ATLANTA BALLET.
Atlanta Ballet collection, 1929-1984

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Atlanta Ballet.
Title: Atlanta Ballet collection, 1929-1984
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 634
Extent: 4.25 linear feet (9 boxes) and 1 oversized papers box (OP)
Abstract: Collection of materials of the Atlanta Ballet, including the personal papers of founder, Dorothy Alexander, but primarily composed of printed and promotional material.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
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Source
Gift, 1983.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Atlanta Ballet collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

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Collection Description

Biographical Note
Dorothy Moses Alexander (1904-1986) was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1904 to Mina Thibadeau (d. 1914) and Francis Hamilton Moses (d. 1919). She began to study dance when she was eight years old, and before she reached the age of eighteen she was teaching dance to the children of Atlanta friends. In 1921 she opened the Dorothy Alexander School of Dance. While performing with her own company, the Dorothy Alexander Dance Concert Group which she and her students formed in 1929, Alexander continued to study and to teach and choreograph. She taught at and attended the University of Georgia and Oglethorpe University where she completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1930. Alexander's dance group, known as the Dorothy Alexander Dance Art Group throughout the 1930s, was renamed the Atlanta Civic Ballet in 1941. Merging with the Atlanta Municipal Theater in 1967, the company dropped the word "civic" from its name and became the Atlanta Ballet. The school which had continued since its founding by Dorothy Alexander became the Atlanta School of Ballet, the official school of the company. Alexander performed until 1947 and taught until 1958 when Merrilee Smith, her partner and co-owner in the school since 1945, took over those duties. In 1962, Dorothy Alexander retired as the artistic director of the company and Robert Barnett, who had been a principal dancer with the company since 1958, was named her successor and the administrative director of the school. In 1968, Alexander, who had become ill, sold her share in the school to Barnett who made Mereilee Smith its director.

Dorothy Alexander is recognized as the matriarch of dance in Atlanta and of regional ballet in the United States. She was instrumental in the development of the Southeastern Regional Ballet Association (SERBA), and the Atlanta Civic Ballet hosted the first regional dance festival in 1955. The formation of the National Association for Regional Ballet (NARB) in which Alexander was also very much involved came shortly after SERBA's organization. Among the other awards presented to Dorothy Alexander over the years are the Atlanta Woman of the Year in the Arts (1947), the Dance Magazine's National Award (1960), and the Capezio Award (1981).

Scope and Content Note
The material in this collection was a gift of Dorothy Alexander, founder of the Atlanta Ballet. Although it includes personal papers of the donor and original records of the company the bulk of the collection is printed and promotional material. Earliest items are programs dated 1929, the latest are news articles dated 1984, but the collection bulks during the period 1955-1975. It is divided into three series, the largest of which (Series I, boxes 1-7) pertains directly to the organization and activities of the Atlanta Ballet, 1929-1984. In this series are files the company's original records, followed by the programs, material related to the Decatur and Apprentice companies and information concerning several ballet productions. Promotional material published by the Atlanta Ballet, press material and material related to the Atlanta School of Ballet follows. One box of photographs (box 7) ca. 1930-1975, completes the series.

The second series in the collection contains personal correspondence, biographical material, and articles and monographs pertaining to Dorothy Alexander, as well as articles written by
her. The final series (Series III), most of which is promotional and press material, concerns the history and organization of the regional ballet associations of the United States, particularly the Southeastern Ballet Association and the National Association for regional Ballet.

**Arrangement Note**
Organized into 3 series: (1) Atlanta Ballet (Atlanta Civic Ballet), (2) Dorothy Alexander papers, and (3) Regional ballet associations.
Description of Series

Series 1: Atlanta Ballet, 1929-1984
Series 2: Dorothy Alexander papers, 1931-1984
Series 3: Regional ballet associations, 1955-1981
Series 1  
Atlanta Ballet, 1929-1984  
Boxes 1 - 7; OP1

**Arrangement Note**  
Arranged in alphabetical order by subject

**Organizational Records; Programs, 1929-1956**

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**Press material, biographical and institutional information**

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**Photographs**

| 7 7 | Photographs, circa 1930-1975 |
**Series 2**  
**Dorothy Alexander papers, 1931-1984**  
**Box 8**

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Series 3  
Regional ballet associations, 1955-1981  
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