



## The New York Public Library Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

### **Julius Monk papers**

1906-1991 [bulk 1935-1979]

\*T-Mss 1995-023

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Monk, Julius, 1912-1995

**Title:** Julius Monk papers

**Date:** 1906-1991 [bulk 1935-1979]

**Size:** 5.9 linear feet (19 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Thomas Peacock, 1995.

**Abstract:** Julius Withers Monk was a producer and director of satirical revues and founder of the New York City nightclubs the Downstairs Room, Upstairs at the Downstairs, and Plaza 9-, where his revues were staged. The Julius Monk papers (1906-1991, bulk 1935-1979) document Monk's career through scripts, scores, clippings, programs, promotional material, and photographs.

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**Preferred citation:** Julius Monk papers, \*T-Mss 1995-023. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014 Some of the scrapbooks were disassembled and placed in folders.

### **Creator History**

Julius Withers Monk was a producer and director of satirical revues and founder of the New York City nightclubs the Downstairs Room, Upstairs at the Downstairs, and Plaza 9-, where his revues were staged. Monk was manager, master of ceremonies, and artistic director of his clubs. He also worked as a model.

Born in Spencer, North Carolina in 1912, Monk began his entertainment career as a pianist, performing in nightclubs and bars in New York and Europe. In 1941, he became manager of Le Ruban Bleu, a supper club in New York City. He opened the Downstairs Room in 1956 and Upstairs at the Downstairs in 1957; those two venues hosted the revues Four Below (1956), Take Five (1957), Demi-Dozen (1958),

Pieces of Eight (1959), and Seven Come Eleven (1961), among others. In 1962 he opened Plaza 9- in the Plaza Hotel, where his revues included Dime a Dozen (1962), Pick a Number XV (1965), and Four-in-Hand (1967). He closed Plaza 9- and retired from producing shows in 1968. Monk died in New York City in 1995.

## Scope and Content Note

The Julius Monk papers date from 1906 to 1991 (bulk 1935-1979). Approximately half the collection consists of scripts and scores for Monk's revues from the 1950s and 1960s. The rest of the collection consists of memorabilia and correspondence related to Monk's career, such as newspaper and magazine clippings, programs, promotional material, photographs, and letters. Most of this material is mounted in scrapbooks, but some is loose.

Material predating 1941 documents Monk's work as a pianist and nightclub manager in New York and Europe, especially in Paris. Material dating 1941 to 1968 chiefly concerns Monk's revues at Le Ruban Bleu, the Downstairs Room, Upstairs at the Downstairs, and Plaza 9-. One scrapbook documents Monk's 1953 revue, Stock in Trade, performed in Bermuda, and another scrapbook documents his 1963 Chicago revue, Struts and Frets. Material from after 1968 is mostly clippings regarding performers and writers who Monk worked with. Other material from after 1968 includes programs for revues, and a small number of letters from Monk's colleagues.

The earliest material in the collection is a set of colored costume designs from 1906, identified as being for "The Blue-Belles" in London.

The collection also contains scripts, scores, and lyrics for songs and sketches, most of which were featured in Monk's revues from 1956 to 1968. Unproduced songs and sketches are also present, as are some songs that were originally written for other productions. Scripts and scores are identified only by their title and author, and not by the revues that they pertained to. Sketch writers, composers, and lyricists represented in the collection include Michael Brown, William F. Brown, Dee Caruso, Lesley Davison, Clark Gesner, Bud McCreery, William Roy, and G. Wood. The majority of the scores are manuscripts. Scripts are mostly clean copies. The collection includes a shooting script for "Julius Monk's Plaza 9," a revue that was televised as an episode of NET Playhouse.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged in two categories: Memorabilia and Correspondence, which includes Scrapbooks, and Songs and Sketches.

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings  
Photographs  
Scores  
Scrapbooks  
Scripts

### Subjects

Comedy sketches  
Music-halls (Variety-theaters, cabarets, etc.) -- New York (State) -- New York  
Nightclubs -- New York (State) -- New York

Revues -- New York (State) -- New York  
Satirical songs

**Occupations**

Impresarios  
Theatrical producers and directors

**Names**

Plaza 9 (Nightclub : New York, N.Y.)  
Upstairs at the Downstairs (Nightclub : New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

### Memorabilia and Correspondence

- b. 9 f. 1-2 1906, 1960s  
Includes "The Blue-Belles" costume designs.
- b. 1 f. 1-12 1937-1970s
- b. 12 f. 8-9 1960s
- b. 2 f. 1-5 1964-1991

### Scrapbooks

- b. 10 1935-1955  
v. 1
- b. 11 1935-1989  
v. 1
- b. 12 1938-1944  
v. 1
- b. 9 f. 3-10 1943-1945
- b. 13 1947-1955  
v. 1
- b. 14 f. 1-7 1956-1958
- b. 15 f. 1-6 1958-1961
- b. 16 1958-1961  
v. 1
- b. 17 1959-1962  
v. 1
- b. 18 1962-1963  
v. 1
- b. 9 f. 11-14 1963-1964
- b. 19 1964-1965  
v. 1
- b. 15 f. 7-9 1965-1966
- b. 19 1966-1967  
v. 2
- b. 11 1967-1972  
v. 2
- b. 14 f. 8 Stock in Trade 1952-1953
- b. 18 Struts and Frets 1963  
v. 2

### Songs and Sketches

- b. 4 f. 1-14 1942-1960s
- b. 5 f. 1-11 1950-1968
- b. 6 f. 1-15 1950s-1968
- b. 7 f. 1-11 1950s-1968
- b. 8 f. 1-4 1950s-1968  
Includes "Julius Monk's Plaza 9" shooting script.
- b. 3 f. 1-9 1950s-1960s
- b. 12 f. 10-13 1950s-1960s
- b. 2 f. 6-13 1951-1960s