



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Little Players correspondence

1961-1999

*T-Mss 2002-030

Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan.

Summary

Creator: Little Players (Theatrical troupe)

Title: Little Players correspondence

Date: 1961-1999

Size: .21 linear feet. (1 box)

Source: The Theatre Collection purchased this material from Steve Resnick in 2002.

Abstract: The Little Players correspondence consists of letters from prominent members of the performing arts field to Frank Peschka, Bill Murdock and Isabelle Standwell, founders of the Little Players.

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 Access:

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Preferred citation: Little Players Correspondence, *T-Mss 2002-030. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Mary Ellen Rogan; Machine-readable finding aid created by Mary Ellen Rogan.

Creator History

Under the guidance of Frank Peschka, Bill Murdock, and Isabelle Standwell, The Little Players produced puppet plays first in New York, later in Ohio, and received enthusiastic support from a number of prominent figures in the theatrical world. Beginning in New York City in 1959, the Little Players' puppet productions, which delved into classical material and were aimed at adults rather than children, soon established a following among actors and other entertainment professionals. Fans of the troupe included Sir John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Emyln Williams, Stella Adler, Ethel Merman, Libby Holman, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Aline MacMahon, and Cyril Ritchard, among others. Several of these celebrities acquired season tickets to the Little Players' shows, and corresponded with the producers. Some maintained contact even after the Little Players troupe relocated to Huron, Ohio.

Scope and Content Note

The Little Players correspondence consists of notes addressed to either Frank Peschka and Bill Murdock, or to Isabelle Standwell, written during the early 1960s when the troupe was based in New York, and later, after the Little Players had relocated to Huron, Ohio. Although most of the notes from the Little Players' famous fans are little more than succinct requests for tickets, almost all express admiration for the troupe's shows. Some of the prominent supporters, notably Ethel Merman and actress Aline MacMahon, corresponded steadily with Little Players co-producers Frank Peschka and Bill Murdock.

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence

Subjects

Puppet theater -- United States

Puppeteers -- United States

Names

Little Players (Theatrical troupe)

MacMahon, Aline, 1899-1991

Merman, Ethel

Murdock, Bill

Peschka, Frank

Container List

Correspondence 1961-1999 (13 folders)

- b. 1 f. 1 A-B 1962-1980 (2 items)
Includes letters from Stella Adler and Barbara Cook.
- b. 1 f. 2 Fitzgerald, Geraldine 1976 (2 letters)
- b. 1 f. 3 Freedman, Louis 1965-1972 (5 letters)
Includes one internal memo from Frank Leicht from Freedman's office.
- b. 1 f. 4 Gielgud, John, Sir ca. 1961-1999 (9 letters and notes)
- b. 1 f. 5 Holman, Libby 1965 (3 letters)
- b. 1 f. 6 MacMahon, Aline ca. 1961-1986 (31 letters, notes and cards)
- b. 1 f. 7 Merman, Ethel 1969-1978 (15 letters, notes and cards)
- b. 1 f. 8 Nichols, Mike 1962 Dec. 4 (1 letter)
- b. 1 f. 9 Richardson, Ralph, Sir 1963 (2 letters)
- b. 1 f. 10 Ritchard, Cyril 1962-1964 (4 letters and notes)
- b. 1 f. 11 Rodgers, Dorothy ca. 1983 (4 letters and cards)
- b. 1 f. 12 Skinner, Cornelia Otis 1963 Mar. 26 (1 letter)
- b. 1 f. 13 Williams, Emlyn 1962 Oct. 2 (1 letter)
- b. 1 f. 14 Backstage photograph of unidentified person sleeping (1 photograph)