



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Jane and Gordon Connell papers

1923-2015

*T-Mss 2015-020

Compiled by Heather Lember, 2015.

Summary

Creator: Connell, Gordon

Title: Jane and Gordon Connell papers

Date: 1923-2015

Size: 12.15 linear feet (27 boxes, 1 oversized folder, 1 tube); 1 gb (344 computer files)

Source: Gift of Margaret J. Connell, 2015.

Abstract: The Jane and Gordon Connell papers date from 1923-2015, and are comprised of correspondence, music scores, photographs, reviews, scripts, theatre programs, audio recordings, and videos showcasing the careers of the couple. The collection's focus is predominantly on the Connells' professional lives and the theatre, radio, and television productions in which they performed.

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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Creator History

Jane Sperry Connell (née Bennett; 1925-2013) and Gordon Connell (1923-) were both born and raised in Berkeley, California. They met while attending the University of California at Berkeley, where they performed on the stage together. After graduating college, Jane and Gordon launched their careers at the Purple Onion and The Hungry I in San Francisco, as well as voice acting in radio serials for NBC. In 1947, they formed the Straw Hat Revue Company, taking their act on the road and touring the country. Jane and Gordon were married in 1948, and their travels with the Straw Hat Revue eventually led them to New York City, where they relocated in 1953.

The Connells' New York City performance careers began in revues and commercials. A 1958 Dexol Bleach commercial, which featured a pie being thrown in Gordon's face, won an award of distinctive merit at a contest sponsored by the Art Directors Club of Los Angeles. Their stage careers got a boost after being hired at Julius Monk's Upstairs at the Downstairs, where they began performing regularly in 1959.

Jane made her off-Broadway debut in the 1956 revival of *The Threepenny Opera*, and was then hired for a 1960 production of *Once Upon a Mattress*, which was staged in London. Noted for her work as a character and comedic actress, Jane is best known for her role as Agnes Gooch in Jerry Herman's *Mame*. First appearing in the original 1966 Broadway production with Angela Lansbury, she was also cast in the 1974 film version starring Lucille Ball, and again in the 1983 Broadway revival.

Jane performed in numerous theatre and television programs over the years, most notably in *Me and My Girl*, which earned her a Tony nomination in 1986. Other productions include *Drat the Cat* (1956), *Dear World* (1969), *Annie* (1977-1982), *Lend me a Tenor* (1988-1991), *Crazy for You* (1992-1996), *Move Over Buffalo* (1995-1996), and *The Full Monty* (2001). Her television credits include, *Bewitched* (1967-1972), *Green Acres* (1970-1971), *The Carol Burnett Show* (1970), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1977), *All in the Family* (1977), and *M*A*S*H* (1980).

In the late 1950s, Gordon got his East Coast start performing in revues at the Tamiment Playhouse. His off-Broadway debut came in 1961 with *Subways are for Sleeping*. He went on to appear in *Hello, Dolly!* (1964-1970), *The Baker's Wife* (1976), *Finian's Rainbow* (1977), *The Human Comedy* (1983-1984), *Show Boat* (1984), *Big River* (1985-1987), and *1776* (1987-1991). Gordon was also a musical theatre composer, and wrote the score for *Bertha*, *The Sewing Machine*.

Jane and Gordon also appeared together on the stage throughout their careers, most notably in *Lysteria* (1972), *Bye Bye Birdie* (1977), and *The Good Doctor* (1988). They maintained busy and successful careers until the 2000s.

Scope and Content Note

The Jane and Gordon Connell papers detail the couple's careers in theatre, radio, and television. Included are correspondence, photographs, programs, reviews, scripts, scores, video, and audio recordings from the productions in which they performed. Items are grouped together by production title, theatre name, or subject matter, and often contain materials from various performances of the same show.

