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Guide to the

Isaiah Sheffer Papers

1891-2013 [bulk 1937-2012]

*T-Mss 2014-186

Support for the processing of this collection was generously provided by Gina Boonshoft.

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2015

Summary

Creator: Sheffer, Isaiah

Title: Isaiah Sheffer Papers

Date: 1891-2013 [bulk 1937-2012]

Size: 27.9 linear feet (70 boxes, 1 oversized folder, 2 tubes); 483.9 mb (1943 computer files)

Source: Donated by Ethel Sheffer, 2015

Abstract: Isaiah Sheffer (1935-2012) was a creative force in the New York theatre scene for many years. He co-founded Symphony Space in New York City and served as the organization's artistic director until 2010 and founding artistic director thereafter. His papers range from writings, scripts, scores, professional correspondence, and other production-related materials to administrative records concerning his work at Symphony Space.

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<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Preferred citation: Isaiah Sheffer Papers, *T-Mss 2014-186. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

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Creator History

Isaiah Sheffer was born in 1935 into a theatrical family in the Bronx, New York. His mother and his uncle, Zvee Scooler, both performed in New York's Yiddish theatre. Isaiah Sheffer had already begun performing in Yiddish theatre by the time he was a teenager, appearing at such theatres as the Henry

Street Playhouse on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and on the radio. He studied theater at both Brooklyn College, where he got his bachelor's degree in 1956, and at Michigan State University, where he earned his master's degree in 1958.

Sheffer continued acting as an adult, performing in summer stock and in New York. Although he would continue to perform throughout his career, he shifted his focus to writing, directing, and producing Off-Broadway plays. In 1963, he wrote and directed *The Theatre of Peretz*, an adaptation of the stories of I. L. Peretz, at the Gate Theatre. In 1965 he directed Eric Bentley's adaptation of Brecht's *The Exception and the Rule* and Langston Hughes' *The Prodigal Son* at the Greenwich Mews Theatre.

Sheffer's best known writings are two Off-Broadway musicals for which he wrote the book and lyrics: *The Rise of David Levinsky*, a collaboration with composer Bobby Paul, which was produced at the John Houseman Theater in 1987; and *Yiddle with a Fiddle*, written with composer Abraham Ellstein, which was produced at the American Jewish Theatre in 1997. Sheffer's other plays and musicals include *Columbus Circle*, *Dreamers and Demons: The Three Worlds of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, *It's Hard to Be a Jew*, *The Last Chapter*, and *The Sheik of Avenue B*. In 1978, Sheffer and his friend and neighbor Allan Miller co-founded an Upper West Side cultural institution: Symphony Space. Sheffer's wife, urban planner and community leader Ethel Sheffer, had suggested a venue at 95th Street and Broadway, a dilapidated building that had once housed a public market, an ice skating rink, a boxing arena and a movie theatre. They launched the new organization with *Wall-to-Wall Bach*, the first of many free twelve-hour music marathons that would become a signature event, covering the works of composers from all musical genres, including classical, jazz, musical theatre, pop, and rock.

In 1981, Sheffer launched another signature event at Symphony Space, *Bloomsday on Broadway*. This annual reading of James Joyce's *Ulysses* takes place on June 16th, the day in 1904 on which the action of the novel takes place. More than 100 actors and other notables take part in readings that last seven hours or more. The format of *Bloomsday on Broadway* inspired Sheffer and Kay Cattarulla, the producer of Literary Programs, to create *Selected Shorts*. Since its launch in 1985, *Selected Shorts* has been a popular weekly series of readings of short stories by a variety of actors and actresses. The event takes place live at Symphony Space and is broadcast on over 130 radio stations across the country, and via a popular podcast. *Selected Shorts* also went on several tours, performing in other cities in the United States. Sheffer served as the host of *Selected Shorts*, and often read a story himself.

Sheffer's interest in politics inspired him to produce his first political cabaret in 1968, *The DMZ*, a collaboration with Sheffer's Columbia University colleague, the critic and Brecht scholar, Eric Bentley. In the years that followed, Sheffer conceived and directed cabarets that poked fun at contemporary urban life: *Urban Blight* (1970) and *Late City Edition* (1981). He contributed material to Yale Repertory Theatre's political revue, *Watergate Classics* (1973). Sheffer continued this trend at Symphony Space, with the *Thalia Follies*, an annual political cabaret, produced from 2004 to 2013.

Isaiah Sheffer served as the artistic director of Symphony Space until 2010 and founding artistic director until his death. He also taught Theatre Arts at Columbia University's School of the Arts during the 1960s and 1970s. Sheffer was married to Ethel Shatunoff, from 1956 until his death. They had one daughter, Susannah Sheffer. Isaiah Sheffer died of a stroke on November 9, 2012.

