



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**William E. Hunt papers**

1862-1998 [bulk 1970-1995]

\*T-Mss 2000-043

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** Hunt, William E.

**Title:** William E. Hunt papers

**Date:** 1862-1998 [bulk 1970-1995]

**Size:** 8.4 linear feet (21 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Donated by the Estate of William E. Hunt, 2001.

**Abstract:** William E. Hunt (circa 1923-2000) was an American theater director. The collection dates from 1862 to 1998 and contains production files, scripts, scores, correspondence, programs, and professional files.

### Conditions Governing Access:

The collection contains audiovisual material. Inquiries regarding audiovisual material may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division ([theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org)). Audiovisual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

**Conditions Governing Use:** The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Theatre Division at [theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org).

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## Creator History

William E. Hunt (circa 1923-2000) was an American theater director. He received a bachelor's degree in English from Johns Hopkins University and attended the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York City. Hunt directed over 100 Off-Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, regional, and summer stock productions between the early 1950s and the 1990s. He ran the Red Barn Theatre in

Northport, New York from 1953 until 1967, and designed the Off-Broadway theater, Theatre East, with Betty King in 1955. From 1983 to 1984, he directed the Ivoryton Playhouse in Ivoryton, Connecticut.

In 1971, Hunt directed *Two by Tennessee*, a tryout production of Tennessee Williams's *Confessional* and *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow*, at the Maine Theatre Arts Festival. Among his more notable Off-Broadway productions are *Green Julia*; *The Sunshine Train*, for which he was nominated for an Obie Award; a dual production of James Prideaux's *Lemonade* and *The Autograph Hound*; a dual production of *Ludlow Fair* and *The Madness of Lady Bright* by Lanford Wilson; and *Friends and Enemies*, starring Eli Mintz. Between 1975 and 1985, Hunt conceived of and directed five productions of a musical revue about Jerome Kern. The production was staged under varying titles along the East Coast, including *Kern at the Gate* (1975 at the Village Gate), *Jerome Kern at the Hartman* (1978), *Just For Fun: The Music of Jerome Kern* (1979 at Off Center Theatre, New York City), and *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern* (1983 at the Ivoryton Playhouse and 1985 at the Harold Clurman Theatre).

William E. Hunt died in New York City in 2000.

## Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from 1862 to 1998 (bulk 1970-1995) and contains production files, scripts, scores, correspondence, programs, photographs, and posters for Off-Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, stock, and regional productions that Hunt directed or produced between 1975 and 1995. The collection also contains professional files.

Production files are arranged alphabetically by production title and document the planning, performance, and reception of plays and musicals Hunt directed or produced. Files may contain correspondence, contracts, budgets, invoices, stage plots, prop lists, synopses, song lyrics, programs, reviews, and publicity materials. Among the more robust files are those for *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern*; *A Loud Bang on June the First*; *Get Happy: The Music of Harold Arlen*; and *Variable Lengths*. Researchers interested in scripts, scores, and correspondence pertaining to a particular production should consult those respective file groups in addition to the production files.

Production files for the Jerome Kern musical revue are all filed under *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern*. Included are programs, reviews, and other publicity materials for *Kern at the Gate* (1975); *Jerome Kern at the Hartman* (1978); *Just For Fun: The Music of Jerome Kern* (1979); and *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern* at the Ivoryton Playhouse (1983), and the Harold Clurman Theater (1985). Budgets for the 1975 and 1985 productions are included, as well as box office statements for the 1985 production. Some materials in the files, such as song lists, scene outlines, lyrics, movement sequences, stage plots, and contact sheets, are undated and may pertain to more than one production of the show. Outgoing letters to lawyers regarding arbitration against the producer West Dobson during the 1985 production are present. Other correspondence relating to this and earlier productions is located in the correspondence files.

Scripts in the collection consist of annotated typescript and published plays that Hunt directed or produced. The scripts are sometimes accompanied by programs, letters from authors, or contracts. The published scripts are heavily annotated and include such titles as *Gigi*, *A Loss of Roses*, *Lovers and Other Strangers*, *No Time for Comedy*, *Sleuth*, *The Man*, and *Come Back, Little Sheba*. Among the typescripts are those for *Miss Stanwyck is Still in Hiding*, *Prague Spring*, *Wash the Spider Out*, *Roberta*, and *The Midnight Run of Alvin Blum*.

The bulk of the scores are for *Get Happy: The Music of Harold Arlen* and the Jerome Kern musical

revue. Scores for songs by Jerome Kern consist of manuscripts and printed, annotated scores for songs like "How'd You Like to Spoon With Me"; "Who? Sunny!"; "In Love In Vain"; "I Won't Dance"; and "Lovely to Look At." Scores for *Get Happy* are manuscript, printed and published scores, some of which are accompanied by light cues and lyrics. Other musicals represented through the scores include *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* and *Variable Lengths*.

