

**Guide to the Theatre Guild *United States Steel Hour* Records, 1956-1963**

**\*T-Mss 1975-006**

**Billy Rose Theatre Division**

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts  
New York, New York**

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Date Completed: October 2007

Processed and encoded through a gift from Robert W. Wilson.

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Theatre Guild <i>United States Steel Hour</i> Records</b>
<b>Collection ID:</b>	<b>*T-Mss 1975-006</b>
<b>Creator:</b>	<b>Theatre Guild</b>
<b>Extent:</b>	<b>1.88 linear feet (5 boxes)</b>
<b>Repository:</b>	<b>Billy Rose Theatre Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts</b>

**Abstract:** The Theatre Guild *United States Steel Hour* Records are comprised of correspondence, financial records, casting, rehearsal, and recording notes, as well as some scripts for productions that were telecast as part of *The United States Steel Hour* television series. *The United States Steel Hour*, which was a continuation of the Guild's earlier radio anthology series, *Theatre Guild of the Air* (1945-1953), ran for two seasons (1953-1955) on the ABC Television Network. In 1955, it moved to the CBS television network, where it remained through 1963.

### Administrative Information

#### Access

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

#### Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

#### Preferred Citation

Theatre Guild *United States Steel Hour* Records, \*T-Mss 1975-005, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

#### Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in October 2007.

#### Related Materials

The Theatre Guild Archive is held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

## Historical Note

By the 1940s, the Theatre Guild, a prestigious theatrical production company, had evolved from its more radical beginnings in 1919 to become established as an almost *de facto* national theater for the United States. In 1945, as part of an effort to reach a broader audience, the Guild developed a radio program, *The Theatre Guild on the Air*. This anthology series initially presented live broadcasts of adaptations of plays which had been produced originally by the Guild, such as Ferenc Molnár's *The Guardsman* (1945) with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. It also occasionally offered dramatic works which had been staged by other producers. First broadcast on the ABC Radio Network (1945-1949), the program's sponsor was the United States Steel Corporation. Arminia Marshall (wife of one of the Guild's original founders, Lawrence Langner) was responsible for coordinating the administrative aspects of the radio program for the Guild.

*Theatre Guild on the Air* was heard on the NBC Radio Network from the fall of 1949 to the spring of 1953, when it was revamped as a television series, *The United States Steel Hour*. The show, which presented a mixture of original plays for television and adaptations of other works, ran for two seasons on the ABC Television Network. In September 1955, *The United States Steel Hour* moved to the CBS Television Network, where it remained through 1963. Notable productions over the years included Ira Levin's adaptation of *No Time for Sergeants* (1955), Rod Serling's *Noon on Doomsday* (1956), *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1956) by Arnold Shuman, *Survival* (1957) by Alfred Brenner, and James Yaffe's version of *The Two Worlds of Charlie Gordon* (1959). The final episode of the series, another adaptation of J. M. Barrie's *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, starring Lunt and Fontanne, aired on June 12, 1963.

## Scope and Content Note

The Theatre Guild *United States Steel Hour* Records are comprised of correspondence, financial records, casting, rehearsal, and recording notes, as well as some scripts for productions that were telecast as part of *The United States Steel Hour* television series. Most of the material concerns productions which aired during 1961-1963, the final years in which the program was broadcast on CBS Television. During this period, William B. (Bill) Nichols served as the Theatre Guild's producer for the series. Much of the correspondence is addressed either to Nichols or to casting director Caro Jones. Also included with the collection are some production files and scripts for what appear to have been Off-Broadway projects optioned or produced independently by Nichols. Among these projects was the play, *Cockeyed Kite* (1961), by Joseph Caldwell, which ran for only seven performances at the Actor's Playhouse. Included in the collection is a *Cockeyed Kite* script, as well as related publicity materials such as press releases, headshots, and original publicity questionnaires completed by many members of the company, including one from Gene Hackman, who had been cast in a lead role, but who dropped out of the production before opening night.

