Summary

Creator: Rodgers, Richard, 1902-1979

Title: Richard Rodgers papers

Date: 1914-1989

Source: Gift, Dorothy Rodgers, 03/--/1987 Gift, Dorothy Rodgers, 07/19/1991

Abstract: The Richard Rodgers Papers consist of correspondence, photographs, posters, newspaper clippings, and other material related to the career of Richard Rodgers. There is a small series of production files which includes materials on THE KING AND I, SOUTH PACIFIC and OKLAHOMA! The primary strength of the collection lies in the inclusiveness of the business correspondence; there are both complimentary and uncomplimentary letters, indicating that Rodgers did not edit the collection to eliminate unfavorable information. Another strength of the collection lies in the amount of correspondence with his collaborators, particularly Oscar Hammerstein II. There is, however, no direct correspondence between Rodgers and his first collaborator Lorenz Hart and there are few references to Hart. Although there are a considerable amount of letters from Rodgers to his wife, there are very few from her to him. There is also a small amount of correspondence related to Dorothy Rodgers political and literary activities.

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

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division


Processing note: Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan and Jeanne Mixon.

Related Materials:
Creator History
Richard Rodgers, composer and producer, was born in New York on June 28, 1902. He composed his first song, *My Auto Show Girl* when he was fourteen years old. (This is included in the collection Box 16, Folder 6) In 1918 Rodgers met his first professional partner, Lorenz Hart. Together they presented their first hit show, *The Garrick Gaieties* in 1925. In 1929 Rodgers and Hart appeared in a two-reel autobiographical short, *Masters of Melody* produced by Paramount-Famous-Lasky Corp. and written and directed by S. J. Kaufman. In 1948, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer produced a biographical film about the professional relationship and career of Rodgers and Hart. Rodgers teamed up with Oscar Hammerstein II in 1942 to produce *Oklahoma!* After the death of Lorenz Hart in 1943, Hammerstein became Rodgers' permanent collaborator. They worked together until Hammerstein's death in 1960. Among the works created by Rodgers and Hammerstein are: *Oklahoma!, Carousel, South Pacific, State Fair, Flower Drum Song, The King and I, and Cinderella.* Following Hammerstein's death Rodgers continued to produce musicals. In 1962 he wrote both the music and the lyrics for *No Strings,* and in 1965 he teamed up with Stephen Sondheim on *Do I Hear a Waltz?* His last musical was an adaptation of John Van Druten's play *I Remember Mama* which opened on Broadway on May 31, 1979. Richard Rodgers married Dorothy Feiner in 1930. They have two daughters, Mary and Linda. Richard Rodgers died December 30, 1979.

Custodial History
The Richard Rodgers Papers were donated to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Billy Rose Theatre Division in March and April of 1987. Additional installments of the collection were added periodically from 1988 until Dorothy Rodgers death in 1994 when the rest of the materials were added as designated by her estate. The Richard Rodgers Papers arrived in good condition and in good order. The files have been maintained as near to the original arrangement as possible. One change has been the creation of folders for individuals in the correspondence files in order to maintain appropriate security for letters of noted individuals in the theater world. Correspondence between Dorothy and Richard Rodgers has been restricted until July 1998 at the request of Dorothy Rodgers. Recordings in the collection were transferred to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound; music scores and oversized scrapbooks were transferred to the Music Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Scope and Content Note
The Richard Rodgers papers consist of correspondence, photographs, clippings and ephemera documenting his career as a composer and producer. Included as well, is a small amount of materials related to the political and literary activities of his wife, Dorothy Rodgers. The primary strength of the collection is in the breadth and depth of the business correspondence. The correspondence contain letters from friends and business associates throughout the career of Richard Rodgers and includes as well, carbon copies of letters sent in reply to these friends and associates giving a clear and comprehensive picture of Richard Rodgers in all facets of his professional career. There are both complimentary and uncomplimentary letters, indicating that Rodgers did not edit the materials to eliminate unfavorable information. Another strength of the collection lies in the amount of correspondence with his collaborators, particularly Oscar Hammerstein II. Lacking in the collection is correspondence between Richard Rodgers and his first collaborator, Lorenz Hart. Also missing from the collection is correspondence from Dorothy Rodgers to Richard Rodgers, although there is considerable correspondence from Richard Rodgers to his wife, Dorothy.