Scope and Content Note

The Isaiah Sheffer papers (1891-2013, bulk dates: 1937-2012) consist of professional files created during his career as a writer, director, producer, actor, and administrator at Symphony Space. Although

the collection has been arranged in four series, there is considerable overlap among the files. The chronological files have the broadest scope since they span all aspects of his career. The files contain professional correspondence with colleagues and collaborators, administrative files concerning his work as artistic director of Symphony Space, and production materials. Sheffer's work as a writer, producer, and director is most evident in the Productions series which primarily contains scripts and scores from his plays and musicals. Symphony Space Office Files document the day-to-day running of a non-profit arts organization and contain mainly administrative files, such as publicity material for events held there, meeting minutes, and financial records. Within the small amount of personal files, there is family correspondence, photographs, early academic records, and writings.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors
Arts administrators
Directors
Producers and directors
Writers

Subjects

Arts administrators -- New York (State)
Concerts -- Production and direction
Off Off-Broadway theater
Political plays
Radio programs
Short stories.
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Theater -- Production and direction -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)
Correspondence
Photographs
Programs (documents)
Scores
Scripts
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Names

Bentley, Eric, 1916-
Symphony Space (Firm)

Container List

Series I: Productions 1937-2011 (18 Computer Files 29 Boxes, 2.57 Megabytes)

Productions consist primarily of scripts and scores, but also include other production materials and several audio and video recordings. Sheffer's writing and revision process is shown through multiple drafts, revisions, notes, and annotated scores. Sheffer consistently retained audio and video recordings, such as demo recordings and live performance recordings of works he wrote, directed, produced or appeared in. These include such plays and musicals as *Claire de Lune*, *The Doctor Will See You Now*, *The Dybbuk*, *The Last Chapter*, *Millenium*, *A Pair of Jokers*, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, *The Sheik of Avenue B*, *Yiddle with a Fiddle*, and the radio series *Theatre Studio on the Air*. Other production materials such as programs, flyers, clippings, rehearsal schedules, contracts, correspondence, photographs, posters, and notes filed with scripts are included here, though the majority of non-script and score production materials will be found in Chronological Files.

This series does not include scripts and production materials for Symphony Space productions. These will be found in Symphony Space Office Files and Chronological Files. This series is arranged in alphabetical order by name of production.

Audio and visual materials are unavailable pending digitization.

- b. 1 f. 1-3 *Acting/Directing and Stuff in Between* 2002-2004
- b. 1 f. 4 *Air Rights* 1987
- b. 1 f. 5 *Angela and the Baby Jesus* 2011
- b. 2 f. 1 *Baal* 1962
- b. 2 f. 2 *The Babylon Captivity* 1974
Barabbas
- b. 2 f. 3-4 1958-1961
- b. 70 f. 1 1961
Bentley, Eric
- b. 2 f. 5 Birthday Tribute 1996
- b. 58 f. 1 Scores
- b. 2 f. 6-7 *A Broadcast Baby* 1985
- b. 2 f. 8 *Broken Yokes*
- b. 3 f. 1 *Call Me Bridey* 2010
- b. 3 f. 2 *Cauldron* 1978
- b. 3 f. 3 *Chère Maître* 2008
- b. 69 f. 1 *Children in a New Land*
Christopher Columbus and Chronicles of Hell
- b. 69 f. 2 1967
- b. 68 f. 6 1967
- b. 3 f. 4 *Clair de Lune: By the Pale Moonlight* 1995
Clownmaker
- b. 3 f. 5-6 1975
- b. 70 f. 2 1975
Columbus Circle
- b. 58 f. 2 1976
- b. 4 f. 1-4 1979
- b. 4 f. 5 *Contingent Loves* 1994

Series I: Productions (cont.)

- b. 58 f. 3 *The DMZ* 1967
- b. 5 f. 1-6 *The Doctor Will See You Now* 1996-1998
Dreamers and Demons 1996-2004
 - b. 5 f. 7 1996
- b. 6 f. 1-9 1998-2010
- b. 69 f. 11 2010
 - b. 7 f. 1 *Driving the Interior* 1988
- b. 7 f. 2-4 *Duke's Place* 1991-1992
The Elephant Calf
- b. 58 f. 4 1963
 - b. 7 f. 5 1994, 2010
 - b. 7 f. 6 *An Evening with the Poet-Senator*
The Exception and the Rule
- b. 68 f. 1 1961
- b. 69 f. 21 1961
 - b. 7 f. 7 *Fresh Kills* 2005
 - b. 7 f. 8 *Gamblers* 1977
 - b. 7 f. 9 *Good Humor* 1970
 - b. 7 f. 10 *Headlines, Humor, and Hartz-Veytik* 1997
Helpers
 - b. 8 f. 1 2005
2005
er.1 (2 Computer Files, 410.5 Kilobytes)
 - b. 8 f. 2 *Her Funny Valentine* 1995
 - b. 8 f. 3 *How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear*
 - b. 8 f. 4 *In the Zone* 1951
 - b. 8 f. 5 *I'm a Stranger Here Myself* 2000
- b. 57 f. 3 *An Irish Christmas - Irish Arts Center* 2010
- b. 57 f. 4 *Insight XI: Alive When I Die* 1993
- b. 8 f. 6 *It's Hard to Be a Jew* 1983
- b. 9 f. 1 *Jubilee Jim* 1980
- b. 64 f. 6 *King David*
 - b. 9 f. 2 *King Solomon*
 - b. 9 f. 3 *The Last Chapter*
- b. 58 f. 5 *The Last Word*
Late City Edition
- b. 58 f. 6 1978
 - b. 9 f. 4 1979
- b. 69 f. 3 1981
 - b. 9 f. 5 *Leaves of Grass* 1992
 - b. 9 f. 6 *Logomaniacs*

