



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Sol Jacobson papers

1891-1993 [bulk 1950-1979]

*T-Mss 2011-152

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2014

Summary

Creator: Jacobson, Sol, 1912-2010

Title: Sol Jacobson papers

Date: 1891-1993 [bulk 1950-1979]

Size: 16.41 linear feet (37 boxes, 1 volume)

Source: Donated by Sol Jacobson and Lewis Harmon in 1981, and by Barbara Zimmerman in 2011.

Abstract: Sol Jacobson was an American press agent, noted for his work on early productions of the director and producer Harold Prince, including *Fiddler on the Roof*. The Sol Jacobson papers contain publicity files on productions, organizations, and individuals Jacobson represented; responses to a biographical questionnaire of actors and actresses; personal notes and correspondence, and a late nineteenth century theatre scrapbook.

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 Diana Bertolini, 2014

Creator History

Sol Jacobson was born Solomon A. Jacobson in Pennsylvania on July 3, 1912. Jacobson began his career as a theatrical press agent at Jasper Deeter's Hedgerow Theatre, in the Philadelphia area. He moved to New York in 1936 to work for the Shuberts. He moved through George Abbott's office before

being taken on as a protégé by the prolific press representative Richard Maney, working with him on *Watch on the Rhine* (1941).

When Jacobson came back from military service in World War II, he launched his own career, which would include such productions as *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *The Browning Version / Harlequinade* (1949), *The Autumn Garden* (1951), *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1951), *The Male Animal* (1952), *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1953), *John Murray Anderson's Almanac* (1953), *No Time for Sergeants* (1955), *Look Back in Anger* (1957), *The Entertainer* (1958), *Flower Drum Song* (1958), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), *Fiorello!* (1959), *Toys in the Attic* (1960), *Tenderloin* (1960), *Donnybrook!* (1961), *A Call on Kuprin* (1961), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *She Loves Me* (1963), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Generation* (1965), *The Right Honourable Gentleman* (1965), *A Joyful Noise* (1966), *Loot* (1968), *Harvey* (1970), *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* (1971), *Hard Job Being God* (1972), *Best Friend* (1976), and *Horowitz and Mrs. Washington* (1980). All productions from 1950 to 1976 were represented jointly by Jacobson and his partner Lewis Harmon.

In 2012, David A. Long published *Tales of a Broadway Flack: The Charmed Life of Press Agent Sol Jacobson*, based on a series of interviews he'd conducted with Jacobson.

Sol Jacobson died of heart failure on February 17, 2010 in Key West, Florida.

Scope and Content Note

Sol Jacobson was an American press agent. His papers document the process of publicizing a production, individual, or company in the mid-twentieth century New York theatre community. Jacobson kept publicity files on shows, individuals, and theatre companies he represented. These files consist of press releases, advertisements, features, clippings, business correspondence, programs, production shots, headshots, resumes, biographies, and information sheets on productions and theatres. Publicity files occasionally contain scrapbooks of clippings.

Fiddler on the Roof is the most extensively represented production in this collection. Publicity files from this show document not only the musical's eight-year Broadway run, but also touring, regional domestic, and international productions. Rare publicity photographs of productions all around the world are included here. The musical, *Tenderloin*, and the production company run by Lyn Ely, Theatre in Education, are also documented extensively with publicity files.

Throughout their careers, Jacobson and his partner Lewis Harmon conducted surveys with the actors and directors involved in the productions they were publicizing. These surveys collected basic biographical information and resume credits on the individuals concerned. The majority of these questionnaires are included in publicity files for the shows in which the actors filling out the questionnaires were appearing, but a small amount have been separated from publicity files and arranged by actor's name.

