



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Charles Gnys papers**

1950s-1970s

\*T-Mss 1999-015

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Gnys, Charles, d. 1986

**Title:** Charles Gnys papers

**Date:** 1950s-1970s

**Size:** 3.2 linear feet (7 boxes, 2 volumes)

**Source:** Donated by Perry Knowlton, 1999.

**Abstract:** Charles Gnys (d. 1986) was a director and manager of the Playwrights Unit. The Charles Gnys papers hold agreements, clippings, letters, notebooks, photographs, playbills, and scripts.

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015

## Creator History

Charles Gnys (d. 1986) was a director and manager of the Playwrights Unit (founded in 1961 by Richard Barr, Edward Albee and Charles Woodward) that offered new playwrights the opportunity to present their work before an audience without the pressure of a commercial production. From this experience, the playwrights would acquire learning skills on how to develop their plays for an audience. Philip Magdalany, a critically acclaimed playwright, received early support and advice from the Playwrights Unit.

During the 1960s through the 1970s, Gnys directed and produced mostly Off-Off Broadway productions. He also directed the rock opera *The Survival of St. Joan* that was created by Smoke Rise (brothers Gary Ruffin, Hank Ruffin and Stan Ruffin). This production ran first as a concert at the Playwrights Unit, briefly followed by the Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo, and the Anderson Theatre in New York City.

In the late 1970s, Gnys become the president of Curtis Brown Management, an agency that represents actors.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The papers, dated 1950s to 1970s, hold agreements, clippings, letters, notebooks, photographs, playbills, and scripts that document the career of Charles Gnys.

The bulk of the collection is represented by the production *The Survival of St. Joan*. The files hold multiple scripts in completed or draft form; agreements; lyrics, notebooks, playbills, photographs, and slides of the graphics.

Gnys's work as a professional writer was represented by the script *Teddy Bear*, co-written by the playwright Philip Magdalany (d. 1986). The collection holds several letters written by Magdalany while he was abroad in London. The collection also holds several of Gnys's notebooks and drama papers written while as a student at Catholic University.

Other scripts in the collection were previously submitted to Gnys for consideration for future productions.

Address books, business agreements, assorted playbills and Gnys's resumes complete the collection.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Certificates  
Photographs  
Playbills  
Scripts

### **Occupations**

Directors (performing arts)  
Managers

### **Subjects**

Experimental theater  
Experimental theater -- New York (State) -- New York  
Off-Broadway theater

### **Geographic Names**

New York (N.Y.)

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Letters 1972-1974  
*(The) Survival of St. Joan*
- b. 1 f. 2-4 Agreements 1970-1972
- b. 1 f. 5-6 Album Information 1970-1972
- b. 1 f. 7 Graphics 1970-1972
- b. 1 f. 8-10 Lyrics 1970-1972
- b. 2 f. 1 Notebook
- b. 1 f. 11 Notes c. 1970
- b. 2 f. 2 Photographs c. 1970
- b. 2 f. 3 Playbills 1970-1972
- b. 2 f. 4 Reviews 1972  
Scripts  
1970-1972
- b. 2 f. 4-9 1970-1972
- b. 3 f. 1-3 1970-1972
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- b. 3 f. 4 Miscellaneous Rewrites 1970-1972
- b. 3 f. 5 Studio Acre Theatre. Blueprint
- b. 3 f. 6-10 Smoke Rise 1970-1972
- b. 3 f. 11 Slides from Production
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- b. 7 f. 1 Slide Cues
- b. 4 f. 1-8 Gnys, Charles and Magdalany, Philip. *Teddy Bear*
- b. 4 f. 9 Writings. Various by Gnys
- b. 4 f. 10 *Burr, Anne. One in Four*
- b. 4 f. 11 *Hartman, Jan. Eine Kleine Nachtmusik or A Little Night Music*
- b. 4 f. 12 *Jacobs, Fred Rue. Well Endowed* 1970  
Jacobson, Steven M
- b. 4 f. 13 *Germes*
- b. 4 f. 14 *Who's There?*
- b. 5 f. 1 *Kerbs, Charles. The Friend*
- b. 5 f. 2 *Knee, Allen. Ephrain*  
Litvack, Barry
- b. 5 f. 3 *Slatova, or the Monster's Monster's*
- b. 5 f. 4 *Whatever Happens is Gonna Happen...*
- b. 5 f. 5 *Sabath, Bernard. Andy and Sheila* 1978
- b. 5 f. 6 *Smith, Milburn. Bloodsport*
- b. 5 f. 7 *Swan, Jon. Actor's Warm Up*
- b. 5 f. 8 Sydovich, Tom. Untitled Script
- b. 5 f. 9 *Trainer, David. Mr. Curator's Proposal*

Writings. Various by Gnys (cont.)

Wallace, Ian

b. 5 f. 10 *Blackbird*

b. 5 f. 11 *Folio*

Scripts by Other Playwrights

b. 5 f. 12-15 Charles Gnys University Papers 1953-1958

b. 6 f. 1-3 Address Books

b. 6 f. 4 Melinson, Jeff 1970s  
Agreements.

b. 6 f. 5 Osborne, Christian 1970s  
Agreements.

Assorted Files