

Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images



**Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021**

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020570132>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu021054>

Prepared by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Jade Vaughan, 2021 November

Revised 2024 February

Collection Summary

Title: Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images

Inclusive Dates: 1984-2019

Bulk Dates: 1984-1998

Call No.: ML31.S543

Creator: Simon, Peter Angelo

Extent: 493 items

Extent: 1 container

Extent: 0.5 linear feet

Extent: 114 digital files (28.6 GB)

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020570132>

Summary: Peter Angelo Simon (born 1936) is an award-winning photographer known for capturing creative artists during their working process. This collection of still and moving images consists of negatives, contact sheets, slides, digital photographs, digital videos, and one printed photograph. Subjects include twentieth-century avant-garde operas, dance pieces, innovative directors, composers, choreographers, dancers, and street performers. Notable subjects are Robert Wilson, Philip Glass, Lucinda Childs, Bessie Schönberg and Meredith Monk, and Merce Cunningham.

Acquisition Information

Gift, Peter Angelo Simon, 2021

Gift, Frazer Pennebaker, 2021

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

Stephanie Akau, Libby Smigel, and Jade Vaughan processed the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images, and Vaughan coded the finding aid, in 2021.

Additional Description

The Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images are described in a Library of Congress blog post titled "Photography Collection Captures Innovation in Performing Arts."

Transfers

Producer Frazer Pennebaker provided a DVD copy of the documentary film *Bessie: A Portrait of Bessie Schönberg*, directed by Chris Hegedus and D. A. Pennebaker, for inclusion in the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images. In addition to co-producing the project, Simon contributed video footage and photographs as part of Meredith Monk's tribute to Schönberg in the film. The DVD has been transferred to the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, where it is identified as part of the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images Collection (MAVIS collection no. 17857) and is available for onsite viewing.

Other Repositories

The Archive of Robert Wilson located at The Watermill Center in Water Mill, New York, is the largest set of materials related to the artistic activity of Robert Wilson. The New York Public Library holds the Merce Cunningham Archive, the Bessie Schönberg Papers, and the Meredith Monk Archive. The Centre Nationale de Danse in Paris formed an archive on Lucinda Childs related to the Centre's co-curated exhibit with the Thaddeus Ropac Gallery.

Related Material

For the study of performing arts photography and videography, the Music Division has the following collections: David Fullard Dance Photographs; [Larry Colwell Dance Photographs](#); [Herta Moselsio Photographs of Martha Graham's Lamentation](#); [10 Hairy Legs Dance Company Archive](#); [Judith Chazin-Bennahum Photograph Collection Relating to Antony Tudor](#); and the [George Zoritch Collection](#). Additionally, many of the special collections of individual artists and dance companies include photographic materials.

For the study of opera photography, the Music Division has the following collections: [Houston L. Maples Family Collection on Russian Theatre, Opera, and Ballet](#); [National Negro Opera Company Collection](#); and the [Helen Traubel Papers](#).

Copyright Status

Materials from the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions on using or copying materials may apply.

Digital Files

Digital files were received as part of the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images. Access to digital content is currently available onsite only in the Performing Arts Reading Room and requires advance notice. Consult reference staff in the Performing Arts Reading Room for more information.

Technical Requirements

The digital files in this collection represent a variety of common formats, including .jpg, .mov, .mp4, .pdf, .psd, .tif, .xmf, and .xlsx.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container or digital ID number], Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Peter Angelo Simon was born near Philadelphia in 1936. He first gained an interest in photography in high school by taking photographs of items through a microscope. While working as a reporter for a small newspaper in Vermont, he began taking photographs for the newspaper's editor. In the early 1960s, Simon worked as a documentary writer for the weekly public affairs television program *Concept* for WRCV-TV in Philadelphia. Again, he incorporated photography in his work by taking photographs of locations, which he included in the documentaries.

Simon attended photography workshops in Philadelphia led by Brooklyn-born photographer Harold Feinstein. In 1968, Simon transitioned to working as a professional photographer. He became aware of the work of the pioneers of direct cinema in the United States, such as documentary filmmakers Robert Drew, D. A. Pennebaker, and Richard Leacock, and he was influenced by their style. Simon's works have been exhibited internationally at galleries and museums. He provided image curation for the *Smithsonian Magazine* in the 1970s, and his photographs have been featured in books, magazines, and advertising campaigns. In addition to the subjects in the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images collection, Simon photographed painter George Deem, New York City's Big Apple Circus, the Chelsea Hotel artist community, and Muhammed Ali.

