



## St. Louis Civic Ballet Records (S0072)

**Collection Number:** S0072

**Collection Title:** St. Louis Civic Ballet Records

**Dates:** 1958-1979

**Creator:** Saint Louis Civic Ballet

**Abstract:** The St. Louis Civic Ballet Records contain correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, and photographs documenting the dance company's mission to foster young people's interest in ballet through performances and scholarships.

**Collection Size:** 0.04 cubic foot  
(19 folders, 3 photographs)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center-st-louis). If you would like more information, please contact us at [stlouis@shsmo.org](mailto:stlouis@shsmo.org).

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *St. Louis Civic Ballet Records* (S0072); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Herbert Stanley on February 21, 1971 (Accession No. SA0008).

**Processed by:** Processed by AJ Medlock and Isaac Alexander, September 2023

### Historical Note:

Stanley Herbertt (1919-2003), a Chicago native, founded the St. Louis Civic Ballet in 1958. Before moving to St. Louis in 1952, Herbertt danced professionally with the Chicago Civic Opera Ballet, then performed as a soloist with the Ballet Theatre of New York from 1943 to

1947 and performed in Broadway productions, such as *Carousel*, in the late 1940s. While in St. Louis, he owned and operated a dance studio, the Ballet Arts Academy from 1952 to 1986. Herbertt founded the St. Louis Civic Ballet to foster young people's interest in ballet through performances and scholarships.

The St. Louis Civic Ballet's first performance was *Treacle and Toffee* at the American Theatre in St. Louis on May 9, 1959. Other performances included *Cinderella*, the *Nutcracker*, and *The Masquerade*, all performed at the Kiel Auditorium in 1960 and 1963, respectively. In addition to performances, the St. Louis Civic Ballet also attempted to fund scholarships for young ballet dancers from 1963 to 1964. The goal was to select five male dancers ages 12 to 18 for six-week dance classes valued at \$100 under Stanley Herbertt. However, the St. Louis Civic Ballet could not find qualified boys for the program, leading to its dissolution in October 1964.

Throughout its history, the St. Louis Civic Ballet performed with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in its productions of the *Nutcracker* and performed in venues ranging from the Kiel Auditorium to the Meramec Caverns. Stanley Herbertt served as the group's Artistic Director, overseeing nearly 80 productions. The St. Louis Civic Ballet disbanded sometime in the late 1980s.

### **Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into 4 series:

Administration  
Correspondence  
Programs and Outreach  
Photographs

### **Scope and Content:**

#### **Administration**

The Administration series contains bylaws, meeting minutes, treasurer's reports, and budgets regarding the Board of Directors' efforts to implement its vision to foster interest in ballet among St. Louis-area youth. For example, the meeting minutes and annual reports chronicle the board's decision to establish the \$100 Dance Scholarship Fund for youth and their vote affirming their decision to integrate the Ballet's dance performances on May 25, 1961. Also included in this series are treasurer's reports and budgets from 1963 to 1969, detailing expenses for performances and special events and income from membership dues, ticket sales, and fundraising events, such as rummage sales. The constitution and bylaws appear first in this series, with the remaining materials arranged chronologically, dating from 1958 to 1969.

#### **Correspondence**

The Correspondence series primarily consists of letters sent to and from Stanley Herbertt, the St. Louis Civic Ballet's artistic director, regarding the coordination of performances and festivals, press coverage, and Herbertt's efforts to create a regional Ballet association. Correspondents of note include letters between Herbertt and Chicago ballerina and choreographer Ruth Page and New York City choreographer Socrates Birskey. Also included in the correspondence are letters from the Board of Directors to St. Louis Civic Ballet dancers and members announcing

upcoming performances and audition opportunities. The materials in this series are arranged chronologically, dating from 1959 to 1969.

### Programs and Outreach

The Programs and Outreach series includes newsletters, programs, and lists regarding the Saint Louis Civic Ballet's performances and membership fundraising activities. Materials of interest include issues of the *Balletin*, the St. Louis Civic Ballet's membership newsletter. The issues include updates on upcoming performances and fundraising opportunities, including rummage and bake sales. Also included in the series are performance programs containing biographies of St. Louis Civic Ballet directors, guest performers, photographs of ballet dancers, and set lists for the performance. Company performances included *Cinderella*, the *Nutcracker*, and *Masquerade* at Kiel Auditorium. Missing from this series are programs from 1969, 1972-1975, and 1977. The materials in this series are arranged chronologically, dating from 1958 to 1979.

### Photographs

The Photographs series contains three photos taken in 1972. The first photograph features Artist Director Stanley Herbertt, Ballet Mistress LaVerne Meyering, and Board member Betty McRoberts. The remaining photograph depicts unidentified dancers in the company. The materials in this series are arranged chronologically throughout 1972.

### Container List:

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