Other Professional and Personal Files include a scrapbook of late nineteenth century Philadelphia theatrical programs; a small number of programs from various New York and touring productions from the late 1930s, including some for the Mercury Theatre; Jacobson's typed notes and outlines on unidentified early projects; autobiographical writings; and a few folders of letters to Jacobson from theatre industry friends and prominent individuals such as Brooks Atkinson, John Beal, John Beaufort, Schuyler Chapin, Constance Cummings, Ronald Gow, Sheldon Harnick, Boris Karloff, Burton Lane, Robert E. Lee, Edwin Lester, Richard Maney, Frank McHugh, Richard Nixon, Katina Paxinou, Harold Prince, Louis Schaeffer, Dorothy Stickney, Howard Taubman, and Eli Wallach.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged in the following three groups: Publicity Files, Biographical Questionnaire Responses, and Other Professional and Personal Files.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)
Photographs
Press releases
Programs (documents)
Publicity materials
Scrapbooks

Subjects

Musicals
Musicals -- Production and direction -- New York (State) -- New York
Press agents -- United States
Publicity -- United States
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Theater -- Public relations
Theater -- United States -- 20th century

Occupations

Press agents
Publicists

Names

Harmon, Lewis
Prince, Harold, 1928-

Container List

- Publicity Files 1947-1979
 - b. 1 f. 1 Abbott, George 1959
 - b. 1 f. 2 The Acting Company 1971-1972
 - b. 1 f. 3 American Educational Theatre Association 1967
 - b. 1 f. 4 *A Boston Story* 1968
 - A Call on Kuprin*
 - b. 1 f. 5 1961
 - b. 2 f. 1 1961
 - b. 2 f. 2 *The Crocodile Smile* 1970
 - b. 2 f. 3 *The Divorce of Judy and Jane* undated
 - b. 2 f. 4 *Donnybrook* 1961
 - b. 2 f. 5 Edelman, Maurice 1961-1962
 - b. 2 f. 6 *The Emperor Jones* 1965
 - b. 2 f. 7 Ensemble Theatre Laboratory 1969
 - b. 3 f. 1-4 Equity Library Theatre 1968-1979
 - b. 4 f. 1 Evans, Maurice 1947-1960
 - b. 4 f. 2 *Every Kid You See on the Street Ain't Bad* 1971
 - Fiddler on the Roof*
- Broadway
 - Actors and Creative Team Biographies 1964-1972
 - b. 4 f. 3-5 Adler, Luther - Bernardi, Hershel
 - b. 5 f. 1-6 Bikel, Theodore - Jarrett, Jerry
 - b. 6 f. 1 Lipson, Paul - Pearce, Jan
 - b. 7 f. 1 Randolph, Mimi - Stuart, Laura, Various
 - b. 8 f. 1-4 Clippings, Reviews, and Features 1964-1972
 - b. 24 f. 1 Clippings and Photographs 1964
 - Photographs
 - b. 8 f. 5-7 1964-1969
 - b. 9 f. 1-6 1964-1972
 - b. 10 f. 1-5 1964-1972
 - b. 11 f. 1-2 1964-1972
 - Production Information and Special Events
 - b. 11 f. 3-6 1964-1972
 - b. 12 f. 1-5 1964-1972
 - Out of Town, Tours, and Regional Domestic Productions
 - b. 13 f. 1-7 1964-1972
 - b. 14 f. 1-3 1964-1972
 - International Productions 1965-1972
 - b. 14 f. 4-7 Argentina - Brazil

Publicity Files (cont.)

Fiddler on the Roof (cont.)

International Productions (cont.)

