



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Papers and lecture notes of Nathaniel Buchwald

1927-1940

*T-Mss 1957-002

Summary

Creator: Buchwald, Nathaniel, b. 1890

Title: Papers and lecture notes of Nathaniel Buchwald

Date: 1927-1940

Size: 1 portfolio (4 folders)

Abstract: Nathaniel Buchwald (1890-1956), drama critic, teacher, and authority on Yiddish theater, was also a co-founder of the Artef Players Collective, a Yiddish dramatic group, active in New York from the late 1920's to 1940. Born in the Ukraine, Nathaniel Buchwald came to the U.S. as a young man and studied at the University of Georgia, Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and New York University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. He became a journalist, contributing pieces in Yiddish to the Jewish Daily Forward of New York, then co-founded the Morning Freiheit in 1922. Mr. Buchwald became the Morning Freiheit's drama critic, and also wrote a theater column for the monthly Jewish Life. In 1925, he and several like-minded colleagues formed the Artef Players Collective, a drama troupe dedicated to performing "plays of social import," supported by subscribers and by the players themselves. The collective staged its first production in 1927, and prospered during the Depression, but eventually experienced financial and other difficulties resulting in a two-year hiatus, 1937-9. The group resumed work with Louis Miller's CLINTON STREET in autumn 1939, but despite positive notices and popular support they disbanded in February 1940. In 1943 Nathaniel Buchwald published a book on Yiddish theater in America. He died in 1956. The Nathaniel Buchwald papers and lecture notes span 1927-1940 and consist of lecture notes, a five page ballet synopsis, a program and a handbill relating to the life and career of Nathaniel Buchwald, a critic and co-founder of the Artef Players Collective. The bulk of the collection consists of lecture notes, some encased in mylar, which date from 1927 to 1937 and pertain to the study of drama. There is also an unsigned, undated synopsis for a "proposed Purim ballet," suggested by the folk festival Purim, based on narrative material by Sholem Aleichem. Also included is a program and a handbill for a revue written by Nathaniel Buchwald, LEBEDIK UN FREILACH.

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>

Preferred citation: Papers and lecture notes of Nathaniel Buchwald, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Nathaniel Buchwald (1890-1956), drama critic, teacher, and authority on Yiddish theater, was also a co-founder of the Artef Players Collective, a Yiddish dramatic group, active in New York from the late 1920's to 1940. Born in the Ukraine, Nathaniel Buchwald came to the U.S. as a young man and studied at the University of Georgia, Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and New York University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. He became a journalist, contributing pieces in Yiddish to the Jewish Daily Forward of New York, then co-founded the Morning Freiheit in 1922. Mr. Buchwald became the Morning Freiheit's drama critic, and also wrote a theater column for the monthly Jewish Life. In 1925, he and several like-minded colleagues formed the Artef Players Collective, a drama troupe dedicated to performing "plays of social import," supported by subscribers and by the players themselves. The collective staged its first production in 1927, and prospered during the Depression, but eventually experienced financial and other difficulties resulting in a two-year hiatus, 1937-9. The group resumed work with Louis Miller's CLINTON STREET in autumn 1939, but despite positive notices and popular support they disbanded in February 1940. In 1943 Nathaniel Buchwald published a book on Yiddish theater in America. He died in 1956.

Scope and Content Note

The Nathaniel Buchwald papers and lecture notes span 1927-1940 and consist of lecture notes, a five page ballet synopsis, a program and a handbill relating to the life and career of Nathaniel Buchwald, a critic and co-founder of the Artef Players Collective. The bulk of the collection consists of lecture notes, some encased in mylar, which date from 1927 to 1937 and pertain to the study of drama. There is also an unsigned, undated synopsis for a "proposed Purim ballet," suggested by the folk festival Purim, based on narrative material by Sholem Aleichem. Also included is a program and a handbill for a revue written by Nathaniel Buchwald, LEBEDIK UN FREILACH.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Handbills
Lecture notes
Programs
Synopses

Subjects

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Yiddish drama -- United States

Names

Buchwald, Nathaniel, b. 1890
Sholem Aleichem, 1859-1916
Artef Players Collective