
Finding Aid for the Ernest Belcher Papers, 1900-1964

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UCLA Library Special Collections

UCLA Library Special Collections staff

Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library

Box 951575

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575

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Note

Arts and Humanities--Dance--Choreography and Dance Notation
Arts and Humanities--Dance--Dance History and Criticism
Arts and Humanities--Film, Television, and Broadcasting--Film
Geographical (By Place)--California--Los Angeles Area
Arts and Humanities--Art--Photography

Finding Aid for the Ernest Belcher Papers, 1900-1964

Collection number: 544

UCLA Library Special Collections
UCLA Library Special Collections staff

Los Angeles, CA

Contact Information

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Ernest Belcher Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1900-1964

Collection number: 544

Creator: Belcher, Ernest, 1882-1973

Extent: 4 boxes (2.0 linear ft.)3 oversize boxes

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Abstract: Belcher was born in London, England, in 1883. He studied ballet in London and was the principal danseur at the Alhambra Theatre (1902-09). He founded the Celeste School of Dance in 1916, which supplied dancers for films and produced ballets for Hollywood Bowl concerts from 1923-36. His career as a film dance director took off in 1918 when he staged dances for D.W. Griffiths' *Broken Blossoms*. He was the trainer and coach of many film performers including Beth Beri, Mary Pickford, Pola Negri, Ramon Navarro, Nanette Fabray and Shirley Temple. The collection consists of material related to Belcher's involvement with the dance community. Includes issues of various dance periodicals, articles by and submitted to Belcher, as well as Belcher's notes, sketches, scrapbooks, and teaching materials. Also includes a taped interview of Belcher and a paper titled Ernest Belcher, the father of ballet in Southern California.

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

Language: English.

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Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Advance notice required for access.

Additional Physical Form Available

A copy of the original version of this online finding aid is available at the UCLA Library Special Collections for in-house consultation and may be obtained for a fee. Please contact:

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Ernest Belcher Papers (Collection 544). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

UCLA Catalog Record ID: [462341](#)

Biography

Belcher was born in London, England, in 1883; studied ballet in London and was the principal danseur at the Alhambra Theatre (1902-09); came to Los Angeles, 1915; founded Celeste School of Dance in 1916, which supplied dancers for films; produced ballets for Hollywood Bowl concerts, 1923-36; his career as a film dance director took off in 1918 when he staged dances for D.W. Griffiths' *Broken Blossoms*; also worked in silent era films for directors Cecil B. de Mille, Mack Sennett, and Thomas H. Ince; trainer and coach of many film performers, including Beth Beri, Mary Pickford, Pola Negri, Ramon Navarro, Nanette Fabray and Shirley Temple; died on February 24, 1973 in Los Angeles.

Scope and Content

Collection consists of material related to Belcher's involvement with the dance community. Includes issues of various dance periodicals, articles by and submitted to Belcher, as well as Belcher's notes, sketches, scrapbooks, and teaching materials. Also includes a taped interview of Belcher and a paper titled Ernest Belcher, the Father of Ballet in Southern California. The notebooks contain sketches and drawings related to Belcher's choreography and dance instruction. Photographs are of Belcher's students and family, and of various productions.

Organization and Arrangement

Arranged in the following series:

1. Articles for publication.
2. Teaching materials.
3. Photographs.
4. Notebooks containing Belcher's notes and sketches.
5. Programs, scores, and scrapbooks.
6. Dance periodicals.
7. Interview.

Indexing Terms

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

Belcher, Ernest--1882-1973--Archives.

Dance teachers--California--Los Angeles--Archival resources.

Ballet dancers--California--Los Angeles--Archival resources.

Ballet in motion pictures, television, etc.

Dance in motion pictures, television, etc.

Ballet--Study and teaching--California--Los Angeles.

#16 - Book: *The Dance*, by Troy and Margaret West Kinney,

Date: 1914.

#17 - Book: *Eurhythmics in Art and Education*, E. Jaques-Dalcroze,

Date: 1935.

#18 - Book: *Adeline Genee*, Ivor Guest,

Date: 1958.

