



*The New York Negro Ballet. Autographs of 19 Members on a card. 1957*

\$750

Small card. 4½" x 3½" with holograph signatures on both sides of 19 members of the company while on tour in Glasgow and London in 1957. Thin strip of paper removed from left margin on front, just touching the first letter of the first name of six dancers, else near fine.

Signatures from a landmark 1957 tour by one of the earliest American black classical ballet companies, founded in 1954 with money from New England philanthropists and directed by Ward Fleming, a visionary black dancer. The company was historically significant but short-lived, disbanding shortly after this tour. Material about the company was included in an exhibition entitled "Classic Black" devoted to classical black dancers at the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in 1996. "...the first [sic] all black ballet company... They were truly ground breakers... They toured throughout England, Scotland and Wales... Sadly, the tour ended abruptly when the company's patron died unexpectedly." -Classical Ballet News.

Signers include Thelma Hill (see, Notable American Women), an important New York dancer, and later dance teacher, who, in 1958, with Alvin Ailey, and others formed what would become the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1960, and the other founder, director Edward "Ward" Flemmyng. Also signatures of original members of the company, dancers and some future choreographers, Bernard Johnson, Candace Caldwell, Gene Hill Sagan, Graham Johnson, Guy (Ardie) Allison, Anthony Bassae, Theodore (Crum) Duncan, Elizabeth Thompson, Frances Jimenez, Cleo Quitman, Anthony Bassé, Yvonne McDowell, Carol Ann Wise, and two we can't identify. Some had danced with Joseph Rickard's First Negro Classic Ballet, with which the NYNB had merged in 1956. A rare survival of this pioneering ballet's only foreign tour [BTC#429755]

