Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila Collection

Inventory Prepared by Jessie Hopper

Last Revision - June 2013
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Collection Summary

Repository: Ballets Russes Archives at the University of Oklahoma School of Dance

Collection: Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila

Title: Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila Collection

Dates: 1923-2013

Bulk Dates: 1944-1952

Quantity: 2 boxes .75 linear feet

Abstract: Robert Lindgren, a Canadian dancer, and his wife Sonja Taanila (Tyven), an American dancer, were members of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Their collection contains photographs, correspondence, rehearsal schedules, drawings, books, costumes and other items that document their time in the company and their dancing life afterwards.

Identification: RL_ST-056

Biographical Note

Robert Lindgren was born in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, on December 9, 1923 -- 10 years before the first ballet company began in America. His first teacher was June Roper. At 19, Robert was ready to make dance a career. He was invited by the famous choreographer, Leonide Massine to join the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and while waiting for his visa, he worked for Boeing Aircraft Company building PBY flying boats. However, Massine left Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo to join Ballet Theatre (now called American Ballet Theatre). Ballet Theatre made its debut at the Center Theatre in Rockefeller Center in 1940. Massine invited Robert to join him at Ballet Theatre from 1942 to 1943. With Ballet Theater, Robert had the opportunity to dance in Antony Tudor's Gala Performance, Romeo and Juliet, and Pillar of Fire. He also danced in Massine's Cappricio Espanol, Boutique Fantasque, Le Tricoene (The Three Cornered Hat), Aleko, George Balanchine's Errante, Eugene Lorning's Billy the Kid, and many other classics. After his discharge from the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1944, Robert rejoined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Sonja Tyven was born in New York City on May 29, 1928. She began her early training with Vecheslav Swobada and Maria Yurieva. Later she studied with Igor Schwezoff in New York City and Olga Prebrajenska in Paris. Sonja also studied with George Balanchine at the School of American Ballet. In 1945, she joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and stayed until 1952. When Sonja was dancing with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, her sister Gertrude was also a member. To keep things from getting confused, she used the name Sonja Taanila while with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Sonja Tyven danced in many ballets including Les Sylphides, Carnival, Les Elves, Scheherazade, Prince Igor, Giselle, Swan Lake, and Gaite Parisienne. While with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Sonja met Robert Lindgren and they were married in 1952. They have 2 daughters and 3 grandchildren.
Sonja Tyven's Broadway credits included *Me and Juliet, Oklahoma*, and *On Your Toes*. She also danced in a number of television shows among them Max Liebman Spectaculars, and Omnibus, choreographed by Agnes de Mille. With her husband, they danced with Alexandra Danilova's Great Moments of Ballet, adding more ballets to her credits. In 1957, Sonja joined The New York City Ballet. Together, Robert Lindgren and Sonja Tyven opened a ballet school, Lindgren-Tyven School of Ballet, in Phoenix, Arizona. In 1965, when Robert moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina to head the North Carolina School of the Arts (NCSA), his wife Sonja took on the position as Director of the Richmond School of Ballet, as well as Ballet Mistress of the North Carolina Dance Theater. Eventually Sonja became director of the Pre-Program NCSA. From 1987 - 91 Sonja taught ballet at the YMHA on 92nd Street in New York City. Lincoln Kirsten, upon retiring, asked Robert to succeed him as president of the School of American Ballet. Among the many awards given to Robert Lindgren are The North Carolina Governor's Award for outstanding contribution to the Arts, a Honorary Doctorate with a PhD of Fine Arts.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila Collection contains black and white photographs, promotional materials, rehearsal schedules, and other memorabilia. Lindgren was also the Dean of the North Carolina School of the Arts, so his collection includes some items from that period as well.

**Organization of the Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila Collection**

- Photographs
- Scans of Photos
- Book
- Magazine
- Correspondence and Promotional Materials

**Restrictions**

**Restriction of Access**

The Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila Collection is currently unavailable to researchers. When the Ballets Russes Archive is open to researchers, the collection will be open to researchers without restrictions.

**Index Terms**

The following are selected search terms used in the collection

- Ballet -- 1940-1950
- Ballet -- 1950-1960
- Ballet dancers--1940-1950
- Ballet dancers--1950-1960
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
Books
Correspondence
Information Artifacts
Lindgren, Robert
Photographic Prints
Programs
Tyven, Sonja

Administrative Information

Provenance
The collection was donated by Robert Lindgren and Sonja Taanila in March of 2012.

