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Guide to the

Robert Weiner papers

1951-1975

*T-Mss 2014-173

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

Summary

Creator: Weiner, Robert, 1902-

Title: Robert Weiner papers

Date: 1951-1975

Size: 7.56 linear feet (18 boxes)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: Robert Weiner (circa 1935-1989) was a theatrical, film, and television producer, as well as a theatrical funder. The Robert Weiner papers, dating from 1951 to 1975, consist of his files for theatrical, film, and television projects. They contain correspondence, production records, financial records, programs, publicity materials, and photographs.

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Creator History

Robert Weiner (circa 1935-1989) was a theatrical, film, and television producer, as well as a theatrical funder. He began his career at the age of 14 as a copyboy for Variety magazine. After attending Bard College for one year, he transferred to Columbia University, graduating in 1957 with a degree in drama. Weiner worked as a press agent and assistant to the theater publicist Arthur Cantor during his college years, and after graduating from Columbia formed a company, Juvenia Productions Inc., with Herman Krawitz of the Metropolitan Opera Association.

While at Columbia, Weiner organized a syndicate devoted to investing in Broadway shows. Later, he was a member of an investment group called The Peanut Syndicate, and he consulted for many productions as an "angel wrangler" (a fundraiser who courts wealthy donors). Among the productions

he invested in or organized funding for were Auntie Mame (1956-1958), Shangri-La (1956), Tall Story (1959), The Desk Set (1955-1956), Long Day's Journey Into Night (1956-1958), Cat On A Hot Tin Roof (1955-1956), and New Girl In Town (1957-1958).

Weiner began his production career as a stage manager for a summer tour of No Time for Sergeants in 1958. He co-produced his first Broadway hit, Tall Story, in 1959. The following year, he joined The Happy Medium Theatre in Chicago, where he served as producer or co-producer of several shows, including Medium Rare (1960), and a revue, Put it in Writing (1961), which also went on tour. Back on Broadway, he was general manager and associate producer for Spoon River Anthology (1963-1964); general manager and associate producer of What Makes Sammy Run (1964-1965); general manager for A Day in the Death of Joe Egg (1968); and production supervisor for Gantry (1970). He also served as general manager for Double Entry (1961), an off-Broadway play.

Weiner began working in television and film in the 1960s, and stopped working in theater after 1970. He supervised the production of a television version of Spoon River Anthology for ABC in 1963, and was an associate producer for D'Antoni/Baer Television Productions from 1965 to 1966, as well as for Comedy Tonight, a series, in 1970. In 1973, he produced Ailey Celebrates Ellington, an episode of The CBS Festival of Lively Arts for Young People.

In film, he was production supervisor and casting director for Who Killed Teddy Bear (1965); associate producer of Bullitt (1968); technical advisor for John and Mary (1969); producer of the documentary Groupies (1970); production executive and casting supervisor for The French Connection (1971) and The Seven-Ups (1973); and casting supervisor for Tommy (1975).

Weiner also worked at the Yale School of Drama in 1966 and 1967 as producer and managing director of theater operations; in later years, he was a guest lecturer at the school. In the early 1980s, he worked for Joseph E. Seagram U.S.A. as coordinator of special promotional events for charities and the arts. In addition, he wrote for many New York and national publications. For six years he wrote a column for the The SoHo Weekly News under the byline Bob Weiner.

Robert Weiner died in 1989 of acute kidney failure.

Scope and Content Note

The Robert Weiner papers, dating from 1951 to 1975, consist of project files documenting his involvement with theatrical productions and films as a funder, fundraiser, producer, or casting director. They also include files for individuals or corporate entities he did business with or was employed by. The collection presents a detailed look at how theatrical productions were financed and produced from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s.

The files contain weekly or monthly letters and reports to investors on the financial status of productions; contracts; production correspondence; programs, publicity materials; clippings; personal letters; and photographs. Weekly financial statements, particularly for productions Weiner helped fund or acted as funding consultant, are a significant element of the files. Files for other plays for which Weiner worked more on the production side contain correspondence or other papers regarding technical or casting matters. The files also hold Weiner's written reviews of and commentary on Broadway and regional productions he attended; a biographical file (filed under Weiner's name) with resumes, clippings, and photographs; samples of contracts for various shows; and correspondence with the New York Theatre League regarding official policies on stage unions and salary requirements.

Projects with the most significant documentation include Auntie Mame, Put it in Writing, What Makes Sammy Run, Tall Story, and No Time for Sergeants.

Files arranged chronologically follow the alphabetical listing. Researchers should look in both the alphabetical and chronological listings for information on particular projects.

Arrangement: The papers are arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Business records
Correspondence
Financial statements
Photographs
Theater programs

Occupations

Film producers
Producers (managers)
Theatrical producers and directors

Subjects

Theater -- United States -- 20th century

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