Detroit Recreation Department Dance Program:
The Shirley Harbin Collection

Papers, 1912-1992
(Predominantly, 1940-1980)

5 linear feet

Accession Number 1618

The papers of Shirley Harbin were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in 3/20/95 and 7/7/95 and were opened for research on 4/28/08.

The Detroit Recreation Department has had a long and storied history of mergers, re-naming, re-organizing, and re-structuring, that its history has become clouded and unclear, and very little documentation exists. A Committee on Parks for the city was first appointed in 1854, and with the purchase of Belle Isle in 1879, a need arose for governmental organization, leading to legislation for a Commissioner of Parks and Boulevards in 1889. While the city was establishing and governing parks, playgrounds were soon developed and opened beginning in 1901, with a 1914 ordinance creating a Recreation Commission, changing in 1920 to the Department of Recreation. The Department of Parks and Recreation was formed through the consolidation of the Department of Parks and Boulevards and the Department of Recreation in December of 1940 remaining until 1974 when the new city charter took effect, and the resultant restructuring of city departments created the Detroit Recreation Department.

For most of its history, Detroit Parks and Recreation was subdivided into four distinct divisions: Recreation, Forestry & Landscaping, Public Service, and Building & Equipment Maintenance. Within the Recreation Division fell various units, including Competitive Athletics, Senior Citizens, Swimming, and Special Activities. Dance was part of the Special Activities Unit which supported mobile summer programs, theatre productions, symphony concerts, the International Freedom Festival, and the Christmas Carnival. The various recreation centers throughout the city contracted certain classes for their centers including dance, dramatics, puppetry, sewing, and painting. The Special Activities staff supervised these “specialists” for the different programs at each center.

Shirley Harbin was hired in 1963 as a Senior Recreation Instructor in Drama, and by 1971, she was the Senior Recreation Instructor in Dramatics and Music. Contained within the collection are some of her files and correspondences. While the collection is labeled the Shirley Harbin Collection, the Dance Program is documented with the earliest reference to 1924 when it was then the Detroit Department of Recreation, and Vivian Glauz McMillan the Director of Dancing during the 1920s to around the 1940s. At the time Shirley Harbin was with the department, Eleanor Cattron was the Senior Recreation Instructor of Dance.

The Collection captures Recreation Dancing in Detroit though the administration, performances, scripts and plans of the Dance Program, along with references to other dance studios and initiatives in the metro area including the Harbinger Dance Company, the Mme. Cadillac Dance
Theatre, the Jewish Community Center, and the Detroit Metropolitan Dance Project. Of special research value is the large collection of original choreographed dances dating to 1924 that were performed by the students in classes and performances. The choreographed dances include ballet, tap, modern and folk dancing, often indicating the particular musical score to which the counts and measures have been assigned.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:
- Ballet
- Choreography
- Dance
- Detroit, City of
- Detroit, Department of Recreation
- Detroit, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Folk dancing
- Modern dance

Among the important individuals named are:
- Harriet Berg
- Amelita Almanza Bridges
- Eleanor Cattron
- Shirley Harbin
- Marian FitzGerald
- Vivian Glauz McMillan
- Lisa Nowak
- Barbara Tait

An index for the dances will be found on page 10.
Contents

4 storage boxes
1 oversize box

Series I, Manuscript Material, 1912-1992, Boxes 1-4:
Subseries A: General Files, 1953-1992, Box 1-2,
Dance Program performances, plans and classes, Detroit Parks and Recreation
Bulletins, local dance companies, information packets, fliers, and brochures
accumulated through the years. Of notable interest are both local and national
theater programs including:
   Betty White in “The King and I” at the Cass Theatre, 1959
   Florence Henderson in “The Sound of Music” at the Riviera Theatre, 1961
   Carol Channing in “Hello, Dolly!” at the Fisher Theatre, 1962/63 Season
   Kathryn Grayson in “Camelot” at the Fisher Theatre, 1962/63 Season
Subseries B: Dance Choreography, 1924-1964, Box 2,
Dances for classes and performances with written steps, counts and measures,
often arranged to specific music.
Subseries C: Music Books and Scores, 1913-1968, Box 2,
Handwritten sheet music as well as compiled books, many of which relate to
choreographed dances.
Subseries D: Catalogs, 1964-1990, Box 3,
Assorted costume and fabric catalogs.
Subseries E: Published Books and Magazines, 1912-1990, Box 1; Boxes 3-4,
Books and magazines with a subject matter of dance, plays and performances, as
well as the local publication City Arts Quarterly.

