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Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Marilyn Cooper papers

1930s-2006

*T-Mss 2008-013

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2014

Summary

Creator: Cooper, Marilyn

Title: Marilyn Cooper papers

Date: 1930s-2006

Size: 7.3 linear feet (19 boxes)

Source: Donated by Kristine Nevins, acting for Marilyn Cooper, 2008.

Abstract: Marilyn Cooper (1934-2009) was a Tony Award winning American actress working primarily in theatre and television from the mid-1950s to the late 1990s. The Marilyn Cooper papers document Cooper's professional life with scripts, photographs, programs, publicity materials, correspondence, sheet music, and other production materials; and her personal life with photographs, correspondence, and elementary school, high school, and college yearbooks, photographs, and scrapbooks.

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Processing note: Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2014

Creator History

Marilyn Cooper was born Harriet Marilyn Cooper in the Bronx, New York on December 14, 1934. She graduated from Rhodes Preparatory School in Manhattan in 1951 and from New York University in 1954. At NYU she was active in many organizations, including the dramatic group, Square Playhouse. Cooper's interest in performing began when she saw her aunt, the actress and singer Belle Baker, perform.

Cooper's performing career began with chorus roles in the original Broadway production of *Mr. Wonderful* (1956) and a City Center revival of *Brigadoon* (1957). She quickly graduated to featured roles in the original productions of two classic musicals, earning praise and attention for her

performances as Rosalia in *West Side Story* (1957) and Agnes in *Gypsy* (1959).

Cooper's first starring role was in the Harold Rome musical *I Can Get it for You Wholesale* (1963). She also appeared in the musicals *Hallelujah, Baby!* (1967), *Golden Rainbow* (1968), *Mame* (as a replacement cast member in 1969), *Two by Two* (1970), a revival of *On the Town* (1971), *Working* (1978), and *Ballroom* (1978). Cooper also appeared in the musical *Nefertiti*, which closed out of town in 1977. In 1981 Cooper played the role of Jan Donovan in *Peter Stone*, John Kander and Fred Ebb's musical version of *Woman of the Year*, starring Lauren Bacall. Cooper appeared for 10 minutes in the second act, sang the duet "The Grass is Always Greener" with Bacall, and won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical.

Cooper followed up *Woman of the Year* with two Neil Simon plays: the female version of *The Odd Couple* (1985) and *Broadway Bound* (1986); and with revivals of *Café Crown* (1989), and *Grease* (1994). During the 1990s Cooper also toured with productions of *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Show Boat*; appeared in *Encores!* productions of *Fiorello* (1994), *One Touch of Venus* (1996), and *Do Re Mi* (1999); and performed in Michael John LaChiusa's *The Petrified Prince* (1994) at the Public Theatre.

During the 1980s and 1990s Cooper performed in television movies of *Woman of the Year* (1984), and *Broadway Bound* (1992); and in films such as *The Survivors* (1983), *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1986), *Family Business* (1989), and *Keeping the Faith* (2000). She also made appearances on television series such as *Cheers*, in which she played Lilith's mother; *Law and Order*; *The Nanny*; and *Caroline in the City*.

Marilyn Cooper died in Englewood, New Jersey on April 22, 2009.

Scope and Content Note

The Marilyn Cooper papers document Cooper's professional life with Production Files, Sheet Music, and Personal Files.

Production Files document Marilyn Cooper's extensive career as a theatre and television actress from the 1950s to the early 2000s. Production files contain scripts for plays, musicals, and television shows Cooper appeared in. In many cases there are multiple drafts, illuminating changes made over the course of the rehearsal process. Clippings and correspondence discuss these productions and often comment on Cooper's performances in particular. Photographs included in Production Files consist of production shots, posed promotional photographs, and backstage and rehearsal photographs. The scrapbook which documents *West Side Story* and *Gypsy* contains photographs, programs, and clippings. Other Production Files include contracts, awards certificates, opening night telegrams, programs, and clippings.

