



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Arthur Cantor papers

1955-1965

*T-Mss 2012-028

Compiled by Brynn White, CUNY Queens College, 2014, 2013.

Summary

Creator: Cantor, Arthur, 1920-2001

Title: Arthur Cantor papers

Date: 1955-1965

Size: 1.47 linear feet (4 boxes)

Source: Gift of Arthur Cantor, 1984.

Abstract: The Arthur Cantor papers (1955-1965) document the theater producer's work as a television and theatrical press agent in the 1950s and 1960s. The collection includes press releases and clippings, correspondence and memos regarding publicity campaigns, final and drafted scripts, and other production materials.

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 Brynn White, CUNY Queens College, 2014, 2013. Collection rehoused. Original groupings were maintained. Additional material added to collection by Lea Osborne, 2016.

Creator History

Theater and television press agent and producer Arthur Cantor (1920-2001) was born in Boston and educated at Harvard University. Following his service in the United States Air Force during World War

II, he became a publicity assistant with the Playwrights' Company. In the early 1950s, Cantor opened his own firm in Times Square and coordinated the publicity campaigns for Broadway hits *Inherit the Wind*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Auntie Mame*, and *The Miracle Worker*. As general manager of the Billy Rose Foundation in the early 1960s, he oversaw all business and promotional aspects of Rose's productions. Cantor was named executor of Rose's estate after his death in 1966.

During this time, Cantor also served as a publicity agent for numerous television companies and productions. These included a variety of NBC Universal specials and programs; several weekly series showcasing a rotation of veteran Hollywood actors and sponsored by the Alcoa aluminum company; and *Way Out*, a science-fiction anthology series hosted by author Roald Dahl. Through his 1950s stage and television work, Cantor met directors Fred Coe and Arthur Penn and writers Paddy Chayefsky and Herb Gardner, with whom he would regularly collaborate, between 1959 and his death in 2001, as a theatrical producer of over one hundred Broadway, Off-Broadway, and international presentations.

Scope and Content Note

The Arthur Cantor papers (1955-1976) document Cantor's work as a television and theatrical press agent in the 1950s and 1960s.

Television productions represented are the anthology series *Alcoa Theater* (1957-1960), *Alcoa Premiere*, (1961-1963), and *Way Out* (1961). These files may include press releases, final and drafted scripts, and other production materials, such as shooting schedules and cast lists. NBC Universal files contain press releases and cast and crew biographies. Many of the documents are annotated by Cantor.

The majority of theater-related materials in the collection relate to the Arthur Penn-directed *Two for the Seesaw* (1958-1959); press releases, memos, and correspondence concern promotion and production logistics of its Broadway and overseas runs. Publicity materials for *Stage Struck* (1958), the RKO film featuring *Seesaw* star Henry Fonda, Frank Coe, and other Cantor clients and collaborators are interspersed. Press clippings for the Peter Glenville stage-version of *Rashomon* (1959), and the musical *Redhead* (1958-1959), starring Gwen Verdon, are present, as are select publicity materials for performing artists Elsa Lanchester, Roger Williams, Billy Taylor, and Richard Rodgers, and the Meyer David production of *Wonderworld* at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair.

A shooting schedule for the Frank Coe-directed film adaptation of Herb Gardner's *A Thousand Clowns* (1965) and script for the National Educational Television production *Trouble in the Family* (1965) are also present.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged alphabetically by production or organization.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings
Press releases
Scripts

Subjects

Performing Arts -- Public relations

Television -- United States -- 20th century

Theater -- United States -- 20th century

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 *ABC Television - Pop Music* 1965
- b. 1 f. 2-3 *Alcoa Premiere* 1962-1963
- b. 1 f. 4-7 *Alcoa Theater* 1958-1959
- b. 2 f. 1-3 *Alcoa Theater* 1958-1959
- b. 2 f. 4 *Hotel Paradiso* 1957-1959
- b. 2 f. 5 *MCA Publicity* 1961-1962
- b. 2 f. 6-9 *NBC Universal* 1955-1956
- b. 3 f. 1 *Rashomon* 1959
- b. 3 f. 2 *Redhead* 1958-1959
- b. 3 f. 3 *A Thousand Clowns* 1964
- b. 3 f. 4 *Trouble in the Family* 1965
- b. 3 f. 5-7 *Two for the Seesaw and Stage Struck* 1958-1959
- b. 3 f. 8-9 *Way Out* 1961
- b. 4 f. 1-3 *Way Out* 1961
- b. 4 f. 4 *Wonderworld* 1963-1964