included: Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardée*.

Also included are images from other unidentified performances.
SERIES I: San Francisco Ballet
Photographic prints, circa 1970s-1980s

Scope and Contents note
Works included: George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; George Balanchine's *Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet*; Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardee* and William Christensen and Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*.
Also included other unidentified performance and rehearsal images.

Box 5, Folder 3
Photographic prints, circa 1980s-1990s

Scope and Contents note
Works included: George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; George Balanchine's *Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet*; Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardee* and William Christensen and Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*.
Also included other unidentified performance and rehearsal images.

Box 6, Folder 1
Photographic prints, 1986, undated

Scope and Contents note
Work included: George Balanchine's *Stars and Stripes* (1986).
Also includes other unidentified performance images.

Box 6, Folder 2
Photographic prints, circa 1980s

Scope and Contents note
Works included: Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardee* and Helgi Tomasson's *Swan Lake*.
Also includes other unidentified rehearsal and performance photos.

Box 6, Folder 3
Photographic prints, circa 1970s-1980s

Scope and Contents note
Also includes unidentified rehearsal images.

Box 6, Folder 4
Photographic prints, circa 1977

Scope and Contents note
Work included: Lew Christensen's *The Ice Maiden*.

Box 6, Folder 6
Photographic prints, circa 1986

Scope and Contents note
Willam Christensen and Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker* (1986).
Also included are other unidentified performance images.

Box 7, Folder 2
Photographic prints, 1980

Box 6, Folders 5, 7-9
Photographic prints, undated

Scope and Contents note
Various unidentified performance and rehearsal photographic prints.
SERIES I: San Francisco Ballet
Photographic prints, circa 1970s-1980s

Box 2, Folder 1

35mm Slides, circa 1980s

Scope and Contents note
Various unidentified performance and rehearsal slides.

Box 4, Folder 2

35mm Slides, circa 1970s-1980s

Scope and Contents note
Work included: San Francisco Ballet's Nutcracker.
Also included are unidentified San Francisco Ballet performances and rehearsals.

SERIES II: Dancers and Choreographers

Scope and Contents note
This series includes photographic images (negatives, slides, prints) of local to San Francisco and visiting dancers and is sorted alphabetically by last name. These dancers may also appear in other series.

Berman, Joanna, 1970-1989

Scope and Contents note
Joanna Berman was a student at Marin Ballet, and then a prominent member of the San Francisco Ballet. McLeod documented both her time as a student and as a principal within the company. This series includes images of her in performances, during rehearsal, and for promotional material.

Box 1, Folders 3-6,
Box 3, Folder 3
Box 4, Folders 3, 4
Box 3, Folder 4,
Box 1, Folder 5
Box 4, Folder 3,
Box 1, Folders 3,5
Box 4, Folder 3,
Box 3, Folder 3,
Box 1, Folder 4
Box 4, Folder 3

Performance prints

Performance negatives
Rehearsal - San Francisco Ballet
Rehearsal - Marin Ballet
Portraits - San Francisco Ballet

Portrait negatives - San Francisco Ballet

Box 5, Folders 1, 4, Box 6, Folder 3

Baryshnikov, Mikhail, circa 1980s

Scope and Contents note
Includes images of the American Ballet Theater performance of Giselle and images taken during interviews.

Box 1, Folder 4
Christensen, Lew, circa 1983
Box 1, Folders 3, 5

Cisneros, Evelyn, Undated
Box 4, Folder 7, Box 1, Folders 3-4, 6

Cowden, Laurie, Undated
Box 4, Folder 5

Dowell, Anthony, Undated
Box 1, Folders 4-5

Gil, Jean Charles, circa 1980s
Box 4, Folder 7

Gyorfi, Victoria, Undated
Box 4, Folder 8

Magno, Susan, Undated
Box 1, Folders 3-5, Box 2, Folders 6-7

Martins, Rhonda, circa 1980s
Scope and Contents note
Rhonda Martin was a dancer with the San Francisco Moving Company and was photographed by on multiple occasions during rehearsal and performances.
Box 4, Folder 7

