



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Elie Edson press files on Sarah Bernhardt**

1910-1911

\*T-Mss 2013-107

Compiled by Lea Jordan, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Edson, Elie

**Title:** Elie Edson press files on Sarah Bernhardt

**Date:** 1910-1911

**Size:** 1.9 linear feet (3 boxes, 1 volume)

**Source:** Unknown.

**Abstract:** Elie Edson (1882-1971) was an American theatrical press agent. The Elie Edson press files on Sarah Bernhardt hold correspondence, press releases, photographs, notes, and programs relating to the representation of Bernhardt's American tour from 1910 to 1911.

**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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**Processing note:** Compiled by Lea Jordan, 2015

## Creator History

Elie Edson (1882-1971) was an American theatrical press agent. Edson attended Harvard University for his graduate and undergraduate degrees. He met Sarah Bernhardt when the University's "Cercle Française" gave a reception in her honor in 1906. Edson subsequently became Bernhardt's press representative on one of her last American tours from October of 1910 to the end of 1911. Edson was a charter member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents.

## Scope and Content Note

The Elie Edson press files on Sarah Bernhardt hold correspondence, press releases, photographs, notes, and programs relating to the representation of Bernhardt's American tour from 1910 to 1911.

The bulk of Edson's correspondence is with newspaper editors, journalists, and venues arranging advance press coverage of Bernhardt's tour. Often venue owners provided Edson with lists of cooperative publications, and offered suggestions for how to work with editors who weren't amenable to a series of publicity stories. The solution was often to buy story space as if it were an advertisement. Some of the correspondence is addressed to William Connor, the director of Bernhardt's tour concerning press needs; these letters were forwarded to Edson for response.

Press releases include articles which were pushed (often as a series) in each city before the company arrived. Each are labeled at the top with an abbreviated title and the order in which it should be published. For example, a series about Bernhardt's presentation of *L'Aiglon* would be marked "L'Aiglon - 1", "L'Aiglon-2", and so on. There are also one-off articles specific to individual cities. Articles were written by various individuals; Edson also wrote and suggested ideas for the articles.

Programs are accompanied by hand-drawn mockups. The programs often contained librettos in French and English so that the audience could follow along. The drafts of these translations are also found here.

Other material consists of a small selection of publicity photographs of Bernhardt in various stage roles as well as a large scrapbook of clippings from the tour dated January through May 1911.

Some files have internal call numbers with which they are associated. These call numbers are indicated in the container list with the letters "MWEZ."

**Arrangement:** Alphabetical by file title.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Press agents  
Theater -- 20th century  
Theater -- Public relations  
Theater -- Reviews

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scrapbooks

### Names

Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-4 Correspondence 1910-1911  
8-MWEZ + 21,170
- b. 1 f. 5 Libretto Translations 1910-1911  
*L'Aiglon* and *Madame X*
- b. 1 f. 6 Notes 1910-1911  
8-MWEZ + 21,170
- b. 3 f. 1-6 Photographs 1910-1911  
MWEZ + n.c. 21,172
- b. 1 f. 7 Press Releases 1910-1911  
8-MWEZ + 21,170
- b. 2 f. 1-3 Press Releases 1910-1911  
8-MWEZ + 21,170, 8-MWEZ + 21,171
- b. 2 f. 4 Programs 1910-1911
- v. 1 Scrapbook 1911  
MWEZ + n.c. 14,267