- b. 15 f. 1-6 Czechoslovakia - Germany
- b. 16 f. 1-6 Iceland - Norway
- b. 17 f. 1-5 South Africa - Yugoslavia, Various
- b. 18 f. 1-4 *Fiorello* 1959-1966, 1976
 - b. 18 f. 5 *Flower Drum Song* 1959-1960
 - b. 18 f. 6 *Forward Together* 1969
 - b. 18 f. 7 *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* 1961-1963
- b. 19 f. 1 Garden State Arts Center 1971
- b. 19 f. 2 *Generation* 1965-1966
- b. 19 f. 3 *Hard Job Being God* 1972
- b. 19 f. 4 *Harvey* 1970-1971
- b. 19 f. 5 Hyman, Earle 1963
- b. 19 f. 6 Initial Teaching Alphabet 1967
- b. 19 f. 7 International Theatre Institute 1970
- b. 19 f. 8 *It's a Funny World We Live In* 1972
- b. 19 f. 9 Jacobson, Helen 1967-1968
- b. 19 f. 10 *A Joyful Noise* 1966
- b. 36 f. 36 Kelley, Beverly 1966-1968
 - b. 20 f. 1 Lawrence, Jerome and Robert E. Lee 1966-1967
 - b. 20 f. 2 Lindsay, Howard and Russell Crouse 1967
 - b. 20 f. 3 Los Angeles Civic Light Opera 1962
- b. 20 f. 4-5 *Love Me, Love My Children* 1971-1972
- b. 21 f. 1-2 Margo Jones Awards 1967-1971
 - b. 21 f. 3 McCarter Theatre 1971-1972
 - b. 21 f. 4 National Council of the Arts in Education 1971
 - b. 21 f. 5 Nederlanders 1972
 - b. 21 f. 6 *New Faces of 1968* 1968
 - b. 21 f. 7 *One for the Money* 1972
- b. 22 f. 1 Padula, Edward 1967
 - b. 22 f. 2 *Pavilion* 1976
 - b. 22 f. 3 Phoenix Theatre 1969
 - b. 22 f. 4 Pickwick Puppet Theatre 1978
- Prince, Harold and Robert Griffin
 - b. 22 f. 5-7 1958-1967
 - b. 23 f. 1 1961-1970
 - b. 23 f. 2 Princeton Triangle Club 1972
 - b. 23 f. 3 Rialto Theatre 1977-1979
 - b. 23 f. 4 *The Right Honourable Gentleman* 1965
 - b. 23 f. 5 *Say Nothing* 1964
 - b. 23 f. 6 Schaefer, George 1957-1958
- b. 25 f. 1 *The School for Wives* 1971

Publicity Files (cont.)

- b. 25 f. 2 *She Didn't Say Yes* 1963
- b. 25 f. 3-5 *She Loves Me* 1963-1964
- b. 26 f. 1 *Shubert Alley* 1969
- b. 26 f. 2 Smith, George Alan 1968-1969
- b. 26 f. 3 *Survival* 1977
- b. 26 f. 4 Swerdlow, Robert 1971
- b. 26 f. 5-6 *Take Her, She's Mine* 1961-1962
The Teahouse of the August Moon
- b. 26 f. 7 Files 1953-1955
 - v. 1 Scrapbook 1954-1955
Tenderloin
- b. 27 f. 1-2 Headshots and Biographies 1960
- b. 27 f. 3-4 Clippings and Reviews 1960
- b. 28 f. 1-3 Clippings and Reviews 1960-1961
- b. 29 f. 1-3 Clippings and Reviews 1961
- b. 29 f. 4 Theatre Hall of Fame 1972
Theatre in Education
 - b. 29 f. 5 1961-1963
 - b. 30 f. 1-4 1963-1966
 - b. 31 f. 1-6 1965-1968
 - b. 32 f. 1-6 1968-1973
 - b. 32 f. 7 Tostevin, Bill 1966
- b. 33 f. 1-2 *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* 1971
- b. 33 f. 3 *Two of Everything* 1976
- b. 33 f. 4-5 *West Side Story* 1959-1960
- b. 33 f. 6 *What a Day for a Miracle!* 1970
- b. 36 f. 34 *Write Me a Murder* 1961-1962
- b. 36 f. 35 Various Productions - Press Releases and Columns 1970-1979
- Biographical Questionnaire Responses undated
- b. 34 f. 1-91 Bassie, Joan - Kaiser, Ardyth
- b. 35 f. 1-97 Kaplan, Nicki - Southers, Dennis
- b. 36 f. 1-33 Spielberg, David - Ziskie, Daniel
- Other Professional and Personal Files 1891-1979
 - b. 36 f. 37 Autobiographical Writings 1972-1979
Correspondence
 - b. 36 f. 38 1948-1967
 - b. 37 f. 1-2 1960-1993
 - b. 37 f. 3-4 New York Theatrical Programs and Publications 1930s
 - b. 24 f. 2 Press Agents and the Profession 1966
 - b. 37 f. 5 Scrapbook of Philadelphia Programs 1891-1893