McFall, John, Undated
Box 1, Folder 5

McNaughton, David, circa 1980s
Box 4, Folder 7

Ness, Gina, Undated
Box 1, Folder 3, Box 4, Folder 8

Paciotti, Anita, Undated
Box 6, Folder 4, Box 4, Folder 6

Ruud, Tomm, Undated
Box 6, Folder 4

Santos, Tina, Undated
Box 1, Folder 5

Smuin, Michael, Undated
Box 5, Folder 1, Box 1, Folder 5
SERIES II: Dancers and Choreographers

Berman, Joanna, 1970-1989

Sohm, Jim, circa 1980s
Box 1, Folder 3

Stiefel, Ethan, circa 1990s
Scope and Contents note
Includes performance images from American Ballet Theatre's Le Corsaire (choreography by Rudolf Nureyev)

Box 4, Folder 5

Tharp, Twyla, Undated

Tomasson, Helgi, circa 1980s
Box 4, Folder 7, Box 1, Folder 3

Vest, Vane, Undated

SERIES III: Individuals
Scope and Contents note
This series includes photographic materials (negatives, slides, and/or prints) of non-dance individuals in this collection. The series is arranged in alphabetical order by name.

Box 1, Folder 1
Fonda, Jane, 1975 October 2
Box 1, Folder 1
Frampton, Peter, 1977 July 2
Box 1, Folder 1
Lawrence, Carol, 1982 December 21
Box 4, Folder 7
LeBlond, Richard, Undated
Box 1, Folder 1
Thomas, Michael Tilson, 1995 May 12
Box 1, Folder 3
Casals, Pablo, 1972 July 15
Sinatra, Frank, Undated

SERIES IV: Photographic Materials
Scope and Contents note
This series includes photographic materials (prints, slides, and negatives) from San Francisco Bay area dance companies. The series also includes unidentified photographic materials. The materials are arranged in alphabetical order by company and unidentified materials are arranged by format.

Box 4, Folder 1
Alonzo King - negatives, 1983 June
Box 1, Folder 4
American Ballet Theatre - negatives circa 1987
Box 4, Folder 9
Atlanta Ballet - photograph, Undated
Box 2, Folders 5, 8
Dance Spectrum - Negatives, circa 1970s, undated
Box 3, Folder 4
Joffrey Ballet - Negatives of Romeo and Juliet, 1986 July 10

Scope and Contents note
Negatives of the Joffrey School of Ballet's production of Romeo and Juliet July 10, 1986.

Box 2, Folder 9,
Box 1, Folder 3,5,
Box 5, Folder 7
Marin Civic Ballet School - Printed Images, negatives, and 35mm slides of rehearsals and performances

Box 4, Folder 5
Box 7, Folder 1,
Box 1, Folder 3,
Box 2, Folder 5
New York City Ballet - negatives, Undated
Oakland Ballet - Performance negatives and articles, prints, 1978, undated

Scope and Contents note
Negatives of photos and articles from the Oakland Ballet, including images of Eugene Loring.
SERIES IV: Photographic Materials

- **Palo Alto Ballet - Negatives and Slides, 1984, 1989**
- **San Francisco Moving Company - Negatives**
  - Scope and Contents note
  - Negatives of the San Francisco Moving Company featuring the dancer Rhonda Martin.
- **School of American Ballet - Negatives, 1984 February**
  - Scope and Contents note
  - Negatives from the School of American Ballet
- **Unidentified performances and dancers - 35mm slides, prints, and negatives, undated**
  - Scope and Contents note
  - 35mm, printed images, and photo negatives of unidentified performances, rehearsals and dancers.

SERIES V: Print Materials

- **Dance Magazine 1977-1983**
  - Scope and Contents note
  - Select publications of Dance Magazine from 1977 to 1983.
- **San Francisco Ballet Programs**
  - Scope and Contents note
  - Programs printed by San Francisco Ballet.
- **San Francisco Ballet Notes**
  - Scope and Contents note
  - Includes cast list, performance dates, and production notes.