The correspondence files predominantly address the Connells' professional communications, which discuss contracts, logistics, and potential acting jobs. There are also letters from actors and directors who worked with the couple, as well as some fan letters. Of note is correspondence regarding their work in advertising, which includes a letter discussing the 1958 Dexol Bleach commercial.

The performance files convey the longevity of the Connells' careers through photographs, programs, reviews, and scripts, many of which are annotated and date back to their lives in Berkeley as students at the University of California. There is a great deal of material from Jane and Gordon's work on the West Coast with the Straw Hat Revue Company and in radio broadcasting. They also retained a significant amount of mementos from their early New York City careers working for Julius Monk, which include photographs of performances at Upstairs at the Downstairs, flyers, programs, and a scrapbook of photographs with notes and autographs from the actors.

The career-spanning photographs, which are the most abundant items in the collection, depict stage, television, and radio programs. Most of the performance files contain photographs of the productions and some backstage shots, but there is a small collection of photographs that are unlabeled or were filed separately. These include images of when Jane and Gordon first met in college, live performances, family photographs, and headshots of Jane and Gordon, some in which they appear together. Some of the photographs included in this collection are digital scans; the scenes depicted in these files date between 1954 and 2013.

Less prevalent are musical scores, many of which are handwritten and annotated. They include some of Gordon Connell's musical theatre composition work, most notably from *Bertha*, *The Sewing Machine*. Among the scores are some unidentified drafts which were filed separately from the rest of the performance files.

Arrangement: Performance files are arranged alphabetically by production title, theatre name, or subject matter. Correspondence files arranged chronologically.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Actresses

Geographic Names

Berkeley (Calif.)

Broadway (New York, N.Y.)

Manhattan (New York, N.Y.)

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence

Photographs

Scores

Scrapbooks

Scripts (documents)

Sound recordings

Theater programs

Video recordings

Subjects

Musical theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Musicals

Off-Broadway theater

Revues -- New York (State) -- New York
Television actors and actresses
Theater -- United States -- History -- 20th century

Names

Connell, Jane, 1925-2013

Monk, Julius, 1912-1995

Upstairs at the Downstairs (Nightclub : New York, N.Y.)

Container List

- Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 1-9 1948-2007
- Performances
- b. 2 f. 1 *13 Rue de l'Amour* 1977
- b. 2 f. 2-5 *1776* 1987-1991
- b. 2 f. 6 *After Magritte* 1972
- b. 2 f. 7 *All Kinds of Giants* 1961
- b. 2 f. 8 *Altered* 2001
- Annie*
- b. 2 f. 9 1977
- b. 3 f. 1-5 1977-1982
- Photographs
- b. 27 f. 6 1977-1982
- 2015
er.1 (17.09 Megabytes (14 computer files))
- b. 3 f. 6-8 *Anything Goes* 1983-1990
- b. 3 f. 9 *A.O.A. Show* 1980
- The Baker's Wife*
- b. 3 f. 10-11 1976
- b. 4 f. 1-2 1976
- b. 4 f. 3 *Beekman Place* 1964
- b. 4 f. 4 *The Beggar's Opera* 1972
- Bertha, The Sewing Machine*
- b. 4 f. 5-9 1985-2002
- Photographs 2015
er.2 (9945 Kilobytes (10 computer files))
- Bewitched* 2013-2015
er.3 (8704 kilobytes (2 computer files))
- b. 5 f. 1-4 *Big River* 1985
- b. 5 f. 5 *Blithe Spirit* 1997
- b. 5 f. 6 *The Butler did it* 1981
- b. 5 f. 7 *Bye Bye Birdie* 1997
- b. 5 f. 8 *The Carol Burnett Show* 1970
- b. 5 f. 9 *Carousel* 1991
- b. 5 f. 10 *A Christmas Carol* 1981
- b. 5 f. 11-12 *The Cider House Rules* 1996
- b. 6 f. 1 *Close-up* 1962
- b. 6 f. 2 *Cole Porter Revue* 1974
- b. 6 f. 3-4 *Comedians* 1977-2003
- Commercials

