Inventory of the Margaret Palmer Taylor Collection of Sacred Dance

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Inventory of the Margaret Palmer Taylor Collection of Sacred Dance

Collection number: GTU 96-7-01

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Berkeley, California

Processed by:
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Margaret Palmer Taylor collection of Sacred Dance
Dates: 1920-2004
Collection number: GTU 96-7-01
Creator: Taylor, Margaret Palmer (1908-2004)
Collection Size: 2.2 linear feet (2 archives boxes and 4 folios)8 images
Repository: The Graduate Theological Union. Library.
Berkeley, CA 94709

Abstract: Margaret Palmer, 1908-2004, was born in Oakland, Calif. She was a pioneer in the field of sacred dance in America. A daughter of a Congregational minister, the family moved to Honolulu in 1917, where she learned creative dance in school. She continued to study dance, and earned her B.A. at Oberlin College in 1930, later attending Chicago Theological Seminary, 1931-32. Her first husband, Chester B. Fisk, was a minister. Margaret began to incorporate sacred dance in the church worship services. She continued to expand her dancing, organizing rhythmic choirs and teaching in workshops, festivals, and classes in many denominational and college settings. She interpreted and choreographed dances for worship services well into her 90's. She was one of the founders of the Sacred Dance Guild.

Physical location: 5/G/3; 5/H/6
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
Margaret Palmer Taylor collection of Sacred Dance, GTU 96-7-01. Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

Acquisition Information
The material in Box 1 was organized and given by Margaret P. Taylor. The second part of the collection came to the Archives in 2006 from the office of Douglas Adams at the Pacific School of Religion. This material is contained in Box 2 and four folios.

Biography / Administrative History
Margaret Palmer (1908-2004) was a pioneer in the field of sacred dance in America. Born in Oakland, California, she was a daughter of a Congregational minister. The family moved to Honolulu in 1917, where she learned creative dance in school. She continued to study dance, and earned her B.A. at Oberlin College in 1930, later attending Chicago Theological
Seminary, 1931-32.
Her first husband, Chester B. Fisk, was a minister, and Margaret began to incorporate sacred dance in the church worship services. She continued to expand her dancing, organizing rhythmic choirs and teaching in workshops, festivals, and classes in many denominational and college settings. She interpreted and choreographed dances for worship services well into her 90's.

She is the author of several books and articles, performed sacred dance on early television, and was a founding member of the Sacred Dance Guild. She lived and traveled extensively throughout the United States. She assumed the names of all four husbands. In 1957 she married Walter A. Taylor; in 1969, Elwyn B. Chaney; and in 1980, Clarmont Paul Doane. This resulted in several combinations of married names in her writings and performances.

Her choreography was designed so that members of the congregation could participate and express a religious and communal spirit. She writes, "Sacred dance is really a sacred trust. We can use energy in our dances to share meaningful awareness of our Creator's power among us, strengthening us, and bringing us resiliency as we grow in mutual caring and daring."

**Scope and Content of Collection**
The material in box 1, donated by Taylor, consisted of a series of scrapbooks. Everything was arranged in chronological order. She provided a detailed chronology of her life to 2001 (Box 1, File Folder 1). See also an extensive biographical interview in Box 1, File Folder 21. The second part of the collection came to the Archives in 2006 from the office of Douglas Adams at the Pacific School of Religion. This material is contained in Box 2 and three folios. The material had no order and is here arranged by the Processor.

**Arrangement**
The arrangement is as follows: Series 1, Biographical; Series 2, Writings and performances; Series 3, Dance Groups; Series 4, Photographs; Series 5, Subjects.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**
Dance--Religious aspects--Christianity.
Religious dance, Modern.
Women in church work--United States.
Sacred Dance Guild.

**Other Finding Aids**
GTU 2008-1-0, Doug Adams Collection.
Series 2. Writings and performances 1926-2004

Inventory of the Margaret Palmer Taylor Collection of Sacred Dance

box-folder 2:1 - 2:12

Articles, correspondence, programs, performances, flyers, music, presentations.
1926-2004

Scope and Content Note
Included are collected articles on subjects such as general dance, dance as therapy, dance with children, and articles by Taylor. Includes some material on the Sacred Dance Guild.

box-folder 2:12a

box-folder 2: 13
Time for Wonder, children's curriculum 1959

box-folder 2: 14
Time for Discovery, children's curriculum 1964

box-folder 2: 15
Time for Discovery, children's curriculum 1964

box-folder 2: 16
Report of the Special Committee on the Council's Role in the Field of Religion and the Arts, National Council of Churches 1965

box-folder 2: 17
Creative Dramatic Movement with Ten, Eleven, and Twelve year Olds 1967

box-folder 2: 18
Creative Movement: Steps Toward Understanding, includes film strip 1969

box-folder 2: 19
Dramatic Dance with Children in Education and Worship 1977

box-folder 2: 20
Considerations for Starting and Stretching a Sacred Dance Choir 1978

box-folder 2: 21
Hymns in Action, editor Douglas Adams 1985

box-folder 2: 22

box-folder 2: 23
The History of Symbolic Movement in Worship, editor Douglas Adams 1999


Physical Description: 5 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes articles, programs, correspondence, and flyers on performances and workshops with groups that are Church, College, and Professional.


Physical Description: 4 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes formal studio portraits of Taylor, Taylor dancing, photos of a sculptured bust of Taylor, and rhythmic dance choir performances.


Physical Description: 13 folders, 4 folios

box-folder 2 : 35
Gift of books from Taylor to the Pacific School of Religion Library 1969-70

box-folder 2 : 36
Taylor receiving Doctor of Humane Letters, Whitworth College, Spokane, WA 1998

box-folder 2 : 37
The Margaret Taylor Endowment Fund for Dance in Worship and Education Brochure, Pacific School of Religion ca. 1970s

box-folder 2 : 38
Note cards for talks, workshops, presentation, hand-written 1983, 1986

box-folder 2 : 39
Note cards hand-written for talk "Fifty Years of Sacred Dance" 1982 October 23

box-folder 2 : 40
Archibald MacLeish letter to Taylor. MacLeish sent Taylor the final unpublished lines of his verse play "J.B." when shown in Washington D.C., prior to the New York opening 1958 December 13

box-folder 2 : 41
"Meditations of a Minister's Wife on her Tenth Wedding Anniversary", talk by Taylor 1941

box-folder 2 : 42
Music and directions for dances ca. 2000-03

box-folder 2 : 43
Memorial Service for Taylor (See also: Box 1 File Folders 22-23.) 2004 November 27

box-folder 2 : 44
Sacred Dance on Television 1949-62

box-folder 2 : 45

box-folder 2 : 46
United Church of Christ Fellowship in the Arts, Affirmation, Articles of Organization and Background materials 1976-77
box-folder SC 20 : 1
box-folder SC 20 : 2-5
 "Naomi and Ruth" Choreographed and scripted by Taylor. Performance programs, script, and orchestral and choral music scores (using "Ruth" by Cesar Franck). ca. 1950
folio 1
 Film reel, "Naomi and Ruth". Includes Film Strip and film strip script. undated
folio 2
 Taylor Scrapbook ca. 1950s.
folio 3
 Original music scores for "True Freedom" composed by W.C. Yakovac 1945