



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Tunc Yalman papers**

1924-2001

\*T-Mss 2002-001

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Yalman, Tunc

**Title:** Tunc Yalman papers

**Date:** 1924-2001

**Size:** 1.5 linear feet (4 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Tunc Yalman, 2002

**Abstract:** Tunc Yalman (1925-2006) was a theater director and playwright. The Tunc Yalman papers (1924-2001) primarily document his career from the 1950s to the mid-1980s. The papers hold correspondence, programs, clippings, scripts, resumes, photographs, and writings.

**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 Matthew Snyder, 2015

## Creator History

Tunc Yalman (1925-2006), a theater director and playwright, was born in Istanbul, Turkey. His father was the journalist A. E. Yalman. Growing up, he received a thorough grounding in theater via the Istanbul Municipal Theatre. In 1938 and 1939 his family lived in New York City, where Yalman attended The Lincoln School. He earned his B.A. at Robert College in Istanbul, and, in 1950, received an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama, where he studied directing and playwriting.

Yalman went on to split his career between the United States and Europe. His work as an actor and director in Turkey resulted in his appointment as chief assistant to the director of the Istanbul Municipal Theatre, and effectively its artistic director. He was awarded a McDowell Colony residency as well as two Rockefeller Foundation fellowships to assist with his travels.

In 1966, Yalman settled in the United States to become the artistic director of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater Company. He made his Broadway debut in 1967, directing *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald*. Yalman left Milwaukee in 1971 for New York City, where he directed Off-Broadway plays, and also worked with regional theatres around the country. In 1976, Yalman joined the faculty of the North Carolina School of the Arts (now part of the University of North Carolina), where he remained until his retirement.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Tunc Yalman papers (1924-2001) primarily document Yalman's writing and directing career from the 1950s to the mid-1980s. The papers hold correspondence, programs, clippings, scripts, resumes, photographs, and writings.

Correspondence, programs, photographs, and scripts regarding some plays directed, adapted, or written by Yalman are arranged in project files. The largest of these files documents *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald*, and holds three annotated scripts, production correspondence, and clippings. Other project files cover *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*; *La Turista* (a play by Sam Shepard); Yalman's adaptations of *The Devil's General* (from the book by Carl Zuckmayer) and *The Liar*; and Yalman's plays *Mayerling, or The Advantages of Deodorant*, *The Myrmidons*; and *A Ball for the Imaginative*. Correspondence regarding Yalman's plays mostly discusses their publication prospects, except for *The Myrmidons*, which was produced when Yalman was studying at the Yale School of Drama.

Other plays directed by Yalman are evidenced in the program files, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre files, the Yale University Theater files, and files for the North Carolina School for the Arts and Wright State University. The Milwaukee Repertory Theater files contain folders for individual productions as well as annual reports, clippings, general correspondence, and photographs.

The correspondence file mostly contains letters to Yalman from agents, producers, theater companies, publishers, schools, colleagues, and friends. Correspondents include the Rockefeller Foundation, George Freedley (Curator of the Theatre Division of the New York Public Library in the 1950s and 1960s), Alfred Lunt, Bramwell Fletcher, Sam Wanamaker, Jessica Tandy, Joan Fontaine, John Houseman, and Anthony Perkins.

The writings contain manuscripts, typescripts, or copies of published essays by Yalman. Titles include *Some Generalities on the Director's Choice of the Play*, *On the Artist and His Audience*, *Notes After a Jed Harris "Lecture"*, and *The Regions Through a Perspective*.

A separate photographs file holds formal and informal portraits of Yalman, some taken by Carl Van Vechten. One features Yalman with the English director Tyrone Guthrie.

Two small files relate to Thornton Wilder and The Lincoln School in Manhattan. The Wilder file contains letters from Wilder and his sister, Isabel; Wilder's memorial program; and a published copy of *A Project for a Theatrical Presentation of The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighiere* by Norman Bel Geddes, signed by Wilder. The file for the Lincoln School contains the 1939 yearbook, photographs, a student

handbook, and letters regarding reunions.

The resumes and clippings file holds general documentation of Yalman's career from the 1960s forward.

**Arrangement:** The papers are arranged by format or subject.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)

Correspondence

Photographs

Programs (documents)

Résumés (personnel records)

Scripts (documents)

Writings (document genre)

### **Occupations**

Directors (performing arts)

Playwrights

### **Subjects**

Theater -- United States -- 20th century

### **Names**

Milwaukee Repertory Theater

## Container List

### Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1-5 1948-2001
  - b. 1 f. 6 Freedley, George 1958-1966
  - b. 1 f. 7 Lunt, Alfred, and Jay Fuchs 1969
  - b. 1 f. 8 The Rockefeller Foundation 1962
  - b. 1 f. 9 The Lincoln School 1939, 1997-1999
- ### Milwaukee Repertory Theater
- b. 1 f. 10 Annual Reports 1966-1970
  - b. 1 f. 11 Clippings 1966-1971
  - b. 1 f. 12 Correspondence 1968-1969, 1990-1993
  - b. 1 f. 13 *Design For Living* 1966
  - b. 1 f. 14 *Electra* 1966
  - b. 2 f. 1 Photographs undated
  - b. 2 f. 2 Programs 1966-1971
  - b. 2 f. 3 *The Skin of Our Teeth* 1968
  - b. 2 f. 4 North Carolina School of the Arts 1979-1989
  - b. 2 f. 5 Photographs 1956-1967
  - b. 2 f. 6-7 Programs 1956-1985, undated

### Project Files

- b. 2 f. 8 *A Ball for the Imaginative* 1956, 1968
- b. 3 f. 1 *The Devil's General* 1974
- b. 3 f. 2 *The Liar* 1971-1973
- b. 3 f. 3 *Mayerling, or The Advantages of Deodorant* 1968-1973, 1988-1989
- b. 3 f. 4 *The Myrmidons* 1950-1960
- b. 3 f. 5 *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* 1972
- b. 3 f. 6-9 *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald* 1967-1968
- b. 4 f. 1 *La Turista* 1971
- b. 4 f. 2 Resumes and Clippings 1960s-1994
- b. 4 f. 3 Wilder, Thornton 1924, 1976, 1993
- b. 4 f. 4 Wright State University 1975
- b. 4 f. 5 Writings 1971, undated
- b. 4 f. 6 Yale University Theater 1940s-1950