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Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Paul Morrison papers and designs

1925-1973

*T-VIM 1981-010

Processed by Jim Steere and Barbara Knowles.

Summary

Creator: Morrison, Paul, 1906-1980

Title: Paul Morrison papers and designs

Date: 1925-1973

Size: 5.2 linear feet (11 boxes)

Source: The Paul Morrison Papers and Designs were donated by Alice Owens in 1981.

Abstract: Paul Morrison (1906-1980), whose prolific theatrical career began in New York with the Theatre Guild and Group Theatre, designed sets, lighting and costumes for more than 60 Broadway productions, often working in multiple capacities. This collection includes many of his scenic and lighting designs and a few costume designs, as well as notes and sketches.

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:
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Creator History

Paul Morrison's theatrical career was varied and prolific. Born in Altoona, Pa. in 1906, Morrison graduated from Lafayette College (Easton, Pa.), where he also taught drama. During World War II, he joined the armed forces and designed and supervised shows overseas for the USO. Morrison's first theatrical work in New York was performing with the Theatre Guild in 1929-1930. He acted, designed and stage managed for the Group Theatre, appearing in the first production of Clifford Odets' *Paradise Lost*. During 1935-36, Morrison served as technical director and design supervisor for the Chicago Division of the Federal Theatre (WPA) Project. Morrison often served a show in multiple capacities, covering more than one design element, and sometimes stage managing or supervising the production. As a costume designer, Morrison's first Broadway show was *Thunder Rock* at the Mansfield Theatre in 1939. Serving as technical director for the American Repertory Theatre, Morrison worked with Eva LeGallienne and Cheryl Crawford, designing sets for *What Every Woman Knows* and *John Gabriel Borkman*, which played in repertory 1946-1947. Many Broadway productions followed, for which he designed sets, lighting and/or costumes, including the following shows represented in this collection: *All My Sons*(1947), *Billy Budd*(1951), *Candide*(1956), *Separate Tables*(1956), *The Visit*(1958), *Much Ado About Nothing*(1959), *Thurber Carnival*(1960), *The Caretaker*(1961), *A Man for All Seasons*(1961), and *The Price*(1968). Morrison worked with such directors as Peter Brook, Harold Clurman, John Gielgud, Ulu Grosbard, Tyrone Guthrie, and Lee Strasberg. From 1936-1942 Morrison headed up the Theatre Department at Bard College. In 1963, he became a director of the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre, where he remained for 17 years. Paul Morrison died in New York City on December 29, 1980.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of Morrison's notes, watercolor design sketches, ground plans, set elevations, light plots, channel hookups and other technical drawings. His work as an administrator of theatre training is not represented.

Arrangement: Series I: Professional Papers Series II: Designs Series III: Technical Drawings

Key Terms

Subjects

Costume design
Stage lighting
Theaters -- Stage-setting and scenery

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Costume design drawings
Set design drawings

Names

Morrison, Paul, 1906-1980

Container List

Series I: Professional Papers 1925-1927, 1948-1970, undated (3 boxes)

These working files include correspondence, notes, cast lists, costume and property lists, rough sketches, small format technical drawings, instrument schedules, channel hookups, other lighting documentation, and financial records.

Alphabetical by project or production title. Unidentified items that are not related to a particular production (sketches, letters, notes) are foldered at the end of the series.

- b. 1 f. 1 *Abie's Irish Rose* 1954
Includes expenses, notes for production at the Holiday Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 2 *American Repertory Theatre* undated
Includes correspondence and sketches.
- b. 1 f. 3 *Arabian Nights* 1954
Includes costume breakdown, cast list, notes for production at Jones Beach Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 4 *Billy Budd* 1951
Includes clippings for production at the Biltmore Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 5 *Candide* 1956
Includes program, instrument schedule, expenses, notes for production at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 6 *The Caretaker* 1961
Includes rehearsal schedule, prop list, etc. for production at the Lyceum Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 7 *The Closing Door* 1949
Includes clipping with photo from production at the Empire Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 8 *Conduct Unbecoming* 1970
Includes equipment schedule for production at the Barrymore Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 9 *Cyrano de Bergerac* 1953
Includes channel hookup for production at New York City Center.
- b. 1 f. 10 *Free as a Bird* 1961
Includes early plans for production at the Grist Mill Playhouse, Andover, N.J.
- b. 1 f. 11-11A *Have I Got a Girl for You* 1962 (2 folders)
Includes notes, correspondence, expenses, drawings. Folder 11A includes costume lists and research material.
- b. 1 f. 12 *Invitation to a March* 1960-1961
Includes cue sheet and lighting documentation for production at the Music Box Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 13 "Jack-knife tables" undated
Includes blueprint for "Jack-knife tables", a swinging platform plan designed by W.P. Nolan for multiple New York City theatres.
- b. 1 f. 14 *Joyce Grenfell Requests the Pleasure* 1955
Includes correspondence, sketches, lists, notes for production at the Bijou Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 15 Julie Ives "notes and dialogue," undated
Includes story outline.
- b. 1 f. 16 *Kataki* 1959
Includes instrument schedule and lighting documentation for production at the Ambassador Theatre, New York.
- b. 1 f. 17 La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego, Calif. 1961
Includes notes for summer season.
- b. 1 f. 18 *Little Women* undated
Includes watercolor sketches.