Arrangement: The papers of Richard Rodgers are arranged in seven series and 5 sub-series. They include: Series I. Richard Rodgers correspondence Series II. Dorothy Rodgers correspondence Series
III. Dorothy Rodgers correspondence from Richard Rodgers Series IV. Productions Series V. Columbia University Materials Series VI. Personal Papers Series VII. Memorials Series VIII. Photographs Sub-series 1 - Personalities Sub-series 2 - Events Sub-series 3 - Productions Sub-series 4 - Photograph scrapbooks Sub-series 5 - Negatives Series IX. Oversized Materials

Key Terms

Occupations
Composers

Subjects
Musical theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Titles
Oklahoma! (Motion picture)

Names
Rodgers, Richard, 1902-1979
Hammerstein, Oscar, II, 1895-1960
Hersey, John, 1914-1993
Logan, Joshua
Martin, Mary, 1913-1990
Rodgers, Dorothy, 1909-1992
Ruby, Harry
Steinbeck, John, 1902-1968
Container List

Series I. Richard Rodgers Correspondence 1937-1980 ([4 boxes; 1.67 lf.])
This series consists of personal and professional correspondence to Richard Rodgers. Included is correspondence about his productions, tributes and events, as well as relationships with friends and business associates. This series was originally arranged in alphabetical order with no folders for individuals. For security purposes, individual folders were created for correspondence from famous individuals. Some of these include: Brooks Atkinson, Noel Coward, Bing Crosby, Russel Crouse, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Douglas Fairbanks, Edna Ferber, John Green, Oscar Hammerstein II, Moss Hart, Helen Hayes, Leland Hayward, Theresa Helburn, John Hersey, Lawrence Langner, Arthur Laurents, Howard, Lindsay, Joshua Logan, Frederic March, Mary Martin, Ferenc Moliner, Ogden Nash, Eugene Ormandy, Paul Osborn, Cole Porter, Nelson Rockefeller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Billy Rose and Harry Ruby, among others.
Arranged alphabetically.

b. 1 Correspondence "A" - "E"
b. 2 Correspondence "F" - "H"
b. 3 Correspondence "J" - "M"
b. 4 Correspondence "N" - "Z"

Series II. Dorothy Rodgers Correspondence 1942-1987 ([1 box; .41 lf.])
This series consists of correspondence to Dorothy Rodgers from friends and acquaintances dealing with personal issues and events and political and charitable fundraising. This series is divided into two sub-series:

Arranged alphabetically.

Sub-series 1 - General correspondence
Includes personal and fundraising correspondence.

 b. 5 Correspondence "A" - "Z"
Sub-series 2 - Condolence Letters
Includes correspondence to Dorothy Rodgers from friends, fans and business associates on the death of Richard Rodgers. Letters from many well-known celebrities as well as political, literary and business figures.

b. 5 Condolence correspondence on the death of Richard Rodgers "A" - "Z"

Series III. Dorothy Rodgers correspondence from Richard Rodgers 1926-1974 ([2 boxes; .82 lf.])
This series contains private and personal correspondence to Dorothy Rodgers from Richard Rodgers. For the early years [1926-1935] correspondence is extensive with letters written sometimes daily. In later years the correspondence is less frequent. The letters deal with both their personal lives and the career of Richard Rodgers. The letters are important in that they trace Rodgers' career during the early years giving his personal feeling about his growing fame and popularity.
Arranged chronologically.
(closed until July 1998)