Correspondence documents production planning through letters with authors, producers, publicity representatives, and rights holders of plays and music. The letters discuss royalty and rights agreements, script changes and rewrites, locating and securing venues, advertising agreements, and casting for shows that Hunt directed, such as *As Time Goes By*; *Clan Gathering*; *Spring at Marino*; *Perfect Pitch*; *Blest Quackers*; and various productions of the Jerome Kern musical revue. Some correspondence documents audience and critic receptions and ticket sales, such as that concerning *Ladies and Gentlemen*, *Jerome Kern*; *The Gin Game*; *Drawn to the Fire*; and *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*.

Professional files contain employment contracts, theater lease agreements, and membership materials for the Society of Stage Directors & Choreographers and the Actors' Equity Association. Also included are Hunt's resumes, biographical profiles, and unpublished writings. Materials that relate to the Ivoryton Playhouse consist of newspaper clippings and administrative materials dating from 1983 to 1984.

Programs in the collection are for shows that Hunt directed, most of which were Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway plays and musical revues. Photographs mostly consist of production stills and publicity photographs for *Perfect Pitch* and *Miss Stanwyck is Still in Hiding*. Also included are photographs of Hunt directing rehearsals and backstage, childhood photographs of Hunt, and headshots of actors. Clippings consist of one page of *The Programme: A Journal of the Drama, Music, Literature, Art, etc.* (volume VI, 1862) and two clippings from an 1887 periodical featuring opening night information for *Dandy Dick*. The collection also contains two opening night awards; posters; and original works of art, including a watercolor painting by Eddy Leight; and two collages by Clyde Wachsberger.

The collection contains audiovisual material primarily consisting of sound recordings of productions. Inquiries regarding audiovisual material may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division ([theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org)). Audiovisual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by format.

## Key Terms

### Titles

Get Happy: The Music of Harold Arlen  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scores  
Scripts

### Subjects

Theater -- Production and direction -- United States

### Occupations

Theatrical producers and directors

## Container List

### Production Files

- b. 1 f. 1 *As Time Goes By* 1982
- b. 1 f. 2 *Blest Quackers* 1993-1994
- b. 1 f. 3-4 *Get Happy: The Music of Harold Arlen* 1988  
Includes song lists, lyrics, cast biographies, press kits, and publicity contracts.
- b. 1 f. 5 *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* 1970s
- b. 1 f. 6-9 *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern* 1975-1987
- b. 2 f. 1 *Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern* 1985-1987
- b. 2 f. 2-5 *A Loud Bang on June the First* 1970-1985  
Includes a prompt book containing stage, sound, and light plots.
- b. 20 f. 4 *A Loud Bang on June the First* circa 1984  
Visual concept.
- b. 2 f. 6 *The Nuns* 1969, 1989
- b. 21 f. 2 *The Nuns* 1989  
Ground plan.
- b. 3 f. 1 *Prague Spring* 1996-1997
- b. 3 f. 2 *The Red Rose* 1987-1989
- b. 3 f. 3 *Roberta* 1973-1974
- b. 3 f. 4-7 *Variable Lengths* 1970-1979  
Includes poems, play excerpts, short narratives, songs, program proofs, cast biographies, scene synopses, movement sequences, and correspondence with rights holders.

### Scripts

- b. 4 f. 1-2 *Alphabet of Flowers* 1995
- b. 4 f. 3-4 *And All the People Rejoiced* 1970-1971  
Alternate title is *A Loud Bang on June the First*.
- b. 4 f. 5 *And the Boy Who Came to Leave* 1966
- b. 4 f. 6 *Another Dead Mother Play* 1992, 1994
- b. 4 f. 7 *The Anthem Sprinters* 1969
- b. 4 f. 8 *As Time Goes By* 1998
- b. 5 f. 1-2 *Blest Quackers* 1979-1993
- b. 5 f. 3 *A Bloodless Coup* 1990s
- b. 5 f. 4 *The Book of Malcolm* 1970s
- b. 5 f. 5 *Brighton Beach Memoirs* 1984
- b. 5 f. 6 *Catch!* circa 1988
- b. 5 f. 7 *Clan Gathering* 1990
- b. 5 f. 8-9 *The Cold Wind and the Warm* 1994
- b. 6 f. 1 *The Colonial Dudes* 1969
- b. 6 f. 2 *Come Back, Little Sheba* 1950
- b. 6 f. 3 *The Covenant* 1997
- b. 6 f. 4 *A Day For Surprises* 1970s
- b. 6 f. 5 *Diogenes* 1980

