



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Nicholas Saunders and Gedda Petry papers

1934-1987

*T-Mss 1992-035

Compiled by cdee, 2015

Summary

Creator: Saunders, Nicholas

Title: Nicholas Saunders and Gedda Petry papers

Date: 1934-1987

Size: .4 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift of Nicholas Saunders, 1992

Abstract: The Nicholas Saunders and Gedda Petry papers contain contracts, programs, correspondence, scripts, and one photograph documenting the careers of performers Nicholas Saunders and his wife, Gedda Petry.

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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Processing note: Compiled by cdee, 2015

Creator History

Actor, stage manager, director, and translator, Nicholas Saunders, was born Nikita Soussanin on June 2, 1913 (some sources give birth year as 1914) in Kiev, Ukraine. He escaped from the Soviet Union with his father and grew up in Hollywood. Saunders appeared in Broadway productions and television programs. He stage managed *The Fifth Season* on Broadway (1953) and the original Broadway production of *Look Back in Anger* (1957). Saunders translated *Zoya's Apartment* (1990) from Russian

with Frank Dwyer. He was married to actress Gedda Petry for sixty-seven years and they had two children. Saunders died of lung cancer at age 92 at his home in Los Angeles on Aug. 16, 2006.

Gedda Petry was a performer who appeared or understudied on Broadway in productions including *Lady in the Dark* (1943) and *The Fifth Season* (1953). Petry was born Oct. 23, 1917 and was married to Nicholas Saunders. She died Oct. 12, 2007 in Los Angeles.

Scope and Content Note

The Nicholas Saunders and Gedda Petry papers contain contracts, programs, correspondence, scripts, and one photograph documenting the careers of performers Nicholas Saunders and his wife, Gedda Petry, from 1934 to 1987.

Much of the correspondence consists of letters between Nicholas Saunders (stage manager) and George Kondolf (producer) reporting on *The Fifth Season* (1953) and is often humorous. There are also scripts for *Black-Eyed Susan* (1954), and *Zoya's Apartment* (1990), which Saunders translated from Russian with Frank Dwyer. Of note is the stage manager's (Saunders's) production script for the original New York production of *Look Back in Anger* and an opening night program (1957). Also included is a program for *The "Lady in the Dark" Canteen Show and Stage Door Canteen*, San Francisco (June 13, 1943) in which Petry performed.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors
Actresses
Stage managers

Subjects

Actors -- 20th Century
Actors -- United States
Actresses -- United States -- 20th century

Titles

Black-eyed Susan
Look Back in Anger
The Fifth Season
Zoya's Apartment

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Contracts
Correspondence
Scripts
Theater programs

Names

Petry, Gedda