Series II, Non-manuscript Material, [1950s-1970s], Box 5:
8 Labeled 45s
1 Labeled Compact 33 1/3
9 Identified 7” Reel Tape, [1960s-70s]
11 Identified 5” Reel Tape, [1960s-70s]
8 Unidentified 7” Reel Tape, [1950s]
4 Unidentified 5” Reel Tape, [1960s-70s]
Plus three labeled boxes with possible mate among those unidentified
Shirley Harbin Collection

Box 1

2. Articles and Newspaper Clippings, 1966-1992
5. Correspondences: Shirley Harbin, 1971-87
6. DANCE MAGAZINE, 1972
8. Detroit Metropolitan Dance Project, 1970-78
13. DRD: Dance Program: Ballet Classes, 1969, [1960’s-70s]
18. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: Brigadoon, 1958
19. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: Bozo at the Fair, 1960-61
20. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: Dance Festival—Academy Awards of the Sixties/Fantasy Fashion Show, 1970
22. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: The King and I, 1959-1960
23. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: Peter Cottontail, 1956
24. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: Pinocchio, 1965
25. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: Roberta, 1957
27. DRD: Dance Program: Plans, Scenarios and Outlines for Past Shows, 1959-69
28. DRD: Dance Program: Recreation Dance Theatre, 1969-74
29. DRD: Dance Program: Scripts for Past Shows, 1956, [1960s]
30. DRD: Dance Program: Tap Classes, 1956, [1950s-60s]
31. DRD: Dance Program: Teaching Aids, 1955-71
32. DRD: Finance Reports, 1968-69
33. DRD: Meetings, Committees, Agendas, [1960s/70s]
34. DRD: Special Activities, 1970-79
36. DRD: Teens, 1979, n.d.
37. Fliers, 1964-87
38. Harbinger Dance Company, 1975-88
39. Interlochen Arts Academy, 1968-70
40. Jewish Community Center: The Dancing Center, 1971-77
44. Mme. Cadillac Dance Theatre, 1992
45. Magazines, 1970-91
46. The Michigan State Board of Education “Goals and Objectives for Dance/Music,” 1989
47. National Dance Association, 1991
50. National Folk Festival, 1953-56
51. Newsletters, 1970-94
52. Pageant for School and College Use Vol. I, 1938
53. Pageant for School and College Use Vol. II, 1938
54. Pamphlets/Brochures, 1970-93
56. Photographs, 1962
58. Professional Flair: Information Packet, 1990
60. Resumes and Employment Forms, [1970s-80s]
61. United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, 1992

Box 2
1. African Dances and Games, 1969
2. Compiled Choreography of A. Bridges, n.d.
3. Dances: A, 1929-[1960s]
4. Dances: B, 1925-64
5. Dances: C, 1925-53
6. Dances: D, 1926-54
7. Dances: E, 1926-62
10. Dances: H, 1924-53[50s]
11. Dances: I, 1937-60[60s]
12. Dances: J, 1926-53
13. Dances: K, 1934-54[60s]
14. Dances: L, 1939-54
15. Dances: M, 1934-54
17. Dances: O, 1934-53
18. Dances: P, 1934-57
20. Dances: S, 1930-54
21. Dances: T, 1941-54 [1930s]
22. Dances: V, 1941-48 [1930s-50s]
23. Dances: W, 1931-57
24. Dances: Y, [1930s-50s]
25. Exercises, 1940; 1964
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<td>Music: J-K, [1950s]</td>
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<td>Music: L, 1928</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Music: M, 1969, [1950s]</td>
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<td>Music: N, 1950</td>
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<td>Music: S, 1956-66</td>
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<td>Music: T, 1949-55, [1950s/60s], re-issued music score-no publication date</td>
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<td>Programs-Local: General, n.d.</td>
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<td>Singing Games, [1950s]</td>
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<td>Song Books-General (Compiled and Bound Music)</td>
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<td>Album of Strauss Waltzes, 1913</td>
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<td>The Best of Hollywood, 1966</td>
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<td>Community Dance Manual Vol. Two, 1949</td>
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<td>Dances of the Baroque Era, 1967</td>
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<td>Feist Dance Folio No. 3, 1922</td>
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<td>Feist Dance Folio No. 6, 1923</td>
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<td>Feist Dance Folio No. 11, 1926</td>
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<td>Fundamental Bar Work and Ballet Technique, 1923</td>
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<td>The Gem Dance Folio for 1927-No.2</td>
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<td>The Rhythms of Childhood, 1920</td>
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<td>Sing Again, Michigan Work Projects Administration, [ ]</td>
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<td>The Singing Caller, 1947</td>
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<td>The Wonderful Music of Christmas, 1962</td>
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<td>Wonderful Sounds of Christmas, n.d.</td>
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Box 3