Series I: Professional Papers (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 19 *Long Days' Journey into Night* 1965
Includes photographs, program, expenses and notes for production mounted in Tokyo.
- b. 2 f. 1 *A Man for All Seasons* 1961
Includes extensive notes for bus and truck tour. Morrison supervised the staging and direction, set, lighting and costumes for the tour.
- b. 2 f. 2 *Man with the Golden Arm* 1956
Includes small scale drawings and elevations.
- b. 2 f. 3 *The Mousetrap* undated
Includes schedule, production staff, small format window card.
- b. 2 f. 4 *Much Ado About Nothing* 1951, 1959
Includes cue sheet, scenery list, prop list.
- b. 2 f. 5 *A Night in Venice* 1954
Includes letter regarding production at Jones Beach, N.Y.
- b. 2 f. 6 *Porgy and Bess* 1961
Includes small scale drawings, ground plan and cue synopsis for production at New York City Center.
- b. 2 f. 7 *The Price* 1968
Includes cue synopsis and lighting documentation for production at the Morosco Theatre, New York.
- b. 2 f. 8 *Richard III* undated
Includes drawings and ground plan for production at New York City Center.
- b. 2 f. 9 *Separate Tables* 1956
Includes focus chart, elevation, photographs for production at the Music Box Theatre, New York.
- b. 2 f. 10 *Tamburlaine the Great* 1956
Includes correspondence, notes and sketches for production at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York.
- b. 2 f. 11 *Thurber Carnival* 1960
Includes list of show's running order for production at the ANTA Theatre, New York.
- b. 2 f. 12 *Tiger at the Gates* 1955
Includes schedule, costume and lighting notes for production at the Plymouth Theatre, New York.
- b. 2 f. 13 *Time and Again* 1958
Includes correspondence, cue sheet and lighting documentation.
- b. 2 f. 14 *Travel notes and expenses* 1959, 1969, 1970
Includes receipts, plane tickets, etc.
- b. 2 f. 15 *A View from the Bridge* 1958
Includes cue sheet, lighting documentation, clippings.
- b. 2 f. 16-17 *The Visit* 1958 (2 folders)
Includes instrument schedule, hookup charts, etc. Also, correspondence and notes for production at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, New York.
- b. 2 f. 18 *What Every Woman Knows* 1946
Includes property list for show produced by the American Repertory Theatre.
- b. 2 f. 19 *The Young and the Fair* 1948
Includes small sketch with highlights from reviews from production at the Fulton Theatre, New York.
- b. 3 f. 1 *Early sketchbook* ca. 1925-1927
Includes pencil and watercolor sketches with handpainted cover.
- b. 3 f. 2 *Sketchbook* undated
Includes pencil and crayon sketches of figures.

Series I: Professional Papers (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 3 **Unidentified sketches and plans** undated
Includes pencil and watercolor sketches; technical drawings.
- b. 3 f. 4 **Unidentified notes and cue sheets** undated

Series II: Designs 1939-1964 (3 boxes)

These watercolor and gouache renderings are primarily set designs. Also included are a few costume sketches and lighting designs. Most of them correspond to technical drawings in Series III. The dates listed here are those signed on the work -- in some instances the production was mounted the following year.

Alphabetical by title.

