



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Joseph Maher papers**

1960-1998

\*T-Mss 1999-018

Processed by Elisabeth Elkind.

## Summary

**Creator:** Maher, Joseph, 1933-1998

**Title:** Joseph Maher papers

**Date:** 1960-1998

**Size:** 2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of his agent, Joan Scott in May 1999.

**Abstract:** Photographs, programs, clippings and correspondence document the career of stage, screen and television actor, Joseph Maher.

**Physical Location:** \*T-Mss 1999-018

### Conditions Governing Access:

Photocopying prohibited.

**Conditions Governing Use:** For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

**Preferred citation:** Joseph Maher Papers, \*T-Mss 1999-018. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Elisabeth Elkind; Machine-readable finding aid created by Elisabeth Elkind.

### Separated Materials:

Audio and video cassettes that came with the Joseph Maher papers were transferred to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound.

Joseph Maher feature clips, tributes, etc., 3 VHS  
*Anything But Love*(television), 1 VHS  
Theatre in America, *Forget-Me-Not-Lane*, 2 VHS  
*Gimme a Break*, 1 VHS  
*Laurie Hill*(television), 1992 and n.d., 2 VHS  
*Moonlighting*(television), 2 VHS  
*Old Reliable*(television), 1988, 1 VHS  
*Second Chance*, 1 VHS  
*St. Elsewhere*(television), 1 VHS  
Two television pilots, 1992-1995, 2 VHS

*The Hostage*, 1983 Nov., at the Long Wharf Theatre, 8 cassettes (may be dups)  
*The Hostage*, 1983 Nov., at the Long Wharf Theatre, 3 reels  
*I, Leonardo*, 1 reel

## Creator History

Irish-born actor Joseph Maher had a prolific and illustrious career on stage, screen and television. Best known for his comedic work, especially in the plays of Joe Orton, he received three Tony nominations for supporting actor for *Spokesong*(1979), Tom Stoppard's *Night and Day*(1980), with Maggie Smith and Orton's *Loot* (1986), as well as an Olivier Award Nomination for Best Actor in 1991 for *What the Butler Saw*, also by Orton. Memorable film roles include Warren Beatty's butler in *Heaven Can Wait* and the bishop in *Sister Act* with Whoopi Goldberg. His television work included appearances on *Seinfeld* and *Thirtysomething*.

Joseph Sylvester Maher was born on December 29, 1933, the youngest child of Delia and Joseph Maher, a schoolteacher, in Westport, Galway, Ireland. He emigrated to Canada in 1956 and after working for an oil company became an actor rather unintentionally and without much formal training. He made his stage debut in Shakespeare and then toured with the Canadian Players for three years before making his New York debut as an IRA officer in Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* with Julie Harris in 1962. Other early theater credits were with Dustin Hoffman and Al Pacino. In later years Maher often played comic authority figures such as befuddled doctors and detectives.

Joseph Maher was also a playwright and occasionally a director. His plays include *Dance for Me*, *Simeon*, produced in 1979 and *Down All the Days*. He died of a brain tumor on July 17, 1998 at the age of 64.

## Scope and Content Note

The bulk of the collection is files related to productions in which Joseph Maher appeared as an actor. Materials include correspondence, photographs, programs, publicity and clippings, as well as a few contracts, scripts, songs and cast lists. There is also a series of scripts by Joseph Maher, a few scripts by others with an uncertain connection to Maher, and a series of miscellaneous personal papers, primarily photos, correspondence and tributes from the memorial service in his honor. The papers document Maher's successful career as both a starring and a supporting actor on stage, screen and television.

**Arrangement:** Series I. Personal papers Series II. Joseph Maher: Actor Series III. Joseph Maher:

Playwright Series IV. Scripts by others

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Acting

Character actors and actresses

Motion picture actors and actresses

Television actors and actresses

Theater

### **Occupations**

Actors

### **Names**

Maier, Joseph, 1933-1998

## Container List

### Series I. Personal papers 1964-1998, n.d (9 folders)

Includes biographical information on Joseph Maher, incoming letters on both personal and professional matters, photos, including headshots, snapshots, family photos and photos with other actors, souvenir and autographed programs, memorial service program and tributes, and condolence letters and obituaries.