#33 - Book: *The Dance*,

Date: November 1928.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Box 1 | 1. Articles for publication. Only some articles written by Belcher, but all of them carefully censored by him. |
| Overize Box 5 | 2. Scrapbook containing the Ernest Belcher Eight Grade System of teaching ballet and some of the series of Belcher Technique published in <i>The American Dancer</i>. |
| Box 1 | 3. Miscellaneous magazines, clippings, and articles which mention Mr. Belcher and his students. |
| Box 1 | 4. Catalogues and material from dancing schools. |
| Box 1 | 5. Scrapbook of photographs from his career in England. |
| Box 1 | 6. Photographs of Mr. Belcher's dance school at 607 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles. |
| Box 1 | 7. Some pictures from the dance sequences in the movie <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>. |
| Box 1 | 8. 4 envelopes of photographs of Mr. Belcher's students, family, production numbers and miscellaneous. |
| Box 2 | 9. Photographs of paintings by Mario Larrinago which were done for Mr. Belcher's studio at 607 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles. |
| Box 2 | 10. London photographs and photographs of his large home in Los Angeles on Orange Drive. |
| Box 2 | 11. Miscellaneous large photographs. |
| Box 2 | 12. 2 watercolors which Mr. Belcher painted in 1897. |
| Box 2 | 13. Photographs of Mr. Belcher and his partners during his career in England from about 1903-1914. |
| Box 2 | 14. Notebook of Mr. Belcher's notes and sketches. |
| Box 2 | 15. Scrapbook of Mr. Belcher's Garden - taken about 1919.
<i>Items 16-18 removed.</i> |
| Box 2 | 19. Book: <i>25 Years of American Dance</i>, Doris Hering, editor, 1951. |
| Box 2 | 20. 2 Bound Volumes of <i>The Dancing Times</i>, 1913-1914 and 1917-1918. |
| Box 3 | 21. Miscellaneous drawings and sketches by Mr. Belcher. |
| Box 3 | 22. <i>The Dancing Times</i> pamphlet <i>Some Famous Dancers of XXth Century</i>. n.d. |
| Box 3 | 23. 8 Souvenir Programs. |
| Box 3 | 24. Miscellaneous programs from the late 19th century theater productions in England, program from Pavlova performance in the United States, program from performance of Adeline Genee. |
| Box 3 | 25. Music and notes to some of Mr. Belcher's dances. |
| Box 3 | 26. Original scores for <i>Carnival of Venice</i>, by Hayes Malotte (Hollywood Bowl performance) and <i>Valse Celeste</i>, by Kenneth Park. |
| Box 3 | 27. Miscellaneous programs from studio performances which were not put into 4 large scrapbooks. |
| Box 3 | 28. Book: <i>The How and Why Wonder Book of Ballet</i> by Lee Wyndham, 1961. |
| Box 3 | 29. <i>London Dancing Times</i>.
1916 - October & November
1917 - January & July
1918 - January, April, June, July, August & September
1919 - March, April, May, August, September, November & December
1948 - July |
-

- 1955 - May
 1958 - May
 1960 - October
 1962 - May, October, November & December
 1963 - December
 1964 - January, February, April & March
 1968 - July
- Box 4 **30. *The Dancing Master*, April 1929.**
- Box 4 **31. *The American Dancer*.**
 1930 - November
 1931 - June & September
 1933 - May
- Box 4 **32. *The Dance Magazine* .**
 1928 - November
 1929 - October
 1942 - October
 1954 - September
 1956 - February
 1958 - May & July
 1959 - December
 1960 - December
 1963 - November
 1964 - January, February, March & April
Item 33 removed.
- Box 4 **34. *The Dancer*, November & December 1928.**
- Oversize Boxes 5,
 6 & 7 **35. 4 large scrapbooks containing articles and clippings about Mr. Belcher, his studio
 and his students from 1916 to about 1936.**
- Box 4 **36. Hollywood Bowl Souvenir Program - June 22, 1926 - Large rededication concert at
 the time the shell was erected and improvements had been made.**
- Box 4 **37. Paper written for Dr. Laban's Dance 596 class. Ernest Belcher, the Father of Ballet
 in Southern California by Hawley, Renée Dunia. Los Angeles, 1969.**
 Physical Description: 47pp.
- Box 4 **38. Tape recording. Interview with Ernest Belcher, 1969.**
 Physical Description: 2 reels.