- b. 4 f. 1 *Affairs of State* 1950
Set design: watercolor labeled "first sketch" for production at the Royale Theatre, New York.
- b. 4 f. 2 *Ah, Wilderness* undated
Set design: watercolors labeled "summer stock."
- b. 4 f. 3 **American Repertory Theatre** ca. 1946
Set designs: watercolors.
- b. 4 f. 4 *Babes in the Woods* 1964
Set design: gouache for production at the Orpheum Theatre.
- b. 4 f. 5 **Ballet** undated
Set design: gouache.
- b. 4 f. 5A *Billy Budd* 1951
Set designs: watercolor, gouache and pencil for production at the Biltmore Theatre, New York.
- b. 4 f. 6 *Bishop's Candlesticks* undated
Set design: watercolor for one-act opera.
- b. 4 f. 7 *The Cadillac Show* 1957
Set designs: watercolor.
- b. 4 f. 8 *The Cantilevered Terrace* 1961
Costume design: watercolor sketch of "Mrs. Perpetua" played by Mildred Dunnock for production at the 41st Street Theatre, New York.
- b. 4 f. 9 *The Closing Door* 1949
Set design: watercolor for production at the Empire Theatre, New York. Also, watercolor elevation labeled "sky drop."
- b. 4 f. 10 *Cyrano de Bergerac* 1953
Set design: watercolor for production at New York City Center. Includes ground plan.
- b. 4 f. 11 *The Edge of the World* undated
Set design: watercolor.
- b. 4 f. 12 *Festival* undated
Set design: watercolor.
- b. 5 f. 1 *Fugitive from Rhythm* undated
Set design: watercolor.
- b. 5 f. 2 *Hot Nocturne* undated
Set design: watercolor. Also, 2 black and white photographs of the sketch.
- b. 5 f. 3 *I'll Take the High Road* 1943
Set design: gouache labeled "first sketch" for production at the Ritz Theatre, New York.
- b. 5 f. 4 *The Importance of Being Earnest* undated
Watercolor and pencil sketch for "act curtain."
- b. 5 f. 4A *Jeanette* 1959
Set design: watercolor for production at the Maidman Theatre.

Series II: Designs (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 5 *John Gabriel Borkman* 1946
Costume design for production at the American Repertory Theatre, New York.
- b. 5 f. 6 *Lafayette pageant* undated
Set designs: watercolor and pencil.
- b. 5 f. 7 *Landscapes and figure studies* 1966, undated
Watercolor sketches of New England.
- b. 5 f. 8 *The Lonely Man* undated
Set designs: watercolor and pencil.
- b. 5 f. 9 *Maybe Tuesday* 1958
Set designs: watercolor for production at the Playhouse Theatre, New York.
- b. 5 f. 10 *Mrs. January and Mr. X* 1944
Set design: watercolor for production at the Belasco Theatre, New York.
- b. 5 f. 11 *The Nervous Set* 1959
Set design: gouache for production at Henry Miller's Theatre, New York.
- b. 5 f. 12 *Nothing Serious* undated
Set design: watercolor.
- b. 5 f. 13 *Once Upon a Tailor* 1955
Costume designs for production at the Cort Theatre, New York.
- b. 5 f. 14 *Outward Bound* undated
Set design: watercolor.
- b. 6 f. 1 *The Rape of the Belt* 1960
3 set designs: watercolor for production at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York. Also, watercolor elevation for scrim drop.
- b. 6 f. 2 *Saturday Evening Post presentation* 1956
Gouache labeled "proscenium set piece, curtain, and screen."
- b. 6 f. 3 *The Skin of Our Teeth* 1961
Watercolor set designs: elevations, presentation sketch, curtain sketches for Theatre Guild / American Repertory Theatre tour of Europe.
- b. 6 f. 4 *Ten Little Indians* undated
- b. 6 f. 5 *The Tender Trap* 1954
Set design: watercolor for production at the Longacre Theatre, New York.
- b. 6 f. 6 *The Three Sisters* undated
- b. 6 f. 7 *Thunder Rock* 1939
Watercolor costume design for actor Lee J. Cobb for production at the Mansfield Theatre, New York.
- b. 6 f. 8 *Too True to Be Good* 1963
Set designs: pencil sketches for production at the 54th Street Theatre, New York.
- b. 6 f. 9 *Wings over Europe* undated
Set design: watercolor.
- b. 6 f. 10 *The Young and the Fair* 1948
Set design: watercolor for production at the Fulton Theatre, New York.
- b. 6 f. 11 Unidentified watercolor design sketches undated
- b. 7 f. 1 Unidentified costume design sketches undated

Series III: Technical Drawings 1946-1970, undated (5 boxes)

Includes drafting for scenic designs: ground plans, elevations, details, and rough sketches. Also includes lighting designs: light plots, lighting sections, channel hookups and other documentation. The year noted on the drawing is that of the design, which in some cases precedes the actual production.