- b. 1 f. 1 **Biographical information on Joseph Maher 1972-1992**  
Includes credits, clippings and certificate of naturalization.
- b. 1 f. 2 **Incoming letters to Joseph Maher 1964-1990**  
On both personal and professional matters.
- b. 1 f. 3 **Photographs of Joseph Maher n.d.**  
Headshots, snapshots and unidentified productions.
- b. 1 f. 4 **Photographs of Joseph Maher with other actors n.d.**  
Includes Ellen Barkin, Ellen DeGeneres, Shelly Duvall, Anne Jackson, Christopher Reeve and Maggie Smith.
- b. 1 f. 5 **Snapshots of Brackloon, Ireland n.d.**  
Includes family members, probably parents, sisters and unidentified, some with Maher as a young man. Also scenery and a home.
- b. 1 f. 6 ***Program for Virginia by Edna O'Brien, inscribed to Joseph Maher by Maggie Smith 1981***
- b. 1 f. 7 **Program for Tony Awards 1986**  
Maher was nominated for best supporting actor for *Looftin* 1986.
- b. 1 f. 8 **Unemployment claim forms 1975-1980**
- b. 1 f. 9 **Memorial service program and tributes, obituaries and condolence letters 1998**

### Series II. Joseph Maher: Actor 1960-1998 (4 boxes)

Consists primarily of photographs, programs, publicity and clippings, but also some correspondence, contracts, scripts, songs, cast lists, call sheets and ephemera, documenting Maher's career as an actor on stage, film and television.

Alphabetical by production title

- b. 1 f. 10 ***Absent Friends by Alan Ayckbourn 1977***  
Program and clippings from the American premiere at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven. Cast included Anne Jackson, Eli Wallach and Joseph Maher.
- b. 1 f. 11 ***Afore Night Come by David Rudkin 1975***  
Includes letters, photos, programs, publicity and clippings from the American premiere at the Long Wharf Theatre. Joseph Maher played the tramp.
- b. 1 f. 12 ***Antigone adapted by Jean Anouilh 1970***  
Clippings of the production at the Charles Playhouse in Boston. Joseph Maher played Creon.
- b. 1 f. 13 ***Anything But Love (television) 1989-1990***  
Correspondence, publicity, photographs and clippings. Cast included Jamie Lee Curtis.
- b. 1 f. 14 ***The Applicant (film) n.d.***  
Photos of Joseph Maher.
- b. 1 f. 15 ***Billy Budd by Herman Melville, adapted by Louis O. Coxé and Robert Chapman 1984***  
Program, publicity and clippings from the production at the Gene Dynarski Theatre in Hollywood. Joseph Maher played the Captain.