Series I: Productions (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 7 *Ma Perche Proprio a Me?*
- b. 9 f. 8 *Maestro* 1991
- b. 10 f. 1 *Manual of Piety*
- b. 10 f. 3 *Melissa* 1978
- Millenium: The Music of Ten Centuries*
- b. 10 f. 4 1982
- b. 68 f. 2 1983
- b. 10 f. 5 *Musical Chairs* 1969
- b. 10 f. 6 *New Hope for the Dead*
- b. 69 f. 4 *A Night in the Old Marketplace* 2007
- b. 10 f. 7 *On Circe's Island* 1960
- b. 10 f. 8-10 *On Second Avenue* 1987
- b. 11 f. 1 *Pair of Jokers* 1989
- b. 11 f. 2 *Pantagleize*
- b. 57 f. 5 *The Pat and Jerry Show* circa 2001
- b. 11 f. 3 *Pills and Needles* 1965
- b. 11 f. 4 *Il Pleure Dans Mon Coeur* 1994
- b. 11 f. 5 *The Plough and the Stars* 1970
- b. 11 f. 6 *Pomander Walk* 1980
- b. 11 f. 7 *Private Lines* 1989
- Private Radio*
- 2010-2011
- er.2 (16 Computer Files, 2.17 Megabytes)
- b. 11 f. 8 2011
- b. 12 f. 1-2 2011
- b. 12 f. 3 *Rallying Cries*
- b. 12 f. 4 *Rare Times Altogether* 1994
- b. 12 f. 5 *Red Apple Rest* 1989
- b. 59 f. 1 *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* 1923
- The Rise of David Levinsky* 1975-1989
- b. 12 f. 6-9 1975-1976
- b. 13 f. 1 1978-1987
- b. 59 f. 2-5 1975
- b. 60 f. 1-4 1976-1978
- b. 69 f. 5 1983
- b. 70 f. 3 1983
- b. 14 f. 1 *The Road to the White House* 1964
- The Sheik of Avenue B*
- b. 14 f. 2-4 1992
- b. 61 f. 1 1987
- b. 14 f. 5 *Signor Paganini* 1979

Series I: Productions (cont.)

- b. 14 f. 6 *Shlemiel the First*
- b. 61 f. 2 *The Snooker Game*
- b. 61 f. 3 *Some of My Best Friends Are Women*
- b. 14 f. 7 *The Story of a Soldier* 1969-2005
- b. 57 f. 6 *The Storyteller* 2010
- b. 15 f. 1 *The Sunshine Boys* 2006
- The Theatre of Peretz*
- b. 15 f. 2-3 1963
- b. 68 f. 5 1963
- b. 15 f. 4-5 *Theatre Studio on the Air- Various Scripts* 1946-1959
- b. 61 f. 4 *The Threepenny Opera*
- b. 15 f. 6 *Tingle Tangle* 1994
- The Tower of Babel*
- b. 16 f. 1 Files
- b. 61 f. 5 Scores
- b. 16 f. 2 *Unique Horn*
- b. 62 f. 1 *Urban Blight* 1971
- b. 16 f. 3 *The Wake* 1978
- b. 16 f. 4 *Want* 1973
- b. 16 f. 5 *Watergate Classics*
- b. 16 f. 6 WC/AR Seder Script 2008
- b. 16 f. 7 The Wedekind Cabaret 2008
- b. 16 f. 8 "WEVD: The Station That Speaks Our Language"
- b. 17 f. 1 *W.H.A.T.* 2012
- Yiddle With a Fiddle* 1990-1997
- b. 17 f. 2-8 1990
- b. 70 f. 5 1990
- b. 18 f. 1-9 1990-1997
- b. 62 f. 2-4 2010
- b. 63 f. 1-4 2010
- b. 64 f. 1 2010
- Various Early Productions
- b. 64 f. 2 Cabaret Songs and Lyrics 1960s
- b. 57 f. 7 Notebook 1972-1974
- b. 19 f. 1 Programs 1950s, 1960s
- b. 18 f. 10-11 Scripts 1937-1956
- b. 64 f. 3 Unidentified Scores
- b. 68 f. 3 Unidentified Scores
- b. 69 f. 6 Unidentified Posters

Series II: Symphony Space Office Files 1978-2013 (1,925 Computer Files 481.33 Megabytes, 34 Boxes)

Symphony Space Office Files consist mainly of files on specific projects (arranged by project title or event name) and season files (arranged chronologically). Sheffer took an active role in conceiving productions, reviewing scripts, vetting submitted writings, contributing parody lyrics, writing sketches, producing, and occasionally performing at Symphony Space events. These actions are reflected through administrative files containing meeting minutes, budgets, and PowerPoint presentations; project files holding scripts, scores, and set-lists; and publicity materials, such as photographs, programs, and designs for posters and other printer matter.