Alphabetical by production title.

- b. 7 f. 1A **American Repertory Theatre** ca. 1946
Includes ground plan and set elevation for pit platform.
- b. 7 f. 2 **Arabian Nights** 1954
Production at Jones Beach, Long Island, New York (set design).
- b. 7 f. 2A **Babes in the Woods** 1964
Production at Orpheum Theatre.
- b. 7 f. 3 **Banderol** 1962
Includes ground plans and elevations for production at the Forrest Theatre in Philadelphia (pre-Broadway tryout; closed out-of-town).
- b. 7 f. 4 **Billy Budd** 1951
Includes ground plans and sketches for production at the Biltmore Theatre, New York.
- b. 7 f. 5 **The Cadillac Show** 1957
- b. 7 f. 5A **Candide** 1956
Includes light plot for production at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York.
- b. 7 f. 6 **The Cantilevered Terrace** 1961
Includes ground plans and electrical layout for production at the 41st Street Theatre, New York.
- b. 8 f. 1 **The Caretaker** 1961
Scenic design supervised by Morrison; lighting designed by Morrison. Includes light plot and lighting section for production at the Lyceum Theatre, New York.
- b. 8 f. 2 **The Cat in the Canary** 1964
Includes set elevations.
- b. 8 f. 3 **The Chrysler Americana** undated
- b. 8 f. 4 **The Chrysler Press Show** 1959
Industrial show presented at the Americana Hotel in Miami, Florida.
- b. 8 f. 4A **Conduct Unbecoming** 1970
Includes ground plan for Donmar production at the Barrymore Theatre, New York; Morrison was production supervisor.
- b. 8 f. 5 **The Confidential Clerk** 1953
Includes ground plans for production at the Morosco Theatre, New York.
- b. 8 f. 6 **Crime and Punishment** 1947
Includes blueprint designed by Paul Sherriff.
- b. 8 f. 6A **Five Finger Exercise** 1961
Includes ground plan and set elevation for production at the La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego, Calif.
- b. 8 f. 7 **Foot in the Door** undated
Includes elevations and full scale details.
- b. 8 f. 8 **Four Saints in Three Acts** 1952
Includes ground plans for revival mounted at the ANTA Theatre, New York. From the original designs by Florine Stettheimer.
- b. 8 f. 8A **Free as a Bird** 1961
Includes ground plans and set elevations for production at Grist Mill Playhouse, Andover, N.J.
- b. 8 f. 9 **Giradoux** undated
Includes ground plans for production at Carnegie Recital Hall.

Series III: Technical Drawings (cont.)

- b. 8 f. 10 *Greek Theatre, Los Angeles, Calif.* 1962
- b. 9 f. 1-4 *Have I Got a Girl for You* 1962 (4 folders)
Includes elevations and ground plans. This production was originally titled *The Human Pattern*.
- b. 9 f. 4A *Henry VIII / Androcles and the Lion* undated
Includes light hanging plan for productions at the American Repertory Theatre, New York.
- b. 9 f. 5 *The Iceman Cometh* undated
Production mounted in Japan with the Kumo Company at the Institute of Dramatic Art, Nikkei Hall.
- b. 9 f. 6 *Invitation to a March* 1960-1961
Includes light plot for production produced by the Theatre Guild at the Music Box Theatre, with sets designed by William Pitkin. Also included are ground plans for production at the La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego, Calif., 1961.
- b. 9 f. 7 *The Irish Plays* 1959
Includes set elevation for production at the Beekman Tower Hotel, New York.
- b. 9 f. 7A *John Gabriel Borkman* 1946
Includes set elevation for production at American Repertory Theatre, New York.
- b. 9 f. 8 *Kataki* 1959
Includes light plot for production at the Ambassador Theatre New York. Also ground plans and elevations by Peter Dohanos.
- b. 9 f. 9 *Long Day's Journey into Night* undated
Includes ground plan.
- b. 9 f. 10 *Loud Red Patrick* 1956
Includes ground plan and set elevations for production at the Ambassador Theatre New York.
- b. 9 f. 11 *Lovely Star, Goodnight* 1959
Includes set elevations.
- b. 9 f. 12 *Lysistrata* undated
Includes light plots for production at the Phoenix Theatre.
- b. 9 f. 13 *Make a Million* 1958
Includes ground plans and set elevations for production at the Playhouse and the Morosco Theatre, New York.
- b. 9 f. 14-15 *A Man for All Seasons* 1961 (2 folders)
Includes light plots for production at the ANTA Playhouse, New York. Also includes prop sketches for production at the Greek Theatre, Los Angeles; ground plans and set elevations for National Performing Arts.
- b. 9 f. 16 *Man with the Golden Arm* 1956
Includes ground plans and set elevations for production at the Cherry Lane Theatre, New York.
- b. 9 f. 17 *Marriage-Go-Round* 1961
Includes ground plans, stage plans, rigging, lighting section for production at the Grist Mill Playhouse, New Jersey.
- b. 9 f. 18 *Maybe Tuesday* 1957-1958
Includes ground plans and set elevations for production at the Playhouse Theatre, New York.
- b. 9 f. 19 *The Mousetrap* undated
Production at the Maidman Playhouse.
- b. 9 f. 20 *Much Ado About Nothing* 1951
Includes ground plans and lighting section for production at Phoenix Theatre, London.