Series II. Joseph Maher: Actor (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 16 *Black Angel by Michael Cristofer* 1976-1978  
Photos, programs, publicity and clippings from the production at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in which Joseph Maher starred.
- b. 1 f. 17 *Blackout (television: PBS)* n.d.  
Photographs of Joseph Maher.
- b. 1 f. 18 *Canadian Players* 1960-1961, n.d.  
Photos of Joseph Maher. Includes a scene from *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Bertolt Brecht.
- b. 1 f. 19 *The Contractor by David Storey* 1973-1974  
Letter, photos, programs, publicity and clippings from the New York production.
- b. 1 f. 20 *Dance of Death by August Strindberg* 1973  
Photos and clippings from the Long Wharf Theatre production.
- b. 1 f. 21 *Days in the Trees by Marguerite Duras* 1976  
Correspondence, contract, photo, program, publicity and clippings from the Circle in the Square production starring Mildred Dunnock and Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 1 *Dear Daddy by Denis Cannan* 1981-1982  
Letter from the author, study guide, program and clippings for the American premiere production at the Philadelphia Drama Guild starring Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 2 *Dear Liar by Jerome Kilty based on the correspondence of Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Patrick Campbell* 1967  
Script, photos, programs, publicity and clippings for the traveling production starring Jacqueline Brookes and Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 3 *Eh? by Henry Livings* 1966-1967  
Letter, program and clippings from the Circle in the Square production. Cast included Dustin Hoffman and Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 4 *84 Charing Cross Road by Helene Hanff* 1982-1983  
Correspondence, contracts, photos, programs, publicity and clippings for the New York production at the Nederlander Theatre starring Ellen Burstyn and Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 5 *84 Charing Cross Road by Helene Hanff* n.d.  
Script marked for the part of Frank Doel played by Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 6 *The Entertainer by John Osborne* 1994-1995  
Correspondence, photos, programs, study guide and clippings from the Long Wharf Theatre production with Joseph Maher in the title role.
- b. 2 f. 7 *Entertaining Mr. Sloane by Joe Orton* 1968-1981  
Correspondence, photos, programs and clippings from the New York production at the Cherry Lane Theatre with Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 8 *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour by Tom Stoppard with music by Andre Previn* 1986 Dec.  
Program from the Los Angeles Philharmonic production with Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 9 *The Evil That Men Do (film)* 1983-1984  
Cast and crew lists, publicity and clippings. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 10 *For Pete's Sake (film)* 1973-1974  
Letter, shooting call sheet, photo, clipping and ephemera. Cast included Barbra Streisand and Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 11 *Forget-Me-Not Lane by Peter Nichols* 1973  
Photos, program and clippings from the American premiere production at the Long Wharf Theatre with Joseph Maher.
- b. 2 f. 12 *Forget-Me-Not Lane (television: PBS)* 1975  
Fan mail, photos, publicity and clippings.
- b. 3 f. 1 *Guthrie Theater* 1971  
Programs and clipping from summer repertory productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Series II. Joseph Maher: Actor (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 2 *Hadrian VII by Peter Luke* 1971  
Programs and clippings from the travelling production. Joseph Maher was in the cast.
- b. 3 f. 3 *Heaven Can Wait (film)* 1978  
Photos and clippings from the Warren Beatty film with Julie Christie. Joseph Maher played the butler.
- b. 3 f. 4 *The Hostage by Brendan Behan* 1983  
Songs, photos, programs, contact sheet and clippings. Joseph Maher directed and starred in this production at the Long Wharf Theatre.
- b. 3 f. 5 *An Inspector Calls by J. B. Priestley* 1993  
Cards to Joseph Maher from other cast members, program and clipping from the Williamstown Theatre Festival production. Maher played the Inspector.
- b. 3 f. 6 *IQ (film)* 1994  
Cards, photos and clippings. Joseph Maher was in the cast.
- b. 3 f. 7 *Ivy Day by Mary Manning* n.d.  
Clippings from the Theatre Company of Boston production.
- b. 3 f. 8 *Juno and the Paycock by Sean O'Casey* 1973-1974  
Fan letter, photos, programs, publicity and clippings from the production starring Joseph Maher and Geraldine Fitzgerald at the Long Wharf Theatre. Also program and clipping from the 1974 production at the Mark Taper Forum with Walter Matthau and Maureen Stapleton.
- b. 3 f. 9 *Little Gloria...Happy at Last (television)* 1982  
Photographs of Joseph Maher with Barnard Hughes, Glynis Johns and Angela Lansbury.
- b. 3 f. 10 *Live Like Pigs by John Arden* 1965  
Photos and clippings from the Theatre Company of Boston's production at the Actors' Playhouse in New York. Cast includes Joseph Maher.
- b. 3 f. 11 *The Local Stigmatic by Heathcote Williams* 1969-1992  
Letters, script page, photos, program, publicity and clippings from the New York production at the Actors Playhouse. Cast included Al Pacino and Joseph Maher. Was a play and then a film.
- b. 3 f. 12 *Long Day's Journey into Night by Eugene O'Neill* n.d.  
Photos and clipping. Joseph Maher starred in this production at a Minnesota high school.
- b. 3 f. 13 *Loot by Joe Orton* 1986  
Photos, programs and clippings from the New York production. Joe Maher received a best featured actor nomination for his performance.
- b. 3 f. 14 *Orton revivals: Loot and Entertaining Mr. Sloane* 1987  
Program and clippings from production at the Mark Taper Forum.
- b. 3 f. 15 *The National Health by Peter Nichols* 1974  
Photos, program and clippings from the Long Wharf Theatre production. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 3 f. 16 *Night and Day by Tom Stoppard* 1979-1980  
Photos, programs and clippings from productions in New York and Washington. Also a birthday card from Maggie Smith who starred in the play with Joseph Maher.
- b. 3 f. 17 *The Old Reliable (television) by P. G. Wodehouse* 1988, n.d.  
Photos and clippings. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 4 f. 1 *Pantaglieze by Michel de Ghelderode* 1972  
Photos, programs, publicity and clippings. Joseph Maher played the title role at the Alley Theatre in Houston.
- b. 4 f. 2 *The Price* n.d.  
Photos of a Dublin production.
- b. 4 f. 3 *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie adapted by Jay Allen from the book by Muriel Spark* 1968-1969  
Photos and clippings from the Broadway and pre-Broadway production. Cast included Zoe Caldwell and Joseph Maher.