Project files contain both paper and electronic documents. The electronic records are generally organized in folders by project name, though folders are sometimes named for an individual identified with the project, rather than by the full project title. An example of this is the electronic project file for *Wall-to-Wall Balanchine*, which is simply titled "Balanchine." There are also folders of general Symphony Space files. Researchers interested in any Symphony Space project should consult both the general and individual project files. Project files include audio and video recordings of such Symphony Space productions as *Aufwind*, *A More Perfect Union*, and various editions of *Selected Shorts*, *Thalia Follies*, and the *Wall-to-Wall* series.

Season files document Sheffer's process of planning, managing, maintaining, and developing a large-scale arts organization in New York. His season files and notebooks consist of notes and information about the productions, schedules, planning, staff, and operations of Symphony Space. Notebooks are frequently separated into sections on the projects planned for the season. Major annual events are the Symphony Space projects documented most extensively in this series such as *Bloomsday on Broadway*, *Selected Shorts*, the *Thalia Follies*, and the *Wall-to-Wall* series. Symphony Space season files will also be found in Chronological Files.

Project Files

- b. 69 f. 7 *Abe Lincoln on Love and Law* 1991
- b. 19 f. 2 *L'Amour Francais*
- b. 1 f. 6 *The Ape and the Whale*
- b. 19 f. 3 *Aufwind* 1997
- b. 69 f. 8 *Banned, Burned, Seized, and Censored* 2012
- Bar-Ilan University Project 2000
- er.3 (5 Computer Files, 87.69 Kilobytes)
- b. 69 f. 9 *Beast and Dybbuk*
- Bloomsday on Broadway*
- b. 19 f. 4-11 1982-1987
- b. 20 f. 1-15 1988-2007
- 2000-2012
- er.4 (71 Computer Files, 10.02 Megabytes)
- t. 71 2004, 2009
- b. 21 f. 1-3 2008-2013
- Dialogue for Lovers*
- b. 69 f. 10 1980
- b. 4 f. 6-7 1980-1982
- b. 69 f. 12 *Face the Music* 1990
- b. 21 f. 4-10 Galas, Benefits, and Birthday Celebrations 1982-2008
- b. 57 f. 8 *The Great Gatsby* 2000
- Habimah National Theatre of Israel
- 2002-2003
- er.5 (7 Computer Files, 173 Kilobytes)

Series II: Symphony Space Office Files (cont.)

Project Files (cont.)

Habimah National Theatre of Israel (cont.)

- b. 21 f. 11 2003
- b. 57 f. 9 *The Harlem Nutcracker* 1996
- b. 21 f. 12 HB Studio Event
- b. 21 f. 13-14 Holland America - Rotterdam Cruise 1992-1993
 - Isaiahfest*
 - b. 21 f. 15 2010
 - b. 22 f. 1 2010
 - b. 64 f. 4-5 2010
 - b. 70 f. 6 2010
 - t. 72 2010
 - Laughter After Dark* 2003-2004
er.6 (3 Computer Files, 67.5 Kilobytes)
 - Leaves of Grass*
 - b. 22 f. 2 1991-1992
 - b. 70 f. 7 1992
 - Manhattan Madcaps of 1924*
 - b. 22 f. 3 2006
 - b. 57 f. 10 2006
 - b. 65 f. 1-3 2006
 - 2006
er.7 (10 Computer Files, 1.38 Megabytes)
 - b. 23 f. 1 Manteo Sicilian Marionette Theatre
 - A More Perfect Union*
 - b. 23 f. 2-7 2002-2004
 - 2002-2004
er.8 (57 Computer Files, 1.41 Kilobytes)
 - b. 65 f. 4 circa 2004
 - New York / Paris Contemporary Cabaret 2002
er.9 (5 Computer Files, 287.8 Kilobytes)
 - b. 24 f. 1 *A Night in the Old Marketplace - Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art* 2011
 - b. 57 f. 11 *Now We Are Enemies: The Story of Bunker Hill*
 - Platero y Yo*
 - b. 66 f. 1 1995
 - b. 24 f. 2-4 1998
 - o. 1 *Ruddigore* 1984
 - Selected Shorts*
 - b. 24 f. 5-11 1986-1998
 - 1999-2003
er.10 (637 Computer Files, 17.92 Megabytes)
 - b. 25 f. 1-10 1999-2010
 - b. 69 f. 13 2010
 - b. 26 f. 1-11 2010-2011

Series II: Symphony Space Office Files (cont.)

