

**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 Catron 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 Catron	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

**Box 1**

1. Aerobic Dancing by Jacki Sorensen: Information Packet, 1979
2. Articles and Newspaper Clippings, 1966-1992
3. Ballet Theory: Cecchetti Method, 1954; 1970s
4. Community Proposals, 1977-1979
5. Correspondences: Shirley Harbin, 1971-87
6. DANCE MAGAZINE, 1972
7. Detroit Community Music School, 1978, n.d.
8. Detroit Metropolitan Dance Project, 1970-78
- 9-10. Detroit Parks and Recreation: Bulletins, 1960, 1970, 1971
11. Detroit Parks and Recreation: Dance Program: Auditions/Evaluations, 1970-71
12. Detroit Recreation Department: Dance Program: Awards/Ribbons, 1968, [1970s]
13. DRD: Dance Program: Ballet Classes, 1969, [1960's-70s]
14. DRD: Dance Program: Costume Plans, 1968, [1950s-70s], n.d.
15. DRD: Dance Program: Dance Demonstration Day, 1971-72, n.d.
16. DRD: Dance Program: Graded Dance Skills, n.d.
17. DRD: Dance Program: Modern Dance Classes, 1964-66, n.d.
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
21. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: The Emperor's New Clothes, 1968
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
26. DRD: Dance Program: Performances: You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, [1960s]
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
35. DRD: Staff Training and Development, 1955-70, n.d.
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
- 41-43. John Robert Powers School Student Guide, 1966
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
48. National Endowment for the Arts "Dance Program," 1976
49. National Endowment for the Humanities Project Grant Application: "A Cultural Development Plan for Detroit," 1977
50. National Folk Festival, 1953-56
51. Newsletters, 1970-94
52. Pageants for School and College Use Vol. I, 1938
53. Pageants for School and College Use Vol. II, 1938
54. Pamphlets/Brochures, 1970-93
55. Personnel/Rosters/Association Lists, 1966; 1977, [1960s]
56. Photographs, 1962
57. Press Releases, 1976; 1987, [1970s]
58. Professional Flair: Information Packet, 1990
59. Research Papers: Detroit Parks and Recreation, 1972-73
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
8. Dances: F, 1925-54, [1960s]
9. Dances: G, 1924-53[50s]
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
16. Dances: N, 1935-53
17. Dances: O, 1934-53
18. Dances: P, 1934-57
19. Dances: R, 1937-45[50s]
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
26. General Sheet Music, n.d.

27. Inventory for Sheet Music and Records, 1950-51, n.d.
28. Music: A, [1950s/60s], re-issued music score-no publication date
29. Music: B, [1950s], re-issued music scores-no publication date
30. Music: C, 1968, [1950s/60s]
31. Music: D, [1960s], re-issued music scores-no publication date
32. Music: E-G, [1950s/60s], re-issued music scores-no publication date
33. Music: H, [1950s/60s], re-issued music scores-no publication date
34. Music: I, [1950s], re-issued music scores-no publication date
35. Music: J-K, [1950s]
36. Music: L, 1928
37. Music: M, 1969, [1950s]
38. Music: N, 1950
39. Music: O-R, 1931, [1950s], re-issued music score-no publication date
40. Music: S, 1956-66
41. Music: T, 1949-55, [1950s/60s], re-issued music score-no publication date
42. Music: V-Z, 1953-68, n.d.
43. Programs-Local: General, n.d.
44. Programs-Local: 1950s
45. Programs-Local: 1960
46. Programs-Local: 1961
47. Programs-Local: 1962
48. Programs-Local: 1963
49. Programs-Local: 1970s/1980s
50. Programs-National: 1950s
51. Programs-National: 1960/1961
52. Programs-National: 1962/1963
53. Programs-National: 1970s
54. Singing Games, [1950s]
55. Song Books-General (Compiled and Bound Music)
  - Album of Strauss Waltzes, 1913
  - The Best of Hollywood, 1966
  - Community Dance Manual Vol. Two, 1949
  - Dances of the Baroque Era, 1967
  - Feist Dance Folio No. 3, 1922
  - Feist Dance Folio No. 6, 1923
  - Feist Dance Folio No. 11, 1926
  - Fundamental Bar Work and Ballet Technique, 1923
  - The Gem Dance Folio for 1927-No.2
  - The Gem Dance Folio for 1929
  - The Rhythms of Childhood, 1920
  - Sing Again, Michigan Work Projects Administration, [ ]
  - The Singing Caller, 1947
  - The Wonderful Music of Christmas, 1962
  - Wonderful Sounds of Christmas, n.d.

**Box 3**

Assorted Costume and Fabric Catalogs, 1964-1990

Books

- Canner, Norma. ...and a time to dance. Photography by Harriet Klebanuff.  
Boston: Plays, inc., 1968
- Chubb, Percival. Festivals and Plays in Schools and Elsewhere. New York:  
Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1912.
- Cohen, Selma Jeanne, ed. Dance as a Theatre Art: Source Readings in Dance  
History From 1581 to the Present. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company,  
1974.
- Lamkin, Nina B. Dances, Drills and Story-Plays for Every Day and Holidays.  
Chicago: T. S. Denison & Company, 1916.
- Murray, Jan. Dance Now. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Shreeves, Rosamund. Movement and Educational Dance for Children. Boston:  
Plays, inc., 1979.

**Box 4**

Oversized Magazines

- The Joy of Belly Dancing: Instruction Booklet, 1976.
- 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 Ritmikas  
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