Processing History
The collection was inspected and housed by Tara Davis. The collection was arranged and processed by Jessie Hopper in 2012.
Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Box 1

Folder 1 Scans of Program, Telegram and Verdak Notecard

1.1.1 Undated
    Scan of the front of a promotional item for the One and Only Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo

1.1.2 Undated
    Scan of the back of a promotional item - Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo with the names of the principal dancers.

1.1.3 1946 February 17 - March 31
    Scan of top half of Gala Mid-Winter Season Program order form

1.1.4 1946 February 17 - March 31
    Scan of bottom half of Gala Mid-Winter Season Program order form

1.1.5 1942
    Copy of telegram from Robert Lindgren to his mother about his joining the ballet

1.1.6 1949 September 16 - October 2
    Scan of Verdak Notecard

Folder 2 Scans of Billets de Service, Playbill and Newspaper Articles

1.2.1 1947 April 12
    Copy of Billet de Service - April 12 1947

1.2.2 1947 September 16
    Copy of Billet de Service - September 16 1947

1.2.3 1947 September 20
    Copy of Billet de Service - September 20, 1947

1.2.4 2002
    Copy of newspaper article “Duncan Noble, celebrated dancer, choreographer, dies at 80.”

1.2.5 2002 August 7
    Copy of obituary of Duncan Noble from the New York Times

1.2.6 1954 November 29
    Copy of playbill for “On Your Toes” at the 46th street Theatre

1.2.7 2006 June 3
    Copy of resolution of recognition for Robert Lindgren by the North Carolina School of the Arts

Folder 3 Book- A Passionate Preference

1.3.1 1991
    A Passionate Preference by Leslie Banner

Folder 4 Ballet Review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P001</td>
<td>Studio portrait of four dancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P002</td>
<td>Autographed portrait of a female dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P003</td>
<td>Studio portrait of six female dancers in costume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P004</td>
<td>Studio portrait of a male and female dancer in costume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P005</td>
<td>Studio portrait of a male dancer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Scans of Photographs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P006</td>
<td>Copy of a studio portrait of Sonja Taanila and Robert Lindgren in <em>Great Moments in Ballet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P007</td>
<td>Copy of a studio portrait of Robert Lindgren in <em>Madronos</em> 1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P008</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven and Robert Lindgren in <em>Le Beau Danube</em> 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P009</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Sonja Taanila in <em>Rouge et Noir</em> 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P010</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Robert Lindgren in <em>Prince Igor</em> 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P011</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Sonja Taanila as Zobeide in <em>Scheherazade</em> 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P012</td>
<td>Copy of Studio portrait of Mary Ellen Moylan and Robert Lindgren in <em>Scheherazade</em> 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P013</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Sonja Taanila in <em>Paquita</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P014</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Robert Lindgren as the Champion Roper in <em>Rodeo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P015</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven and Robert Lindgren in the &quot;Bluebird Pas de Deux&quot; 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P016</td>
<td>Copy of a studio portrait of Robert Lindgren in <em>Madronos</em> 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL_ST-056-P017</td>
<td>Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven and Robert Lindgren in <em>Le Beau Danube</em> 1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Copy of studio portrait of Sonja Taanila in *Rouge et Noir*

Copy of studio portrait of Robert Lindgren in *Prince Igor*

Copy of studio portrait of Sonja Taanila as Zobeide in *Scheherazade*

Copy of Studio portrait of Mary Ellen Moylan and Robert Lindgren in *Scheherazade*

Copy of studio portrait of Sonja Taanila in *Paquita*

Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven and Robert Lindgren in the "Bluebird Pas de Deux"

Copy of photograph of the company of Colonel DeBasil's Ballet Russe

Copy of studio portrait of Yvette Chauvire in *Giselle*

Copy of studio portrait of Yvette Chauvire

Copy of performance photo of Sonya Taanila and Bernice Rehner

Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven in Act II of *Giselle*

Copy of studio portrait of Oleg Tupine

Copy of performance photo of Balanchine's *Serenade* at the Hollywood Bowl


Copy of studio portrait of Leon Danielian

Copy of studio portrait of Alexandra Banilova

Copy of studio portrait of Alexandra Danilova

Copy of studio portrait of Nikita Talin as Bartender in *Frankie and Johnny*
Copy of studio portrait of Maria Tallchief as Zobeide in *Scheherazade*