Series II. Joseph Maher: Actor (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 4 *The Rapist by Michael Kenyon* 1977  
Correspondence on film rights.
- b. 4 f. 5 *The Royal Family by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber* 1975  
Cards including two from Eva LeGallienne, photos, programs and clippings from the revival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Helen Hayes Theatre and the Kennedy Center. Cast included LeGallienne, Rosemary Harris and Joseph Maher.
- b. 4 f. 6 *Saint Joan by George Bernard Shaw* 1974  
Programs and clippings from the production of the Center Theatre Group at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 4 f. 7 San Diego National Shakespeare Festival at the Old Globe Theatre 1967  
Photos and clippings.
- b. 4 f. 8 *Savages by Christopher Hampton* 1974-1976  
Correspondence, photos, programs, publicity and clippings from the American premiere production at the Mark Taper Forum. Joseph Maher was in the cast.
- b. 4 f. 9 *Savages by Christopher Hampton* 1976-1977  
Correspondence with the playwright, contracts, programs, publicity and clippings from the Xingu Production at the Hudson Theatre Guild. Cast member Joseph Maher was instrumental in bringing the play to New York.
- b. 4 f. 10 *Sister Act (film)* 1992  
Photos of Joseph Maher, Whoopi Goldberg and Maggie Smith.
- b. 4 f. 11 *Spokesong by Stewart Parker* 1978-1988  
Cards from the playwright to Joseph Maher, songs, photos, program and clippings from the production at the Long Wharf Theatre. Maher played a trick cyclist..
- b. 5 f. 1 Stratford, Connecticut: American Shakespeare Festival Theatre 1969-1972  
Letter, photos, programs and clippings for productions with Joseph Maher in various roles.
- b. 5 f. 2 Syracuse Repertory 1964  
Photos and clippings from productions with Joseph Maher in various roles.
- b. 5 f. 3 *Tales from Hollywood by Christopher Hampton* 1982  
Letters to Joseph Maher, photos, programs and clippings from the production at the Mark Taper Forum. Maher played Heinrich Mann.
- b. 5 f. 4 *Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare* n.d.  
Photographs, probably fell out of folder titled, "Shrew--My production."
- b. 5 f. 5 *There's One in Every Marriage adapted by Suzanne Grossmann and Paxton Whitehead from the play by Georges Feydeau* 1972  
Programs and clippings from the production by the Stratford National Theatre of Canada in New York. Joseph Maher was in the cast.
- b. 5 f. 6 *Those Lips, Those Eyes (film)* 1980  
Photos include Joseph Maher.
- b. 5 f. 7 *Under the Rainbow (film)* 1981  
Photos include Joseph Maher and Eve Arden.
- b. 5 f. 8 *What the Butler Saw by Joe Orton* 1989  
Photos, programs and clippings from the New York production at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 5 f. 9 *What the Butler Saw by Joe Orton* 1990-1991  
Cards, photos, programs and clippings from the London production. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 5 f. 10 *Who's Who in Hell by Peter Ustinov* 1974  
Correspondence, contract, programs and clippings. Cast included Joseph Maher.
- b. 5 f. 11 *Revues* 1965-1966  
Scripts, program and clippings.
- b. 5 f. 12 *Reviews, television, miscellaneous* 1998, n.d.