Project Files (cont.)

Selected Shorts (cont.)

- b. 27 f. 1-12 2011
- b. 28 f. 1-11 2011-2012
- b. 29 f. 1-5 2012
- b. 69 f. 14 *Shadow of a Gunman*
- Short Scores*
- 2000-2002
- er.11 (24 Computer Files, 360.7 Kilobytes)
- b. 29 f. 7 2001
- b. 29 f. 6 *Speak the Speech: Shakespeare's Monologues Illuminated* 2005-2006
- b. 29 f. 8 *Street Songs* 1997
- Smut Sampler*
- b. 29 f. 9 2011
- 2011
- er.12 (14 Computer Files, 1.32 Megabytes)
- Thalia Follies*
- 1999-2014
- er.13 (666 Computer Files, 430.5 Megabytes)
- b. 29 f. 10 2004
- b. 30 f. 1-13 2004-2006
- b. 31 f. 1-10 2006-2007
- b. 32 f. 1-10 2007
- b. 66 f. 2 2007
- b. 33 f. 1-10 2007-2009
- b. 69 f. 15 2008
- t. 72 2008, 2012
- b. 34 f. 1-8 2008-2010
- b. 35 f. 1-8 2010
- b. 36 f. 1-12 2010-2011
- b. 37 f. 1-12 2011-2012
- b. 38 f. 1-3 2012-2013
- b. 38 f. 4 *Unfinished Symphony* 1998
- b. 38 f. 5 *Wall-to-Wall Bach* 2008
- b. 38 f. 6 *Wall-to-Wall Behind the Wall* 2011
- Wall-to-Wall Broadway*
- b. 38 f. 7 2009
- 2009
- er.15 (9 Computer Files, 651.0 Kilobytes)
- b. 38 f. 8 *Wall-to-Wall Cole Porter* 1987-1988
- b. 38 f. 9 *Wall-to-Wall Duke Ellington* 1991
- Wall-to-Wall Frank Loesser*
- b. 38 f. 10 1999
- b. 66 f. 3 circa 1999

Series II: Symphony Space Office Files (cont.)
Project Files (cont.)

- Wall-to-Wall George Balanchine*
b. 38 f. 11-12 2002-2004
2003-2004
er.14 (13 Computer Files, 361.5 Kilobytes)
- b. 39 f. 1 *Wall-to-Wall Gershwin* 1990
- b. 39 f. 2 *Wall-to-Wall Gertrude Stein* 2012
Wall-to-Wall Irving Berlin
b. 67 f. 1-2 1988, 1994
b. 39 f. 3 1994
b. 66 f. 4 1994
b. 39 f. 4 *Wall-to-Wall Leonard Bernstein* 1997
Wall-to-Wall Opera 2006
er.16 (8 Computer Files, 307.1 Kilobytes)
Wall-to-Wall Richard Rodgers
b. 39 f. 5 1985, 2002
2001-2003
er.17 (26 Computer Files, 621 Kilobytes)
Wall-to-Wall Stephen Sondheim
2004-2005
er.18 (44 Computer Files, 1.74 Megabytes)
- b. 39 f. 6 2005
- b. 39 f. 7 *Wall-to-Wall Sonidos* 2011
Wall-to-Wall Stravinsky
2005-2005
er.19 (16 Computer Files, 2.37 Megabytes)
- b. 39 f. 8 2006
- b. 67 f. 3 2006
- Wall-to-Wall Weill*
1999-2000
er.20 (73 Computer Files, 1.94 Megabytes)
- b. 67 f. 4 2000
- Wall-to-Wall Series - Various Editions*
b. 39 f. 9 1978-1986
b. 69 f. 16 1978-2008
b. 70 f. 8 1978, 1996
- Ying Quartet
2001-2002
er.21 (4 Computer Files, 191.5 Kilobytes)
- b. 10 f. 2 circa 2002
- b. 57 f. 12 2004
- General
b. 39 f. 10-12 1994-2007

Series II: Symphony Space Office Files (cont.)

Project Files (cont.)

General (cont.)