RL_ST-056-P037
Copy of studio portrait of Jeanette Tannan

RL_ST-056-P038  1945
Copy of studio portrait of Pauline Goddard

RL_ST-056-P039
Copy of studio portrait of Mia Slavenska

RL_ST-056-P040
Copy of studio portrait of Frederic Franklin in *Streetcar Named Desire*

RL_ST-056-P041  1940
Copy of studio portrait of Yurek Lazowsky

RL_ST-056-P042
Copy of performance photo from *Les Sylphides*

RL_ST-056-P043  1946
Copy of performance photo from Balenchine's *Serenade* at the Hollywood Bowl

Folder  Scans of Photographs
8

RL_ST-056-P044
Copy of performance photo from *Paquita*

RL_ST-056-P045
Copy of performance photo from *Madronos*

RL_ST-056-P046
Copy of performance photo from *Igrovskia*

RL_ST-056-047
Copy of performance photo of the Trepak dance from *The Nutcracker>*

RL_ST-056-048
Copy of studio portrait of Danilova, Slavenska, Krassovska, and Markova

RL_ST-056-P049
Copy of studio portrait of Marie-Jeanne in *Ballet Imperial*

RL_ST-056-P050  1959
Copy of Studio portrait of George Zoritch and Gertrude Tyven

RL_ST-056-P051
Copy of Snapshot of Gertrude Tyven, Sonja Taanila, and Robert Lindgren

RL_ST-056-P052
Copy of Performance photo of

RL_ST-056-P053
Copy of autographed studio portrait of "Nicolas"

RL_ST-056-P054
Copy of studio portrait of Robert Lindgren

RL_ST-056-P055
Copy of studio portrait of Oleg Tupine
Copy of studio portrait of Alicia Markova

Copy of snapshot of reunion

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Irma Sandre in Paquita

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Maria Tallchief in Ballet Imperial

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Nathalie Krassovska as Odile in Swan Lake

Copy of autographed studio portrait of George Zoritch

Copy of studio portrait of Igor Schwezoff

Copy of performance photo from Ballet Imperial

Copy of studio portrait of Nicholas Magallanes in Ballet Imperial

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Joy Williams

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Ruthanna Boris

Copy of autographed Studio portrait of Valrene Tweedie

Copy of Studio portrait of Maureen Reagan in The Nutcracker

Copy of studio portrait of Nora White in Danses Concertantes

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Leon Danielian in Danses Concertantes

Copy of snapshot of Dorothy Etheridge and Robert Lindgren

Copy of studio portrait of Robert Lindgren in Commedia Balletica

Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven in Gaite Parisienne

Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven and Sonja Taanila in Paquita

Copy of studio portrait of Jimmy Starbuck

Copy of studio portrait of Nora White in Danses Concertantes

Copy of autographed studio portrait of Leon Danielian in Danses Concertantes

Copy of snapshot of Dorothy Etheridge and Robert Lindgren

Copy of studio portrait of Robert Lindgren in Commedia Balletica

Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven in Gaite Parisienne

Copy of studio portrait of Gertrude Tyven and Sonja Taanila in Paquita

Copy of studio portrait of Jimmy Starbuck
Copy of studio portrait of Marie-Jeanne
RL_ST-056-P077
Copy of studio portrait of Roman Jasinski
RL_ST-056-P078
Copy of studio portrait of Alan Howard
RL_ST-056-P079
Copy of autographed studio portrait of Mary Ellen Moylan
RL_ST-056-P080
Copy of autographed studio portrait of Leonide Massine
RL_ST-056-P081
Copy of snapshot of Alexandra Danilova and Frederic Franklin at the stage door at City Center in New York City.
RL_ST-056-P082
Copy of Performance photo
RL_ST-056-P083
Copy of performance photo of Sonja Taanila and Leon Danielian

Box 2
Folder Gold Ballet Shoes
1

2.1.1
Gold men’s ballet slippers worn by Robert Lindgren in Scheherazade