



The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Playwrights' Producing Company records

1930s-1960

MssCol 2437

Processed by Julie Miller.

Summary

Creator: Playwrights' Producing Company

Title: Playwrights' Producing Company records

Date: 1930s-1960

Source: Transferred from the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 1961. However, additional records of the Company remain in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection.

Abstract: Press Department files (1930s-1960) of the Playwrights' Producing Company (also known as the Playwrights' Company), a theatrical producing company founded in 1938 by playwrights Maxwell Anderson, S.N. Behrman, Elmer Rice, Robert Sherwood, and Sidney Howard.

Preferred citation: Playwrights' Producing Company. Press Department Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Processing note: Processed by Julie Miller; machine-readable finding aid created by Melanie A. Yolles.

Separated Materials:

Additional records of the Playwrights' Producing Company can be consulted in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Related Materials:

Additional records of the Playwrights' Producing Company, known as the Playwrights' Company Records, 1938-1960 can be consulted at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Archives Division, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706.

Creator History

The Playwrights' Producing Company, a theatrical production company also known as the Playwrights'

Company, was founded in New York in 1938. The original group of partners were playwrights Maxwell Anderson, S.N. Behrman (withdrew in 1946), Elmer Rice, Robert Sherwood, and Sidney Howard (d. 1939). John R. Wharton supplied legal and management advice. Kurt Weill joined the Company in 1946 and Robert Anderson joined in 1953. The group produced plays written by its members and other playwrights. The Company ceased operations in 1960.

Scope and Content Note

The Playwrights' Producing Company Press Department Records consist of correspondence of William Fields and Walter Alford, 1940-1960, and Show Files, 1930s-1950s, along with biographical files and clippings.

Fields' and Alford's correspondence is with performers, magazines, newspapers, radio stations, photographers, charities, and others concerning arrangements for publicity appearances by such stars as Joan Fontaine, Deborah Kerr, Audrey Hepburn. There is not much correspondence with the Playwrights' Company partners. A typescript of a short biographical note about Lotte Lenya with accompanying letters by Kurt Weill, 1944, and Lenya, n.d., is included.

Show Files consist largely of press releases for each show. They also contain drafts of programs, cast lists, printed notices and programs, biographical questionnaires completed by performers, correspondence, memoranda, telegrams, and clippings. Shows represented include *Abe Lincoln In Illinois*, 1938; *Candle in the Wind*, 1941; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 1956-1957; *The Country Wife*, 1957; *Jezebel's Husband*, 1952; *Journey to Jerusalem*; *Juno*, (a musical adapted by Joseph Stein and Marc Blitzstein from Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*), 1959; *Miss Liberty*, 1949; *Look After Lulu*, 1959; *Ondine*, 1954; *The Rugged Path*, 1946; and *Small War on Murray Hill*, 1956. Some additional biographical questionnaires and biographical information solicited by the Press Department, and clippings are also included.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in three series: I. Correspondence II. Show Files III. Questionnaires/Biographical Information, Clippings

Key Terms

Subjects

Dancers -- United States
Dramatists, American
Singers -- United States
Theaters -- United States -- Production and direction

Names

Playwrights' Producing Company
Alford, Walter
Fields, William, 1949-

Container List

Series I. Correspondence, 1940-1960; n.d.

- b. 1 1940-1956
- b. 2 1957-1960, n.d.

Series II. Show Files, 1930s-1950s

- b. 3 *Abe Lincoln In Illinois*
- b. 3 *Camino Real*
- b. 3 *Candle In the Wind*
- b. 3 *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*
- b. 4 *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*
- b. 4 *Cheri*
- b. 4 *The Country Wife*
- b. 4 *Darkness At Noon*
- b. 4 *Flight to the West*
- b. 4 *The Fourposter*
- b. 4 *Jezebel's Husband*
- b. 4 *Journey to Jerusalem*
- b. 4 *Juno*
(Posters and other publicity material removed to Oversize Box 8)
- b. 5 *Juno*
- b. 5 *Lily Henry*
- b. 5 *Look After Lulu*
- b. 5 *Miss Liberty*
- b. 5 *Ondine*
- b. 5 *A Quiet Place*
- b. 6 *The Rugged Path*
- b. 6 *Small War on Murray Hill*
- b. 6 *The Talley Method*
- b. 6 *Time Remembered*
- b. 6 *Two on an Island*
- b. 6 *The Winner*

Series III. Questionnaires/Biographical Information, Clippings

- b. 6 Questionnaires/Biographical Information, Clippings