1998-2012

er.22 (238 Computer Files, 9.65 Megabytes)

b. 69 f. 17

1984

First Friday Proclamation.

b. 70 f. 9

Unidentified Posters

b. 69 f. 19-20

Various Opera Scores

Season Files

b. 69 f. 21

1978

b. 39 f. 13-15

1978-1981

b. 40 f. 1-8

1981-2001

b. 41 f. 1-7

2002-2010

b. 42 f. 1-9

2009-2013

Series III: Chronological Files 1954-2010 (10 Boxes)

Chronological Files (1954-2010) document Isaiah Sheffer's family life and professional activities as an actor, writer, director, producer, and Columbia University professor. These files, from his home office, intellectually and chronologically overlap with the other series in this collection. The files are ordered in rough chronological chunks, reflecting Sheffer's activities at any given period. They are arranged by decade, but the date ranges are not strict. Sheffer's original folder titles, retained here, use a wide variety of designations. There are folders dedicated to a particular project, individual or subject. Other folders are titled by genre or format (such as correspondence, sketches, programs, or publicity materials). There are also folders titled by date range that often contain correspondence with a variety of individuals. All of the chronological groupings contain each of these types of files.

The Chronological Files consist primarily of correspondence and production files. Sheffer's extensive correspondence provides insight into his personal life, professional activities, and political opinions. In his correspondence with collaborators, topics discussed include critical reception of their works, personal opinions on each other's productions, and the process through which these productions are created and presented.

By far the most extensive correspondent is Eric Bentley. Sheffer and Bentley's correspondence documents decades of friendship and collaboration. In their letters they discuss their friends, day-to-day activities, personal lives, teaching careers, opinions about literature, and their own theatrical projects. Many of these projects were collaborations between the two, though many were also created independently. There are folders dedicated entirely to Sheffer's correspondence with or about the Belgian playwright Michel de Ghelderode. Sheffer's correspondence with Ghelderode shows his interest in avant-garde theatre and his active dedication to producing the works of important European playwrights in America. Most of the letters are in French and pertain to American productions of Ghelderode's works. Other correspondents whose letters are contained in the Ghelderode folders include Ghelderode's wife, Jeanne-François Gérard, and sociologist Renée Claire Fox.

There are also many letters between Sheffer and his mother, Esther Scooler Sheffer, his father Samuel Sheffer, and his daughter Susannah Sheffer. Family correspondence is sometimes filed with general correspondence, and sometimes separated into its own folders.

Letters from other prominent correspondents will be found in folders of general correspondence as well as in folders titled by project or production. Sheffer's correspondence with other authors, performers, producers and directors pertains to existing or potential collaborations, adaptations, productions, or appearances. These correspondents include Isaac Bashevis-Singer, Herbert Blau, Robert Brustein, Lou Carter, Joseph Chaikin, Édouard Chambon, Grover Dale, Jules Feiffer, Robert A. Freedman, E. Y. "Yip" Harburg, Langston Hughes, Betty Judkins, Louise Kerz, Lotte Lenya, Lucille Lortel, Louise Manning, Artie Morey, Lew Palter, Bobby Paul, J. I (Jerry) Rodale, and Marc Rosenberg. The correspondence between Sheffer and Langston Hughes concerns a dispute over the premature closing of Sheffer's Off-Broadway production of Hughes' *The Prodigal Son* and the resulting financial loss.

The production materials included in Chronological Files can be differentiated from the materials found in Series I: Productions in that they tend to focus more on the logistical process of casting, directing, negotiating contracts, producing, and publicizing of these works and less on their writing. While some of Sheffer's works from the 1990s and later are documented here, Chronological Files tend to cover the productions he worked on in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Sheffer's many different roles within the New York theatre world are documented in the production materials found in Chronological Files. Script drafts, song excerpts, and letters and notes from the political revues Sheffer wrote, directed and produced during the 1960s and 1970s (*The DMZ*, *Urban Blight*, *Watergate Classics*, and *Some of My Best Friends Are Women*) show his early development of the model for the political cabaret series he would later produce regularly at Symphony Space: the *Thalia Follies*.

Sheffer was also developing his skill as a writer during this period. The files on *The Rise of David Levinsky*, *The Sheik of Avenue B*, *The Theatre of Peretz*, and *Yiddle with a Fiddle* document his writing process with script drafts, notes on revisions, song lyrics, and scores. Sheffer's teaching career at Columbia University is documented in Chronological Files through his correspondence, particularly with Eric Bentley, as well as through materials on productions like *The DMZ*, which, while not officially produced by Columbia was associated with the University though Sheffer's position there and the participation of his students.

Sheffer kept some of his files on Symphony Space at home, and these are included in his Chronological Files. Their content and dates overlap with the files found in Series II: Symphony Space Office Files. Symphony Space files included here consist primarily of logistical documents

Series III: Chronological Files (cont.)

1954-1959

- b. 43 f. 1 *The Exception and the Rule* 1954
- b. 43 f. 2 *The Journey of Simon McKeevers* 1956
- b. 43 f. 3 *Emotional Memory in Acting Technique* 1956
Thesis by Sheffer.
- b. 43 f. 4 Memorabilia 1956-1959
Contains correspondence and various personal documents.
- b. 43 f. 5 Ghelderode, Michel de - Letters, Obituaries 1957-1966
Includes letters from Rene Claire Fox and Jeanne-François Gérard.
- b. 43 f. 6 Correspondence 1957-1963
Includes letters from Jerry Rodale and Lew Carter.
- b. 43 f. 7 Correspondence 1959-1975
Includes letter from Langston Hughes to Eric Bentley.