- Performances (cont.)
Commercials (cont.)
- b. 6 f. 5 1958-1965
Photographs 2015
er.4 (7830 Kilobytes (11 computer files))
 - b. 6 f. 6-7 *A Connecticut Record* 1989
 - b. 6 f. 8 *Cool Off!* 1964
Crazy for You
 - b. 6 f. 9-12 1992-1999
 - b. 7 f. 1 1998-1999
Photographs 2013
er.5 (5527 Kilobytes (4 computer files))
 - b. 7 f. 2 *Cyrano de Bergerac* 1973
 - b. 7 f. 3 *The Day the Diner Closed* 1954
Dear World
 - b. 7 f. 4-5 1968-1969
Photographs 2013-2015
er.6 (819.9 Kilobytes (2 computer files))
 - b. 7 f. 6 *Description Beggared; or the Allegory of Whiteness* 2000
 - b. 27 f. 12 Disabled American Veterans 1954
 - b. 7 f. 7 *Dog Eat Dog* 1983
Don't Drink the Water
 - b. 7 f. 8 1969
Photographs 2015
er.7 (7511 Kilobytes (3 computer files))
 - b. 7 f. 9 *Don't Tell Mama* 1980
 - b. 7 f. 10 Doorbell Ringer's Guide 1957
 - b. 7 f. 11 *Double Entry* 1961
 - b. 7 f. 12-14 *Drat! The Cat!* 1965-1971
 - b. 8 f. 1-2 *Duenna* 1980-1991
 - b. 8 f. 3 *The Dumplings* 1975
 - b. 8 f. 4 *Fann* 1958
 - b. 8 f. 5-6 *Finnian's Rainbow* 1977
 - b. 8 f. 7-8 *The Foreigner* 1985-1986
 - b. 8 f. 9 *Fortuna* 1961
 - b. 8 f. 10-12 *The Full Monty* 2001-2004
 - b. 9 f. 1-2 *Girl Crazy* 1991
 - b. 9 f. 3 *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* 2005
 - b. 9 f. 4 *Going Hollywood* 1983
 - b. 9 f. 5-8 *The Good Doctor* 1998
 - b. 9 f. 9 Goodyear Advertising 1968
 - b. 9 f. 10 *The Guardsman* 1983
Guys and Dolls
 - b. 9 f. 11 1984

- Performances (cont.)
Guys and Dolls (cont.)
Photographs 2013
er.8 (4354 Kilobytes (2 computer files))
- b. 10 f. 1 *Harlequinade* 2000
Hello Dolly
 - b. 10 f. 2-7 1963-1991
Photographs
er.9 (33.90 Megabytes (10 computer files))
 - b. 10 f. 8-9 *Hermaphrodites and Hooligans* 1976
 - b. 11 f. 1-3 *A History of the American Film* 1977
 - b. 11 f. 4-6 *The House of Blue Leaves* 1967-1971
 - b. 11 f. 7-9 *Human Comedy* 1983-1984
 - b. 11 f. 10 *The Importance of Being Earnest* 1977
 - b. 11 f. 11-12 *Inspecting Carol* 1998
 - b. 11 f. 13 *Irene* 1975
Julius Monk
 - b. 12 f. 1-8 1955-1962
 - o. 1 Photographs 1955-1962
 - b. 27 f. 1-2 Photographs 1957-1962
Photographs 2015
er.10 (2543 Kilobytes (2 computer files))
 - b. 26 Scrapbook 1955-1962
 - b. 13 f. 1 *June Moon* 1979
 - b. 13 f. 2 *The King and I* 1959
 - b. 13 f. 3 *Ladybug, Ladybug* 1963
 - b. 13 f. 4 *The Last Straw* 1975
 - b. 13 f. 5 *Laughing Stock* 1982-1984
 - b. 13 f. 6-9 *Leading Ladies* 2000-2005
 - b. 14 f. 1 *Leave it to Me* 2001
 - b. 14 f. 2-4 *Lend Me a Tenor* 1984-1991
 - b. 14 f. 5 *Letterman Hospital* 1968
 - b. 14 f. 6 *Little Women* 2000
 - b. 14 f. 7-8 *Lysistrata* 1971-1972
 - b. 14 f. 9 *Making Memories* 1991
Mame
 - b. 15 f. 1-6 1965-1985
 - b. 27 f. 3 1966
Photographs 2013-2015
er.11 (7.09 Megabytes (11 computer files))
Me and My Girl
 - b. 27 f. 4 1986-1991
 - b. 15 f. 7-10 1986-1991
 - b. 16 f. 1-2 1996-1997

