



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Beni Montresor papers

1953-1999 [bulk 1970-1989]

*T-Mss 2004-011

Compiled by Weatherly Stephan, 2014

Summary

Creator: Montresor, Beni

Title: Beni Montresor papers

Date: 1953-1999 [bulk 1970-1989]

Size: 2.52 linear feet (6 boxes)

Source: Gift of Anna Ponti and Michael Frank, 2004.

Abstract: Beni Montresor (1926-2001) was an Italian-born artist, designer, writer, and director who worked in opera, dance, theatre, and film. The Beni Montresor papers date from 1953 to 1999 (bulk dates: 1970-1989) and contain correspondence, photographs, screenplays, scripts, programs, articles, and designs that document Montresor's multifaceted artistic career.

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Preferred citation: Beni Montresor papers, *T-Mss 2004-011. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Weatherly Stephan, 2014

Related Materials:

Beni Montresor designs, *T-Vim 2004-011. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator History

Beni Montresor (1926-2001) was an Italian-born artist, costume and set designer, director, and writer. Throughout his career, Montresor worked in various capacities on opera, dance, theatre, and film productions, in Italy, the United States, and throughout Europe and South America. After completing his education during World War II, Montresor began his career as a film and theatrical set designer, working on European stage productions and with noted film directors Federico Fellini, Vittorio De Sica and Roberto Rossellini.

Montresor came to the United States in 1960 and was commissioned by Gian Carlo Menotti to design sets and costumes for a production of Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* (1961) and the American premiere of Menotti's *The Last Savage* (1964). Thereafter, Montresor primarily worked in opera and ballet in the United States, designing costumes and sets for the New York City Opera and Metropolitan Opera in productions such as *La Gioconda* (1966) and *Esclarmonde* (1983). He also designed for Broadway productions, including *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965) and *The Marriage of Figaro* (1985). Montresor began writing screenplays in the 1970s, and directed and wrote the films *Pilgrimage* (1972), *The Golden Mass* (1975), and *Daybreak* (1984).

Beni Montresor died in 2001 in Verona, Italy.

Scope and Content Note

The Beni Montresor papers date from 1953 to 1999 (bulk dates: 1970-1989) and contain correspondence, photographs, screenplays, scripts, programs, articles, and designs that document Montresor's multifaceted artistic career.

The collection includes Montresor's Tony Award nominations for best costume design and best scenic design for *The Marriage of Figaro*. A small amount of correspondence from late in Montresor's career shows his efforts to promote his production of *Othello* and search for new theatre and opera projects in the late 1990s. Designs are limited to costume sketches, front elevations, and floor plans for the operas *Iphigenie* and *Pelleas et Melisande*.

Photographs date from the 1960s to 1999 and depict the final products of Montresor's costume and set designs in opera, dance, and theatre. One set of negatives shows scenes from the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Cinderella*, with Montresor's costume and scenic designs featured. Photostat duplicates of Montresor's original drawings are also included. Most photographs from the 1960s are housed in an album with production names noted on each page.

Programs originate from Montresor's scenic and costume design work for opera, dance, and theatre throughout his career. Programs for exhibits of Montresor's designs are also included, along with promotional material for screenings of Montresor's films. The productions represented in the programs are primarily in Italy and the United States, with some productions from Switzerland, Germany, and Spain. Interfiled with the programs are published reviews of his work in opera, stage, and film productions as well as feature articles about Montresor.

Screenplays and scripts hold draft and revised scripts written by Montresor for theatre and film projects, many of which were not produced. Most of the scripts and screenplays date between the 1970s and 1990s. Translations of the scripts into French, English, and Italian are often included.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by genre or document type: Correspondence, Designs, Photographs, Programs, Screenplays and Scripts, and Tony Nominations.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Costume design

Elevations (orthographic projections)
Floor plans
Photographs
Programs (documents)
Screenplays
Scripts

Subjects

Motion picture plays, Italian
Opera -- 20th century
Opera -- Stage-setting and scenery
Theaters -- Stage-setting and scenery

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence 1989-1999
- b. 1 f. 2 Designs 1993-1994
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- Programs
- b. 1 f. 5-8 1953-1970s
- b. 2 f. 1-6 1970s-1980s
- b. 3 f. 1-6 1980s-1990s
- Screenplays and Scripts
- b. 4 f. 1 *Amorous Deceptions* 1990s
- b. 4 f. 2 *Il Cerchio Delgi Dei* 1983
- b. 4 f. 3-4 *Daybreak (Cerimonia d'Amore)* 1980s
- b. 4 f. 5 *Enchantments* 1990s
- b. 4 f. 6 *The Estate* 1990s
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- b. 4 f. 8 *The Furies* 1980s
- b. 5 f. 1 *Giovanni of the Archetti in Love with St. Michael* 1990s
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- b. 5 f. 3-4 *In the House of the Lord* 1980s
- b. 5 f. 5 *The Matriarch* 1990s
- b. 5 f. 6 *Le Miel Noir/Il Miele Nero* 1975
- b. 5 f. 7 *Le Sentiment du Matin* 1980s
- b. 5 f. 8 *The Star of Texas* 1993
- b. 6 f. 1 *La Strada* 1970s
- b. 6 f. 2 *Villa Verdi* 1990s
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