Simon has been recognized with awards from the Clio and Andy awards in advertising, The Art Director's Club of New York, Art Direction Magazine, Communication Arts, and the Eastman Kodak Epcot Center Professional Photographer's Awards. He has issued the books *Muhammad Ali: Fighter's Heaven 1974* (Reel Art Press, 2016) and *Big Apple Circus* (Penguin, 1978), as well as the film *48 Hours with Muhammad Ali* (Dan Glynn, director, Adhoc Films). Simon is married to lighting designer Beverly Emmons; their daughter Annie Simon is a costume designer for film, theater, and opera. Simon teaches photography in his studio in Brooklyn, New York.

Scope and Content Note

The Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images span the years 1984 to 2019, the bulk of which date from 1984 to 1998. The materials consist of digital and physical still and moving images that capture the working processes of twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists in opera, dance, theater, and street performance. The slides, negatives, photographs, and video footage illustrate Peter Angelo Simon's innovative style of documenting performance from behind the scenes.

The photographs and videos document works by theater director Robert Wilson, choreographers Lucinda Childs and Merce Cunningham, and unnamed street performers. The [Photographs](#) series includes black-and-white contact sheets, slides, and a printed photograph, along with a digital file of scans and documents prepared by Simon to accompany the physical photographic materials. This digital file contains a grouping of digital photographs from *The Civil Wars* (Rome Opera House, 1984 and Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1986); *Einstein on the Beach* (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1984); and *Salome* (New York University, 1986). The photographs of *The Civil Wars* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) are from a rehearsal in 1985; the performance took place the following year. The performances at the Rome Opera House in 1984 and at BAM in 1986 were Act V – The Rome Section from *The Civil Wars*. Workshops held in 1998 at Robert Wilson's Watermill Center are extensively documented, as is a gala event there.

The [Videos](#) series contains digital footage from performances and rehearsals of stagings of postmodern dance works: *Available Light* choreographed by Lucinda Childs and *Night Wandering* by Merce Cunningham. Also included are some video recordings of street dancers in New York City.

Simon also contributed photographs and video footage of Meredith Monk for the documentary titled *Bessie: A Portrait of Bessie Schönberg*; this material is accessible on the DVD copy of this film that will be transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound (MBRS) Division.

Organization of the Peter Angelo Simon Performing Arts Images

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Photographs, 1984-1998](#)
- [Videos, 2016-2019](#)

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Childs, Lucinda.
Cunningham, Merce.
Schönberg, Bessie.
Simon, Peter Angelo.
Simon, Peter Angelo.
Wilson, Robert, 1941-

Subjects

Modern dance--United States--Photographs.
Performing arts--United States--Photographs.

Titles

Peter Angelo Simon papers 1984-1998

Form/Genre

Contact sheets.
Documentary photographs.
DVDs.
Negatives (Photographs)
Slides (Photographs)
Video recordings.

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1 MAPCASE 3 DF

Series

Photographs, 1984-1998

This series contains black-and-white contact sheets, negatives, slides, digital photographs, and one print photograph taken by Peter Angelo Simon. Simon also prepared a digital file of selected scans and documents intended to accompany the physical photographic materials. Subjects include opera performances, rehearsals, student artist workshops, and a gala. The collection contains materials that primarily document work by theater director Robert Wilson. Also of significance are composer Philip Glass for the operas *The Civil Wars* and *Einstein on the Beach*, choreographer Lucinda Childs for her work on *Einstein on the Beach*, and lighting designer Beverly Emmons for her contributions to *The Civil Wars* and *Einstein on the Beach*. Operas pictured include *The Civil Wars* (Rome Opera House, 1984 and Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1986); *Einstein on the Beach* (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1984); and *Salome* (New York University, 1986). Also included are images documenting student artists in workshops and a gala event with Wilson at The Watermill Center in 1998.

Arranged alphabetically by title of work or by workshop location, followed by the digital file that includes selections from all titles.

DF

Videos, 2016-2019

This series contains digital moving images recorded by Peter Angelo Simon. Subjects include choreographers Lucinda Childs, Merce Cunningham, and unnamed street performers.

