



The New York Public Library
Music Division

Guide to the

Zero Mostel scores

1905-2000 [bulk 1980-2000]

JPB 13-37

Compiled by Jennifer A. Ferretti, Pratt Institute, 2014, 2013

Summary

Creator: Mostel, Zero, 1915-1977

Title: Zero Mostel scores

Date: 1905-2000 [bulk 1980-2000]

Size: 1.75 linear feet (7 boxes)

Source: Gift of Kate Mostel, 1979 and Tobias Mostel, 1993.

Abstract: Zero Mostel (1915-1977) was an American artist and actor of stage and screen, well known for his portrayal of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*. The Zero Mostel scores contain Mostel's personal copies of published sheet music both related and unrelated to his acting career, as well as sheet music from Jim Brochu's play *Zero Hour*, a tribute to Mostel produced after his death.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Processing note: Compiled by Jennifer A. Ferretti, Pratt Institute, 2014, 2013

Related Materials:

Zero and Kate Mostel papers, *T-Mss 1993-007. Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Creator History

Actor and artist Zero Mostel was born Samuel Joel Mostel on February 28, 1915 in Brooklyn, New York. In 1942 the Café Society nightclub in downtown Manhattan hired Mostel as a professional comedian. That same year, Mostel's stage and screen acting career began with him debuting on Broadway and starring in his first motion picture. He is well known for his portrayal of Tevye in the original Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964). Mostel also starred in *Ulysses in Nighttown* (1958) and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) to name a few.

Zero Mostel died in 1977 in Philadelphia during a pre-Broadway run of *The Merchant*. Following his death, Jim Brochu wrote the one-person play *Zero Hour* as a tribute to Mostel's life.

Custodial History

The contents of the collection described herein were separated from the Zero and Kate Mostel papers (*T-Mss 1993-007) and transferred from the Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Scope and Content Note

The Zero Mostel scores date from 1905 to 2000 and contain personal copies of published sheet music both related and unrelated to Mostel's acting career, as well as sheet music from Jim Brochu's play *Zero Hour*, a tribute to Mostel produced after his death.

The published sheet music includes piano and violin parts for productions such as *Fanny* and *Blooms of Dublin*. The work of musical composers Alec Wilder, Meredith Willson, Harry Ruby, and George Frideric Handel is represented. Hand annotated parts for piano and violin for the song "Mother," presumably composed by Mostel, are included. Sheet music for *Ulysses in Nighttown* (1974 revival) and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* can be found in this portion of the papers.

Fiddler on the Roof is well represented in the collection with orchestral and vocal scores. Some vocal scores include notes, presumably made by Mostel. A large portion of the collection consists of the full score and parts for the play *Zero Hour*, written by Jim Brochu. The *Zero Hour* material is undated but likely dates between 1980 and 2000.

Additional scores can be found in the Zero and Kate Mostel papers in the Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Arrangement: The Zero Mostel scores are arranged in three sections: published sheet music, scores for *Fiddler on the Roof*, and scores from the production *Zero Hour*.

Key Terms

Subjects

Music -- 20th century
Theater -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scores
Sheet music

Names

Brochu, Jim

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-7 Published Sheet Music 1905-1974
- b. 2 f. 1-8 *Fiddler on the Roof* 1964
- b. 3 f. 1-4 *Zero Hour* 1980-2000
- b. 4 f. 1-4 *Zero Hour* 1980-2000
- b. 5 f. 1-5 *Zero Hour* 1980-2000
- b. 6 f. 1-3 *Zero Hour* 1980-2000
- b. 7 f. 1-3 *Zero Hour* 1980-2000