Sheet Music consists mainly of manuscript scores from musicals Cooper performed in and other various songs.

Personal Files include personal correspondence, photographs, appointment books, awards certificates, notes, and materials from Cooper's childhood and youth. Correspondence consists of letters and cards between Cooper and friends and family members. Photographs document Cooper's friends, pets, vacations, and social life in general. Materials from Cooper's childhood and youth include candid photographs; posed class photographs from elementary and high school; and scrapbooks, yearbooks, report cards, and diplomas from Public School 99, Rhodes Preparatory School, and New York University.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged in the following groups: Production Files, Sheet Music, and Personal Files.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors (performing artists)

Actresses

Singers

Subjects

Musicals -- New York (State) -- New York

Musicals -- United States -- 20th century

Television acting -- United States

Theater -- United States -- 20th century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs

Programs (documents)

Scrapbooks

Scripts

Container List

Production Files 1957-2005

- b. 1 f. 1 *6 Rms Riv Vu*
- b. 1 f. 2 *70, Girls, 70* 1989
- b. 1 f. 3 *Aladdin* 1993
- b. 1 f. 4 *Alpo*
- b. 1 f. 5 American Motors Industry Shows 1965-1966
- b. 1 f. 6 *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little...* 1973
- b. 1 f. 7-8 *Ballroom* 1978
- b. 1 f. 9 *Ben Bagley's The Decline and Fall of the Entire World as Seen Through the Eyes of Cole Porter* 1973
- b. 1 f. 10-11 *Bye Bye Birdie* 1990-1991
 - b. 2 f. 1 *Cafe Crown* 1989
 - b. 2 f. 2 *A Capitol Christmas* 2005
 - b. 2 f. 3 *Deathtrap* 1978
 - b. 2 f. 4 *Family Business* 1988
 - b. 2 f. 5 *Fifty Million Frenchmen*
 - b. 2 f. 6 *Fiorello!* 1994
 - b. 2 f. 7 *Funny, You Don't Look Like a Grandmother* 1995
 - b. 2 f. 8 *Gabrielle* 1974
 - b. 2 f. 9 *Games*
 - b. 2 f. 10 *George Washington Slept Here* 1976
 - b. 2 f. 11 *Getting On* 1977
 - b. 3 f. 1 *God's Waiting Room* circa 1995
 - b. 3 f. 2 *Golden Rainbow* 1967
 - b. 3 f. 3 *Goosebumps* 1992
 - b. 3 f. 4 *Grease* 1995
 - b. 3 f. 5 *Gypsy* 1959-1974
- b. 19 f. 4 *Gypsy Scrapbook* 1959
- b. 3 f. 6 *Haiti's Ladies (sic)*
- b. 3 f. 7 *Hallelujah, Baby!* 1967
- b. 4 f. 1 *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* 1962
- b. 4 f. 2 *A Lark in the Park* 1967
- b. 4 f. 3 *The Life of the Party* 1985
- b. 4 f. 4 *Lunch* 1994
- b. 4 f. 5 *The Mad Show* 1966
- b. 4 f. 6 *Mame* 1966-1969
- b. 4 f. 7 *Mackerel Place Musical* 1967
- b. 4 f. 8 *My Champagne Breakfast with Olivier* 1994
- b. 4 f. 9 *The Nanny* 1996
- b. 5 f. 1-2 *Nefertiti* 1977