Scripts (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 6 *Drawn to the Fire* 1992
- b. 6 f. 7 *Fahrenheit 451* 1979
- b. 6 f. 8 *For Love or Money* 1948
- b. 6 f. 9 *George M!* circa 1976
- b. 6 f. 10 *Gigi* 1953
- b. 7 f. 1 *Gigi* 1953
- b. 7 f. 2 *The Great Conflagration of the Place* 1990s
- b. 7 f. 3 *Green Julia* 1966-1973
- b. 7 f. 4 *Harriet* 1945
- b. 7 f. 5 *High Time* 1974
- b. 7 f. 6 *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow and Confessional* 1970
- b. 7 f. 7 *It Only Hurts When I Laugh* 1968  
Alternate title is *The Midnight Run of Alvin Blum*.
- b. 7 f. 8 *Kind Sir* 1964, 1977
- b. 7 f. 9 *Kong in Love* 1990s
- b. 7 f. 10 *The Ladies of the Corridor* circa 1977
- b. 7 f. 11 *Lemonade and Autograph Hound* 1968
- b. 7 f. 12 *Life With Father* 1948
- b. 8 f. 1 *A Likely Story* circa 1968
- b. 8 f. 2 *A Loss of Roses* 1977
- b. 8 f. 3 *Lovers and Other Strangers* 1968
- b. 8 f. 4 *Ludlow Fair and Home Free* 1965
- b. 8 f. 5 *Make a Million* 1959
- b. 8 f. 6 *The Man* 1950
- b. 8 f. 7-8 *The Midnight Run of Alvin Blum* 1968
- b. 8 f. 9-10 *Miss Stanwyck is Still in Hiding* 1978-1980
- b. 9 f. 1 *The Mouse That Roared* 1963
- b. 9 f. 2 *The Moustrap* 1954, 1970s
- b. 9 f. 3 *Murder Among Friends* 1976-1977
- b. 9 f. 4 *Napoleon and Pius* circa 1981
- b. 9 f. 5-6 *No for an Answer* 1970s
- b. 9 f. 7-8 *No Time for Comedy* 1939, circa 1950
- b. 9 f. 9 *The Nuns* 1970
- b. 9 f. 10 *Pinter X Seven* 1991
- b. 10 f. 1 *Pinter X Seven* 1991
- b. 10 f. 2 *Plaza Suite* 1969, 1984
- b. 10 f. 3 *Postcards and The Bench* 1983
- b. 10 f. 4-6 *Prague Spring* 1977, 1996-1997
- b. 10 f. 7 *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* 1972
- b. 10 f. 8 *Really Rosie* 1983
- b. 10 f. 9 *Roberta* 1973

Scripts (cont.)

- b. 11 f. 1 *Roberta* 1973
- b. 11 f. 2 *Sailor, Beware!* 1958
- b. 11 f. 3 *Same Time, Next Year* 1975, 1983
- b. 11 f. 4 *Say Nothing* 1964
- b. 11 f. 5 *Sea Marks* 1974
- b. 11 f. 6 *Separate Rooms* 1942
- b. 11 f. 7 *The Sinking Houses* 1991
- b. 11 f. 8 *Sleuth* 1970, 1984
- b. 11 f. 9 *Spring at Marino* 1984
- b. 11 f. 10 *St. Louis Woman* 1946, 1980s
- b. 12 f. 1 *Stuffings* 1973
- b. 12 f. 2-3 *Wash the Spider Out* 1991-1994
- b. 12 f. 4 *Water Music* 1983
- b. 12 f. 5 *A Woman of No Importance* 1979
- b. 12 f. 6 *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit* 1981

Scores

- b. 12 f. 7-8 *Get Happy: The Music of Harold Arlen* 1988
- b. 19 f. 1-3 *Get Happy: The Music of Harold Arlen* 1988
- b. 20 f. 5 *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* 1970s
- b. 13 f. 1-2 *Jaques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* 1983
- Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerome Kern*
- b. 19 f. 4-6 1927, 1970s-1980s
- b. 13 f. 3-5 1970s-1980s
- b. 14 f. 1-3 1970s-1980s
- b. 14 f. 4 *Prague Spring* 1996-1997
- b. 20 f. 6-7 *That's Life* circa 1970s
- b. 20 f. 8 *Variable Lengths* circa 1979

b. 14 f. 5-7 Correspondence 1973-1996

b. 15 f. 1-3 Correspondence 1981-1997

Professional Files

- b. 15 f. 4-7 1964-1993  
Includes contracts, correspondence, and Hunt's resumes.
- b. 16 f. 1-7 1978-1998  
Includes Ivoryton Playhouse materials.
- b. 17 f. 1-4 Unpublished Writings

Programs

- b. 21 f. 5 1948, 1977
- b. 17 f. 5-6 1955-1979
- b. 20 f. 9 1973-1985
- b. 18 f. 1-3 1976-1996
- b. 18 f. 4-7 Photographs and Slides 1925-1997
- b. 20 f. 10-12 Photographs 1955-1984

- b. 21 f. 3 Photographs 1970, 1980s
  - o. 1 Posters 1966, 1978
- b. 21 f. 6-8 Posters 1968-1987
- b. 20 f. 1-3 Artwork 1970, undated
- b. 21 f. 4 Artwork undated
  - Awards 1964, 1967
  - T-Cabinet. Please email [theatre@nypl.org](mailto:theatre@nypl.org) to make an appointment to view.
- b. 21 f. 1 Clippings 1862, 1887