The materials document the rehearsal, performance, and reception of Childs's *Available Light* (Chatalet Theatre, Paris, 2016); the restaged performance of Cunningham's *Night Wandering* (Düsseldorf Opera House, Germany, 2019), and clips of street performers in New York City. Childs collaborated with composer John Adams and architect Frank Gehry for *Available Light*. Lighting design for *Available Light* and *Night Wandering* was provided by Beverly Emmons. The unnamed street performers are dancers and skateboarders in Brooklyn.

Video recording footage and photographs by Peter Angelo Simon included in the documentary film titled *Bessie: A Portrait of Bessie Schönberg* are found on the DVD included in this collection that was transferred to the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound (MBRS) Division.

Arranged alphabetically by title of work.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1 MAPCASE 3 DF	Photographs, 1984-1998 <p>This series contains black-and-white contact sheets, negatives, slides, digital photographs, and one print photograph taken by Peter Angelo Simon. Simon also prepared a digital file of selected scans and documents intended to accompany the physical photographic materials. Subjects include opera performances, rehearsals, student artist workshops, and a gala. The collection contains materials that primarily document work by theater director Robert Wilson. Also of significance are composer Philip Glass for the operas <i>The Civil Wars</i> and <i>Einstein on the Beach</i>, choreographer Lucinda Childs for her work on <i>Einstein on the Beach</i>, and lighting designer Beverly Emmons for her contributions to <i>The Civil Wars</i> and <i>Einstein on the Beach</i>. Operas pictured include <i>The Civil Wars</i> (Rome Opera House, 1984 and Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1986); <i>Einstein on the Beach</i> (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1984); and <i>Salome</i> (New York University, 1986). Also included are images documenting student artists in workshops and a gala event with Wilson at The Watermill Center in 1998.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by title of work or by workshop location, followed by the digital file that includes selections from all titles.</p>
BOX-FOLDER 1/1-4	<i>The Civil Wars</i> , 1984 Alternate title: <i>the CIVIL warS: a tree is best measured when it is down</i> World premiere at Rome Opera House; 7 contact sheets; 47 negatives; 88 slides; 1 chroma transparency
MAPCASE-DRAWER 3/3	<i>The Civil Wars</i> , 1984 World premiere at Rome Opera House; 1 photographic print
BOX-FOLDER 1/5-6	<i>The Civil Wars</i> , 1985 Rehearsal for the 1986 production at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM); 8 contact sheets; 34 negatives
BOX-FOLDER 1/7-9	<i>Einstein on the Beach</i> , 1984 Rehearsal at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM); 4 contact sheets; 31 negatives; 4 slides
BOX-FOLDER 1/10-11	<i>Salome</i> , 1986 Robert Wilson conducting workshop with New York University students at The Kitchen in New York City; 8 contact sheets; 41 negatives
BOX-FOLDER 1/12-16	The Watermill Center, 1998 Robert Wilson with student artists in workshop at the Watermill Center; 17 contact sheets; 92 negatives; 79 slides
BOX-FOLDER 1/17	The Watermill Center, 1998 Gala event; 31 slides
DF	Selected digital files, undated DIGITAL ID: SimonPeterA_MUS_2021_082 Scans of photographic materials, keynote address slides, and identifying information on the performances prepared by Simon to accompany the physical assets in this collection; 78 digital files

Photographs, 1984-1998

Container	Contents
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Arranged by performance or subject.

DF

Videos, 2016-2019

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Video recording footage and photographs by Peter Angelo Simon included in the documentary film titled *Bessie: A Portrait of Bessie Schönberg* are found on the DVD included in this collection that was transferred to the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound (MBRS) Division.

Arranged alphabetically by title of work.

DF

Available Light, 2016

DIGITAL ID: SimonPeterA_MUS_2022_003

Choreographed by Lucinda Childs; performed by the Lucinda Childs Dance Company; music by John Adams

Rehearsals, performance, and reception in Paris, and several photographs of the dance company; 19 digital files

DF

Night Wandering, 2019

Digital ID: SimonPeterA_MUS_2022_004

Choreographed by Merce Cunningham; performed by Ballet at the Rhine; music by Bo Nilsson

Restaged performance in Düsseldorf, Germany; 13 digital files

DF

Street Performance, undated

DIGITAL ID: SimonPeterA_MUS_2022_006

Dancer on a subway platform; skateboarder in Brooklyn; 4 digital files