



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

James Light typescripts

undated

*T-Mss 2001-050

Summary

Creator: Light, James

Title: James Light typescripts

Date: undated

Size: (1 portfolio), 28 cm; (1 portfolio), 28 cm

Abstract: Director James Light (1894-1964) veteran of the Provincetown Players and its offshoot, the Experimental Theatre Company, was best known for his work with Eugene O'Neill, staging the original productions of *THE EMPEROR JONES*, *THE GREAT GOD BROWN*, and others. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, James Light came to New York in 1917, after graduating from Ohio State University, intending to pursue additional studies at Columbia. Through a chance meeting with George Cram Cook, artistic director of the Provincetown Players, Light was cast in a small role in Susan Glaspell's play *CLOSE THE BOOK*. Soon he left acting behind, and by 1920 was an associate director. He staged the premiere production of Eugene O'Neill's *THE EMPEROR JONES* that year, and later presented O'Neill's *ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS* and *THE GREAT GOD BROWN*. James Light also directed E. E. Cummings' *HIM*, Virgil Geddes' *THE EARTH BETWEEN*, and Paul Green's *IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM*. He later served as Dean of the Drama Faculty at The New School for Social Research in New York and taught at Yale University. James Light died in New York City on Feb. 11, 1964, at the age of 69. The two James Light typescripts are titled *THE PARADE OF MASKS* and *A NEW MARIONETTE THEATRE*. In his 11 page essay *THE PARADE OF MASKS*, which is undated, Light writes about the the use of masks in various Provincetown Players productions of Eugene O'Neill's plays. *A NEW MARIONETTE THEATRE*, also undated, is unfinished, ending mid-sentence on Page 7.

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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Creator History

Director James Light (1894-1964) veteran of the Provincetown Players and its offshoot, the Experimental Theatre Company, was best known for his work with Eugene O'Neill, staging the original productions of THE EMPEROR JONES, THE GREAT GOD BROWN, and others. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, James Light came to New York in 1917, after graduating from Ohio State University, intending to pursue additional studies at Columbia. Through a chance meeting with George Cram Cook, artistic director of the Provincetown Players, Light was cast in a small role in Susan Glaspell's play CLOSE THE BOOK. Soon he left acting behind, and by 1920 was an associate director. He staged the premiere production of Eugene O'Neill's THE EMPEROR JONES that year, and later presented O'Neill's ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS and THE GREAT GOD BROWN. James Light also directed E. E. Cummings' HIM, Virgil Geddes' THE EARTH BETWEEN, and Paul Green's IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM. He later served as Dean of the Drama Faculty at The New School for Social Research in New York and taught at Yale University. James Light died in New York City on Feb. 11, 1964, at the age of 69.

Scope and Content Note

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Key Terms

Subjects

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Typescripts

Names

Light, James

O'Neill, Eugene, 1888-1953

Provincetown Players