b. 6 Correspondence 1926 - July 1934
b. 7 Correspondence August 1934 - 1974, also undated
Series IV. Productions 1943-1972 (1 box; .41 lf.)
This series contains production files, interoffice memos and some correspondence dealing with
the daily operations of Richard Rodgers' theatrical and film productions. The files are not
extensive and much of the production materials are not included. Largest amounts of materials
exist for South Pacific, Oklahoma! (Motion picture), and The King and I, though none are more
than one or two folders of materials. There are scripts and production materials for a 1950's
television series entitled Victory at Sea (Television program). The following is a complete list of
titles included:
Carnegie Hall Concert [1954]
Do I Hear a Waltz [1965]
Flower Drum Song [1961]
I Picked a Daisy [1962] (later known as On a Clear Day You Can See Forever)
The King and I [1951-1972]
Me and Juliet [1953]
The Music and the Words [n.d.]
No Strings [1961]
On Your Toes [1954]
Oklahoma! [1943-1954]
Pal Joey [1951-1952]
South Pacific [1950-1965]
The Sound of Music [1963]
Two by Two [n.d.]
Victory at Sea (Television program) [1951-1952]

Arranged alphabetically by title.

b. 8 Production Files

Series V. Columbia University Materials 1923-1972 (1 box; .41 lf.)
This series contains Columbia University ephemera from Richard Rodgers' days as a student, as
well as information about Columbia's Oral History project and Richard Rodgers' oral history
interview. Included is the 1924 Columbia Songbook, The Columbian of 1923 and the transcript of
Richard Rodgers' oral history interview.
Arranged alphabetically.

b. 9 Columbia University School Ephemera

Series VI. Personal Papers 1954-1978 (1.5 box; .2 lf.)
This series contains miscellaneous personal papers, honorary degrees, articles, songbooks,
biographical materials and the transcript for Richard Rodgers autobiograpy Musical Stages.
Arranged alphabetically.

b. 10 Biographical materials

Series VII. Memorials 1979-1989 (1.5 box; .2 lf.)
This series contains clippings, articles, a transcript of Richard Rodgers' memorial service and
other programs and materials on posthumous tributes to Richard Rodgers and his work.
Arranged alphabetically.

b. 10 Text of memorial service

Series VIII. Photographs 1931-1972 (5 boxes; 2.25 lf.)
This series contains photographs of events in Richard Rodgers' life, photographs of events
surrounding productions, but not traditional production photographs. There are also some
photograph scrapbooks created for Rodgers. This series is divided into five sub-series.
Series VIII. Photographs (cont.)

Sub-series 1 - Personalities
Included are photographs of Richard Rodgers with Lorenz Hart, Oscar Hammerstein, Florence Henderson, Adlai Stevenson, Helen Keller, Leland Hayward and others.
Arranged alphabetically by personality.

b. 11 Photographs of Personalities

Sub-series 2 - Events
Included are photographs of Richard Rodgers at events and celebrations. Some are: NYU Happy 50th birthday, Rodgers and Hammerstein Week, Times Square tribute on the death of Richard Rodgers and others.
Arranged by event.

b. 12 Photographs of events
Series VIII. Photographs (cont.)

Sub-series 3 - Productions

Series VIII. Photographs (cont.)

Sub-series 4 - Photograph scrapbooks


b. 13 Scrapbook of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra Concert [1954]

b. 14 Scrapbook of Richard Rodgers : 60th Birthday Picture Book

b. 15 By Jupiter

Scrapbooks for the following:
By Jupiter
Richard Rodgers celebration at the Imperial Theatre
Richard Rodgers Shows - v. 1
Richard Rodgers Shows - v. 2
Drury College (Springfield, Missouri)
New York Illustrated (Television program)
100 year Assn. of New York - Award to Rodgers & Hammerstein
Richard Rodgers conducting St. Louis Orchestra

Sub-series 5 - Negatives (Four folders of approximately 125 negatives.)

All photography done by: Gerald Kraus, (212) 473-5570; (516) 473-9105

b. 15 Negatives

Series IX. Oversized Materials 1917-1965

This series contains all oversized materials. Included are photographs of productions and individuals and some sheet music. Copy of the song Auto Show Girl is included. Productions included are: Flower Drum Song, The Sound of Music, No Strings and The King and I.

b. 16 Sheet music

b. 17 Portrait of Rodgers and Hart