Performances (cont.)

Me and My Girl (cont.)

Photographs 2013-2015

er.12 (24.65 Megabytes (8 computer files))

- b. 16 f. 3 *Meet Me in St. Louis* 1977
- b. 16 f. 4 *Merton of the Movies* 1959-1970
- b. 16 f. 5 *The Milliden Breakfast Show* 1964
- b. 16 f. 6 *The Mikado* 1958
- b. 16 f. 7 *Miss Moon and Mr. Mann* 1969
- b. 16 f. 8 *M.O.B.* 1960-1970
- b. 16 f. 9-12 *Moon Over Buffalo* 1995-1997
- b. 16 f. 13 *The Muny* 1977-1993
- b. 17 f. 1 *Music Circus* 1958-1977
- b. 17 f. 2-3 *The Music Man* 1977
- b. 17 f. 4 *Musical Theatre Workshop, West* 1979
- b. 17 f. 5-7 *My Fair Lady* 2002-2004
- New Faces*
 - b. 17 f. 8 1956
- Photographs 2013-2015
 - er.13 (54.35 Megabytes (28 computer files))
- b. 18 f. 1 *Oh, Boy!* 1977
- b. 18 f. 2 *Oh, Coward!* 1970
- b. 18 f. 3 *The Oldest Trick in the World* 1961
- b. 18 f. 4-5 *Oliver* 1999-2000
- Once Upon a Mattress*
 - b. 18 f. 6-7 1960
- Photographs 2013-2015
 - er.14 (51.37 Megabytes (21 computer files))
- b. 18 f. 8 *One Acts* 1959-1969
- b. 18 f. 9 *One Thing After Another* 1956
- b. 18 f. 10 *The Peacock Season* 1964
- b. 18 f. 11 *Peculiar Pastimes* 1977
- b. 18 f. 12 *Peter and the Wolf* 1999
- b. 18 f. 13 *The Philadelphia Story* 1992
- The Purple Onion*
 - b. 18 f. 14-16 1954
- Photographs 2015
 - er.15 (16.77 Megabytes (3 computer files))
- b. 19 f. 1 *Put it in Writing* 1962
- b. 19 f. 2-3 *Racketty Packetty House* 1999
- b. 19 f. 4 *The Rainbow Peddler* 1999
- b. 19 f. 5 *The Real Inspector Hound* 1972
- b. 19 f. 6 *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket* 1982
- b. 19 f. 7 *The Rivals* 1974

Performances (cont.)

- b. 19 f. 8 *Rose Marie* 1958
- b. 19 f. 9 *Royal Flush* 1965
- b. 19 f. 10 *Sail Away* 1999
She Stoops to Conquer
- b. 19 f. 11 1971
Photographs 2013-2015
er.16 (5689 Kilobytes (4 computer files))
- b. 20 f. 1-3 *Show Boat* 1984
Sid Caesar Show
- b. 20 f. 4 1947
Photographs 2015
er.17 (25.61 Megabytes (10 computer files))
The Singular Dorothy Parker
- b. 20 f. 5-7 1982-1985
Photographs 2013-2015
er.18 (14.47 Megabytes (3 computer files))
- b. 20 f. 8 *Something for the Bird* 1960
- b. 20 f. 9 Special Events 1992-2004
Includes a transcript of a 2004 interview with Jane Connell.