Series III. Joseph Maher: Playwright 1972-1979, n.d (13 folders)

Consists of scripts by Joseph Maher with few if any revisions. Also a small amount of correspondence, programs and reviews.

Alphabetical by play title

- b. 5 f. 13 *Dance for Me, Simeon by Joseph Maher* 1976  
Clean typescript.
- b. 5 f. 14 *Dance for Me, Simeon by Joseph Maher* 1976-1979  
Correspondence, photos, programs, publicity and clippings.
- b. 6 f. 1 *Down All the Days by Joseph Maher* 1972  
Clean typescript.
- b. 6 f. 2 *Down All the Days by Joseph Maher* 1976  
Letter, copyright forms and script for new scene.
- b. 6 f. 3 *End and Sanctum by Joseph Maher* 1972  
Program and reviews.
- b. 6 f. 4 *Jeppa a screenplay by Joseph Maher* n.d.  
Mostly clean typescript with some directions in red.
- b. 6 f. 5 *Oganvoy by Joseph Maher* n.d.  
Clean typescript and program
- b. 6 f. 6 *An Old Woman Remembers Her Children, a monologue by Joseph Maher*  
n.d.  
Photocopy of clean typescript. "For Mildred Dunnock."
- b. 6 f. 7 *On the Plank, The Pedestal, The Survival of the Bourbon Man and End, four one-act plays by Joseph Maher* n.d.  
Mostly clean typescript. Later name for *The Pedestal: Sanctum--an Especially Private Place*.
- b. 6 f. 8 *On the Plank, The Pedestal, The Survival of the Bourbon Man and End, four one-act plays by Joseph Maher* n.d.  
Mostly clean typescript with some notes. Later name for *The Pedestal: Sanctum--an Especially Private Place*. *The Survival of the Bourbon Man* is mentioned on the title page, but script is not included.
- b. 6 f. 9 *The Parting Sequence by Joseph Maher* n.d.  
Typescript with a few deletions.
- b. 6 f. 10 *Ulysses, adaptation by Joseph Maher, from the book by James Joyce* n.d.  
Typescript with revisions and cues.
- b. 6 f. 11 *Wee Boy by Joseph Maher* n.d.  
Typescript story with a few revisions.

Series IV. Scripts by others 1992, n.d (4 folders)

Consists of scripts with unknown production history found in the papers. Scripts that came with other materials such as programs, photographs and clippings that documented their production are filed in either Joseph Maher: Actor or Joseph Maher: Playwright.

Alphabetical by title

- b. 6 f. 12 *Imperfect Love by Brandon Cole* 1992 Sept.  
Clean typescript.
- b. 6 f. 13 *The Mighty Reservoy by Peter Terson* n.d.  
Mostly clean photocopied typescript.
- b. 6 f. 14 *Minnie and Henry "On the Waterfront", authorship unknown* n.d.  
Photostat with a few revisions.

Series IV. Scripts by others (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 15     *The Old Tune by Samuel Beckett* n.d.  
Mostly clean typescripts. One is underlined.