Assorted Costume and Fabric Catalogs, 1964-1990

Books


Box 4

Oversized Magazines


*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 1984

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 2, Fall 1984

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 3, Winter 1985-86

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 1, Winter 1987

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring 1987

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 3, Summer 1987

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4, Fall/Winter 1987

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1988

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2, Summer 1988

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3, Fall 1988

*City Arts Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 3-4, Spring/Summer/Fall 1990

Box 5

Audio Materials

Records—45s

1. Rappin (C. Cisco, T. Shannon, N. Ameno)
   Soul Clappin (C. Cisco, T. Shannon, N. Ameno)
2. Girl from Kenya (R. Wylie & T. Hester)
   Jan Jan (M. Davis)
3. Morning Glories; Fireflies on Parade
   Primrose Valse; Fascination Valse
4. Rufus Thomas
   (Do the) Push and Pull Part I & II
5. Ramsey Lewis
   Jade East; Party Time
6. Christmas Song & Jazz or Tap
   Jingle Bell Rock
7. Grade 5-6 Tap Fast Buck
   I Want to be Happy
8. Ramsey Lewis
   Party Time; Jade East

Compact 33 1/3
1. Tuxedo Junction
   Swamp Fire

Reel to Reel Tapes
7” Reels
1. Music for Half Time Show-
   Detroit Lions vs. Minnesota Vikings; Sunday, December, 17, 1967
   1. Blue & the Gray—Entrance March
   2. A Winter Holiday
   3. Christmas Tree March
   4. America the Beautiful
   5. Auld Lang Syne
   6. Gridiron Heroes—Exit March
2. Half Time Show-
   Detroit Lions vs. Minnesota Vikings; December 11, 1966
   1. The King’s Parade—The Entrance March
   2-7. Routine music
   8. Gridiron Heroes—Exit March
3. Christmas 1971
   Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
   Jingle Bells
   Great Joy
   God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman
   What are you doing New Year’s Eve?
   Go Tell it on the Mountain
   Sleighride
   Winter Wonderland
   I’ve Got my Love to Keep Me Warm
   It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
4. 1972(3)? February-June
5. 3 Ritnikas
   Gula Matari
   After Hours
   Rhapsody Cecchetti
6. Reel #3 Concert
   Hair
   Lazy River
   Bumpy’s Blues
   Rhapsody in Blue
7. Recreation Dance Theater  
   An All that Jazz  
   Memphis Sock Groovin  
   Something Wrong  
   Inagaddadavida  

   Side 2  
   Down River  
   Easter Bunny  

8. Mrs. Davis Original Tape  
   Park Show-71  

9. Audition Tape 1971  
   Up Tight  
   Thank You  
   Jade East  
   Bumpy’s Blues  
   Take Five  
   Walk From Regios  

5” Reel  
1. 3Ritmiras  
2. Rhapsody in Blue  
   Mod Rhapsodie  
3. Princess Who Couldn’t Talk  
4. Recreation Dance Theatre  
   Groovin  
   Bumpy’s Blues  
   Soul Sacrifice  
5. Rhapsody in Blue (full length)  
6. Santana  
7. Oopsy Show  
8. NPA General Assembly  
9. WXYZ-TV Dance with  
   1. Mod Rhapsodie  
   2. Ballet Technique  
   3. Modern Dance  
   4. Lazy River  
   -or-  
   Bumpy’s Lament; Rhapsody in Blue  

10. Intro  
   Hair  
   Let the Sunshine In  
   Moody Blues  

11. Hair  
   Let the Sunshine In