Production Files (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 3-4 *The Odd Couple (Female Version)* 1984
- b. 5 f. 5 *Oh, Lady! Lady!* 1966
- b. 5 f. 6 *Oklahoma!* 1966
- b. 5 f. 7 *On the Town* 1971
- b. 5 f. 8 *One Touch of Venus* 1996
- b. 5 f. 9 *The Perfect Party*
- b. 6 f. 1 *The Petrified Prince* 1994
- b. 6 f. 2 *The Prince of Grand Street*
Under early title *East Broadway*.
- b. 6 f. 3 *The Producers* 2000
- b. 6 f. 4 *The Rambler Customer* 1964
- b. 6 f. 5-6 *Rumors* 1990-1991
- b. 6 f. 7 *Show Boat* 1992
- b. 6 f. 8 *Steel Magnolias* 1990
- b. 7 f. 1-2 *A Teaspoon Every Four Hours* 1969
- b. 7 f. 3 *This Is Your Life*
- b. 7 f. 4 *The Thorns* 1987
- b. 7 f. 5 *Triad Singles: Painting Distant Men* 1975
- b. 7 f. 6-7 *Two by Two* 1970
- b. 7 f. 8 *Valentine's Day Pick-Up*
- b. 7 f. 9 *West Side Story* 1957-1964
- b. 19 f. 4 *West Side Story Scrapbook* 1957-1962
- b. 8 f. 1-2 *Woman of the Year* 1980-1983
- b. 8 f. 3 *Working* 1978
- b. 8 f. 4-6 Other Unidentified Productions 1950s-1990s
- Sheet Music 1952-2005
 - b. 9 f. 1 *70, Girls, 70* 1989
 - b. 9 f. 2-3 American Motors Industry Shows 1965-1966
 - b. 9 f. 4 *Anywhere There's a Stage*
 - b. 9 f. 5 *Ben Bagley's The Decline and Fall of the Entire World as Seen Through the Eyes of Cole Porter* 1973
 - b. 9 f. 6 *A Capitol Christmas* 2005
 - b. 9 f. 7 Charmin, Martin and Robert Kessler -- Songs 1960
 - b. 9 f. 8 *Gabrielle* 1974
 - b. 9 f. 9 *Golden Rainbow* 1968
 - b. 9 f. 10 Grand, Murray -- Songs 1956, 1969
 - b. 9 f. 11 *Gypsy* 1959
 - b. 9 f. 12 *Hallelujah, Baby!* 1967
 - b. 9 f. 13 *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* 1962
 - b. 10 f. 1 *The Life of the Party* 1985
 - b. 10 f. 2 *Lunch* 1994
 - b. 10 f. 3 *Mame* 1969

Sheet Music (cont.)

- b. 10 f. 4 Millrose, Victor -- Songs
- b. 10 f. 5 *Mr. Wonderful* 1956
- b. 10 f. 6 *On the Town* 1971
- b. 10 f. 7 *One Cent Plain* 1975
- b. 10 f. 8 *The Petrified Prince* 1994
- b. 10 f. 9 *Say Hello to Harvey* 1981
- b. 10 f. 10 *Show Boat* 1992
- b. 11 f. 1 *St. Louis Woman*
- b. 11 f. 2 Stein, Julian -- Songs
- b. 11 f. 3-4 *Two by Two* 1970
- b. 11 f. 5 *Woman of the Year* 1981
- b. 11 f. 6 *Working* 1978
- b. 11 f. 7-8 Other Songs from Musicals
- b. 11 f. 9 Popular Songs 1952-1976

Personal Files 1930s-2006

Appointment Books

- b. 12 f. 2-4 1959-1973
- b. 13 f. 1-3 1975-1986
- b. 14 f. 1-4 1987-1996
- b. 15 f. 1-3 1997-2004
- b. 16 f. 1 2004-2006

Awards and Honors

- b. 12 f. 1 1959-1970
- b. 19 f. 1 1982

Childhood, Youth, and Family Papers

- b. 16 f. 2-3 1930s-1948
- b. 19 f. 2-3 1945-1954
- b. 17 f. 1-3 1949-1954

Correspondence

- b. 17 f. 4-5 1940s-1980s
- b. 18 f. 1 1990s-2000s
- b. 18 f. 2 Notes 1960s-1990s
- b. 18 f. 3-5 Photographs 1950s-2000s
- b. 18 f. 6-7 Programs for Productions and Events Attended by Cooper 1963-1997
- b. 18 f. 8 *The Singer's Job*
Pamphlet by Belle Baker and Marilyn Cooper.