The Standard Hour
- b. 20 f. 10-12 1947
Photographs 2013-2015
er.19 (62.27 Megabytes (16 Computer Files))
- b. 20 f. 13 *Star Struck* 1979
Straw Hat Revue
- b. 21 f. 1-6 1947-1956
Photographs 2013-2015
er.20 (31.03 Megabytes (9 computer files))
- b. 21 f. 7 *Student Prince* 1999-2000
Subways are for Sleeping
- b. 21 f. 8 1961
Photographs 2015
er.21 (3261 Kilobytes (4 computer files))
- b. 21 f. 9 Tamiment Theatre 1957
- b. 22 f. 1 *The Taming of the Shrew* 1973
- b. 22 f. 2 Television Call Sheets 1971-2002
- b. 22 f. 3 Theater East 1974-1976
- b. 22 f. 4 *Threepenny Opera* 1957-2001
Tom Sawyer
- b. 22 f. 5-7 2001-2004
Photographs 2013
er.22 (1328 Kilobytes (2 computer files))
- b. 22 f. 8 The Tonys 1987

Performances (cont.)

- b. 22 f. 9 University of California, Berkeley 1931-1968
 - b. 23 f. 1-2 United Service Organization Show 1981
 - b. 23 f. 3 *Villanella D'Homage* 1993
 - b. 23 f. 4 *Waiting in the Wings* 1999
 - t. 1 *Walls: The Musical Encounter* 1954-1964
 - b. 23 f. 5 *The Way of the World* 1972
 - b. 23 f. 6 *Where's Charley* 1975-1976
 - b. 23 f. 7 *With Love and Laughter* 1961-1974
- The Wizard of Oz*
- b. 23 f. 8-10 1992-1996
 - b. 24 f. 1-2 1992-1997
 - b. 24 f. 3-4 *Write it Off* 1950
 - b. 24 f. 5 *Yankee Ingenuity* 1985

Photographs and Portraits

- b. 24 f. 6-7 1948-2007
- Gordon Connell
- 2015
 - er.23 (115.1 Megabytes (34 computer files))
 - Headshots
 - b. 24 f. 7 1945-2007
 - 2015
 - er.24 (150.6 Megabytes (27 computer files))
 - Shows
 - b. 25 f. 1 1945-2007
 - b. 27 f. 5 1948-1965
 - 2015
 - er.25 (40.57 Megabytes (16 computer files))
- Jane Connell
- b. 25 f. 2 1931-1998
 - 2015
 - er.26 (65.76 Megabytes (21 computer files))
 - Headshots
 - b. 25 f. 3 1948-2007
 - b. 27 f. 7 1948-2007
 - 2013-2015
 - er.27 (170.8 Megabytes (36 computer files))
 - Portraits
 - b. 25 f. 4 1943-1956
 - b. 27 f. 8 2004
 - Shows
 - b. 25 f. 5-6 1948-2007
 - 2015
 - er.29 (31.37 Megabytes (15 computer files))

Photographs and Portraits (cont.)

Jane Connell (cont.)

Memorial Presentation 2013-2015

er.28 (408.3 Megabytes (4 computer files))

Jane and Gordon Connell

b. 25 f. 7 1943-1987

b. 27 f. 11 1943-1987

2015

er.30 (24.48 Megabytes (6 computer files))

Headshots

b. 25 f. 8 1950-1987

b. 27 f. 9 1950-1987

2015

er.31 (16.98 Megabytes (5 computer files))

Shows

b. 27 f. 10 1948-1965

b. 25 f. 9 1948-2000

2015

er.32 (1077 Kilobytes (1 computer file))

Scores

b. 25 f. 10-12 1948-1994