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Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

William Matchett papers on the Poets' Theatre

1951-1994

*T-Mss 1995-016

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2015

Summary

Creator: Matchett, William H., 1923-

Title: William Matchett papers on the Poets' Theatre

Date: 1951-1994

Size: .46 linear feet (2 boxes)

Source: Donated by William Matchett, 1986 and 1994.

Abstract: William H. Matchett (b. 1923) is a poet. He was a founding member of the Poets' Theatre, and served as its treasurer between 1952 and 1954. The Poets' Theatre, which was founded in 1950 in Cambridge, Massachusetts and incorporated in 1952, produced readings and performances of poetry and poetic drama. Matchett's papers on the Poets' Theatre include promotional material, clippings, correspondence, and meeting minutes of the theater company, dating from 1951 to 1994. The bulk of the materials date from 1952 to 1956. Promotional material includes mailings and posters for works by poets such as Dylan Thomas, Archibald MacLeish, and W.B. Yeats. The posters and mailings include art by Gardner Cox and by Edward Gorey, who was a member of the company's executive committee. The collection contains Matchett's correspondence regarding Poets' Theatre business, mostly dating from 1952 to 1955. The correspondence includes letters from Louis Simpson and Dudley Fitts regarding manuscripts they were working on for the theater; a 1994 letter from Matchett to the editor of Harvard Magazine, discussing Lyon Phelps' role in founding the Poets' Theatre; and copies of Matchett's 1958 and 1959 correspondence with Alison Lurie regarding her memoir of Bunny Lang and the creation of the Poets' Theatre. Meeting minutes date from 1952 to 1954 and document the company's administrative decisions and the selection of productions. In addition to Matchett, Phelps, Gorey, and Lurie, the meetings included Bunny Lang, Sonia Grant, Molly Howe, and Richard Eberhart, among others.

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Key Terms

Subjects

Theatrical companies -- Massachusetts -- Cambridge
Verse drama

Names

Poets' Theatre (Cambridge, Mass.)

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-8 1951-1967, 1977, 1994
- b. 2 f. 1-6 Posters 1952-1955