1960-1969

- b. 43 f. 8 *Prologue to an Antigone* 1960
- b. 43 f. 9-10 Bentley, Eric - Correspondence 1960-1963
- b. 44 f. 1 Scripts - Miscellaneous 1961
- b. 44 f. 2 *The Exception and the Rule, and Les Fastes d'Enfer - Letters, contracts, Publicity, Budgets, etc* 1961-1964
- b. 44 f. 3 General Publicity: Old Programs, Reviews, Photos, etc 1961-1981
- b. 44 f. 4 Ghelderode, Michel de - Miscellany 1962-1963
- b. 44 f. 5-6 Correspondence 1962-1968
Includes Herbert Blau, Joseph Chaikin, and Eric Bentley.
- b. 44 f. 7 *The Theatre of Peretz - Publication - Samuel French Co* 1964
- b. 44 f. 8 Bentley, Eric - Correspondence 1964-1966
- b. 45 f. 1 *Splendors of Hell* 1965
By Michel de Ghelderode.
- b. 45 f. 2 *Christopher Columbus* circa 1965
- b. 45 f. 3 Correspondence, Programs, Contracts, Flyers, etc 1965-1976
Includes Jules Feiffer, E.Y. (Yip) Harburg, Langston Hughes, Bobby Paul, and Joseph Chaikin.
- b. 45 f. 4 *Commitments: Two Plays by Eric Bentley* 1965
- b. 45 f. 5 *The Exception and the Rule - Brecht Tour* 1965-1967
- b. 45 f. 6-7 Bentley, Eric - Correspondence 1965-1967
- b. 46 f. 1 *Chronicles of Hell* 1967
- b. 46 f. 2 *The Elephant Calf* 1967
- b. 46 f. 3 Bentley, Eric - Correspondence 1967-1968
- b. 46 f. 4 *Tartuffe and The DMZ* 1967-1969
- b. 46 f. 5-6 *The DMZ* 1967-1971

Series III: Chronological Files (cont.)
1960-1969 (cont.)

- b. 46 f. 7 *Photos / Archives* 1967-1989
- b. 46 f. 8 *Bentley, Eric - Correspondence* 1968-1969
- b. 46 f. 9 *Various Lyrics and Sketches* 1960s
- 1970-1979
- b. 46 f. 10 *Urban Blight* 1970
- b. 46 f. 11 *Sketch Material* circa 1970
- b. 46 f. 12 *Sheffer, Susannah* 1970-1981
- b. 46 f. 13 *Photographs* circa 1970
- b. 46 f. 14 *The Rise of David Levinsky and Hedda Gabbler* 1970s
- b. 47 f. 1 *The DMZ and Urban Blight* 1971
- b. 47 f. 2 *The DMZ* 1971-1973
- b. 47 f. 3 *An Evening with the Poet-Senator* 1973
- b. 47 f. 4 *Yale Repertory Theatre* 1973
Includes Robert Brustein.
- b. 47 f. 5-6 *Watergate Classics* 1973-1974
- b. 47 f. 7 *Singer, Issac Bashevis - Project* 1973-1974
- b. 47 f. 8 *Cream Cheese* 1974
- b. 47 f. 9 *Correspondence - Shlemiel the First and Watergate Classics* 1974-1975
- b. 47 f. 10-11 *The Rise of David Levinsky* 1974-1981
- b. 48 f. 1-5 *The Rise of David Levinsky* 1976-1981
- b. 48 f. 6-7 *Columbus Circle* 1976-1977
- b. 48 f. 8 *Tappan Zee Playhouse* 1977-1978
Includes Ellen Burstyn.
- b. 48 f. 9 *The Wake* 1977-1979
- b. 48 f. 10 *Symphony Space - Calendar* 1978
- b. 48 f. 11 *Symphony Space Board - Press, Memos, Gala* 1978-1988
- b. 49 f. 1 *Not the New York Times* 1978
- b. 49 f. 2 *The Folger Consort* 1978, 1983
- b. 49 f. 3 *Clownmaker - Rights* 1978-1983
- b. 49 f. 4 *Metropolis* 1979
Includes Issac Bashevis Singer.
- b. 49 f. 5 *Symphony Space* 1979
- 1980-1989
- b. 49 f. 6 *Dialogue for Lovers* 1980
- b. 49 f. 7 *The Rise of David Levinsky - Music* 1981
- b. 49 f. 8 *Brecht Centennial* 1981-1982
- b. 49 f. 9 *1980s File* 1981-1984
- b. 49 f. 10 *Correspondence* 1981-1982
- b. 49 f. 11 *Writings* 1981-2011
- b. 49 f. 12 *Bloomsday on Broadway* 1982

Series III: Chronological Files (cont.)
1980-1989 (cont.)