Series III: Technical Drawings (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 21-22 *Much Ado About Nothing* 1959, undated (2 folders)
Includes ground plans, elevation, property sketches and lighting section for production mounted in the Boston area. Also includes details drawn by architect Carl Koch.
- b. 9 f. 23 *Much Ado about Nothing* 1959
Includes ground plan, details and elevations for production at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, New York.
- b. 9 f. 24 *Much Ado About Nothing* undated
Includes Morrison's lighting designs for production at the Sylvan Theatre, Washington D.C. with set designs by Robert Troll.
- b. 9 f. 25 *The Murder of Me* undated
Includes ground plan and set elevations.
- b. 10 f. 1 *Once Upon a Tailor* 1955
Includes costume sketches by Morrison for production at the Playwrights' Company, New York. Also includes set elevation and photocopy of set by Boris Aronson.
- b. 10 f. 2 *The Price* 1968-1969
Includes ground plans by Boris Aronson and light plots by Morrison for production at the Morosco and 46th Street Theatres, New York.
- b. 10 f. 3 *The Rape of the Belt* 1960
Includes ground plan, quick sketches and set elevations for production at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York.
- b. 10 f. 4 *Saturday Evening Post presentation* 1956
Includes ground plans, set elevations and color elevations for industrial presentation.
- b. 10 f. 5-6 *Separate Tables* 1956-1957 (2 folders)
Includes ground plan and set elevations for production at Central City Opera House, Denver, Colorado. Production was also mounted at the Music Box Theatre, New York.
- b. 10 f. 7 *The Sixth Finger on a Five Finger Glove* 1956
Includes ground plan, quick sketches and set elevations for production at the Longacre Theatre, New York.
- b. 10 f. 8 *The Skin of our Teeth* 1961
Includes ground plans and set elevations for production at Theatre Guild / American Repertory Theatre, New York.
- b. 10 f. 8A *Sound of Murder* 1961
Includes ground plans for production at La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego, Calif.
- b. 10 f. 9 *South Pacific*
Includes ground plan with light plot for New York City Center production in 1957. Morrison adapted Jo Mielziner's original (1957) set designs for the 1961 revival at City Center.
- b. 10 f. 9A *Tender Trap* 1954
Includes ground plan and set elevations for production at the Longacre Theatre, New York.
- b. 10 f. 10 *A Thurber Carnival* 1959-1960
Includes light plot for production at the ANTA Playhouse, New York.
- b. 11 f. 1-5 *Too True to Be Good* 1963 (5 folders)
Includes ground plan, set elevations, light plot and lighting section for production at the 54th Street Theatre, New York.
- b. 11 f. 6 *A View from the Bridge* 1958
Includes set elevations and magic sheet from version produced by D'Ancona and Blum at the Curran Theatre, San Francisco.
- b. 11 f. 7 *The Visit* 1958
Includes ground plan and light plot for road tour of the Broadway production.
- b. 11 f. 7A *What Every Woman Knows* 1946
Includes set elevation for production at the American Repertory Theatre, New York.

Series III: Technical Drawings (cont.)

- b. 11 f. 8 *What Makes Sammy Run* 1963
Includes light plot and hanging plot revised by Helen Pond and Herbert Senn.
- b. 11 f. 9 *The World of Shakespeare* 1963
Includes ground plan, set sketches and proposed elevation sketch.
- b. 11 f. 10 *The Young and the Fair* 1948
Includes color set sketch from production at the Fulton Theatre, New York.
- b. 11 f. 11 Unidentified set elevations and light plots undated