Millenium

- b. 49 f. 13-15 1982-1986
- b. 50 f. 1-3 1983-1986
- b. 50 f. 4 Correspondence and Programs 1982-1983
Symphony Space
- b. 50 f. 5 Press 1982-1984
- b. 50 f. 6 Artistic 1982-1984
- b. 50 f. 7 Theatre Projects 1983-1984
- b. 51 f. 1-3 1983-2007
- b. 51 f. 4-7 *The Rise of David Levinsky* 1983-1987
- b. 51 f. 8 *The Advent of Polyphony* 1985
- b. 51 f. 9 *Selected Shorts - Reference - 1985 Season* 1985
- b. 51 f. 10 *Selected Shorts - Archives* 1985-1993
- b. 52 f. 1 *Cauldron (Yeats Project) - Irish Arts Center* 1985-1986
- b. 52 f. 2 Symphony Space - Archives 1985-1993
- b. 52 f. 3 *Selected Shorts - Reference - 1986* 1986
- b. 52 f. 4-5 *The Masque of Oberon* 1986
Includes *Millenium*.
- b. 52 f. 6 Miscellaneous Projects 1986
- b. 52 f. 7 *The Ballad of Jubilee Jim* 1986
- b. 52 f. 8-9 *On Second Avenue* 1987-1988
- b. 52 f. 10 *Bloomsday on Broadway - Joyce / Yeats* 1987-1989
- b. 52 f. 11 *Shlemiel the First - Florida* 1988
- b. 52 f. 12 Poems, Memos, Proposals 1988
- b. 52 f. 13 *Going Public* 1989
- 1990-1999
- b. 52 f. 14 1990
- b. 52 f. 15 *Selected Shorts - Television Project* 1990
- b. 53 f. 1 *Yiddle with a Fiddle* 1990-1991
- b. 53 f. 2-7 *The Sheik of Avenue B* 1992
- b. 53 f. 8 Mayo Show 1992-1993
The Doctor Will See You Now.
- b. 53 f. 9 Memorabilia 1992-1995
- b. 53 f. 10 Memorials 1992-2004
- b. 54 f. 1 Symphony Space 1992-1994
- b. 54 f. 2 *Selected Shorts - Current* 1993-1994
- b. 54 f. 3 *Wall-to-Wall Irving Berlin - Current* 1994
- b. 54 f. 4 *L'Amour Francais: French Love in Letters, Poetry, Song Cinema* 1994
- b. 54 f. 5 *Shlemiel the First* 1994
- b. 54 f. 6-9 Symphony Space 1994-1995
- b. 54 f. 10-11 *Yiddle with a Fiddle* 1994-1995

Series III: Chronological Files (cont.)
1990-1999 (cont.)

- b. 55 f. 1 *Miscellany* 1994-1995
- b. 55 f. 2 *The Rise of David Levinsky* 1997
- 2000-2010
- b. 55 f. 3 *Selected Shorts - Tour* 2001
- b. 55 f. 4 *Thalia Follies - November* 2004
- b. 55 f. 5 *A More Perfect Union* 2004
- b. 55 f. 6 Bentley, Eric - Correspondence 2006
- b. 55 f. 7 *Isaiahfest* 2010

Series IV: Personal Files 1891-2011 (3 Boxes)

Series IV consists of childhood photographs, clippings, degrees and honorary degrees, and a small amount of personal correspondence. The bulk of Sheffer's correspondence as well as a small amount of additional personal materials will be found in Chronological Files and, to a much lesser extent, in Symphony Space Office Files.

- b. 55 f. 8 Academic Papers by Sheffer 1957
- b. 57 f. 14 ASCAP Award 2003
- b. 55 f. 9 Brooklyn College 1956, 2006, 2011
- b. 55 f. 10 Cape Buyout - Truro Massachusetts Property Sale 1999-2007
- b. 55 f. 11-12 Correspondence 1981-1986, 2009-2010
- b. 56 f. 1 *Cousins by the Dozens - Family Book* 2001-2003
- b. 56 f. 2 *Hamlet - Brooklyn Academy of Music - Flyer and Article* 1891
- b. 56 f. 3 Memorabilia 1977
- b. 56 f. 4 Michigan State University - Diploma 1958
- b. 56 f. 5 Notebook 1950-1963
- b. 56 f. 6 Notes, Poems, and Other Writings 1977-2000
- Photographs
- b. 56 f. 7 1930s-2004
- b. 68 f. 4 1994
- b. 57 f. 13 Photographs and Notes from Sheffer's Office Wall at Symphony Space
- b. 56 f. 8 Programs - Plays and Other Events Sheffer Attended 1950-1966
- b. 56 f. 9 Publicity 1982-1992
- b. 57 f. 1 Sheffer, Ethel - Maps and Sketches
- b. 57 f. 2 Sheffer, Samuel - Newspapers, Photographs, and Other Personal Documents 1926-1963