## Organization

The collection is organized into 2 series. They are:

Series I: Correspondence and Production Files, 1957-1963 and undated

Series II: Scripts, 1962-1963 and undated

## Series Descriptions

### **Series I: Correspondence and Production Files, 1957-1963 and undated      3 boxes**

Arranged: Alphabetical

The Correspondence and Production Files consist chiefly of correspondence and financial records, for televised plays mounted by *The United States Steel Hour* during Bill Nichols's tenure as a producer for the series. While some of the correspondence was found in separate files marked "personal," these files contain only a few items concerning Nichols's routine personal affairs; the majority of the correspondence relates to his work on *The United States Steel Hour*. Also included are some files documenting Off-Broadway projects developed by Nichols. While the contents vary, production files on individual titles frequently include casting and rehearsal notes, invoices, and correspondence. The most extensively documented show in the collection is *The Duchess and the Smugs* (1962), which starred Patty Duke and Fritz Weaver.

### **Series II: Scripts, 1962-1963 and undated      2 boxes**

Arranged: Alphabetical

The Scripts series contains only a few of the complete scripts for episodes in the television series, *The United States Steel Hour*, including *The Duchess and the Smugs* (1962) and *The Soldier Ran Away* (1962). Other scripts included with this series are for works for the stage that were either produced or optioned by Bill Nichols, such as Joseph Caldwell's *The Cockeyed Kite* (1961).

**Box/Folder      Description**

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**Series I: Correspondence and Production Files, 1957-1963 and undated**

**Box 1**

- General, 1957-1963 and undated
  - Agency client lists, 1958-1963 and undated (Alphabetical by agency.)
- F. 1                    A-E, 1958-1962 and undated
- F. 2                    F-L, 1958-1963 and undated
- F. 3                    M-O, 1958-1961
- F. 4                    S-Z, 1958-1961 and undated
- F. 5                    Bids, 1959-1961 and undated
- F. 6                    CBS special folder, 1960-1962 and undated
- F. 7                    Christmas list, 1959-1961 and undated
- F. 8                    Code books, 1958-1960 (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.)
- Cost records, 1958-1962
  - 1958-1961
  - 1962
- F. 9                    1958-1961
- F. 10                   1962
- F. 11                   Extras and specials, 1961 and undated
- F. 12                   Off-Broadway project, 1961 (Proposed television special.)
- F. 13                   Photographs, undated

**Box 2**

- Correspondence, 1958-1963 and undated
  - Business, 1958-1963 and undated
  - Personal, 1958-1963 (William B. Nichols)
    - 1958
    - 1959-1960
    - 1961
    - 1962-1963
  - Insurance policy, 1963
- Productions, 1956-1963 and undated (Alphabetical by title.)
  - Cockeyed Kite*, 1961 and undated (Off-Broadway production.)
  - Cast biographies and program drafts, 1961 and undated (Includes publicity questionnaires for Gene Hackman and Audra Lindley.)
- F. 7                    Photographs, undated
- F. 8                    Press releases, undated
- F. 9                    Programs, circa 1961
- F. 10                   Programs, circa 1961
- F. 11                   *Dead Letter*, 1963
- F. 12                   *The Devil Makes Sunday*, 1960
- F. 13                   *Don't Shake the Family Tree*, 1963

**Box 3**

- Duchess and the Smugs*, 1957-1962 and undated

## Theatre Guild *United States Steel Hour* Records

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
F. 1	Correspondence, 1957-1962 and undated Notes, circa 1957-19062
F. 2	Circa 1957 (Mainly about casting and script.)
F. 3	1962
F. 4	Photographs, 1957 and undated
F. 5	<i>Farewell to Innocence</i> , 1962
F. 6	<i>Full Moon</i> , undated
F. 7	<i>The Husband</i> , undated
F. 8	<i>Invicta</i> , undated
F. 9	<i>A Joyful Noise</i> , 1959 (Optioned for Off-Broadway.)
F. 10	<i>The Many Ways of Heaven</i> , 1963 (Includes letters from Dan Duryea.)
F. 11	<i>Marriage Marks the Spot</i> , 1962
F. 12	<i>Men Don't Make Passes</i> , 1961
F. 13	<i>Mission of Fear</i> , 1963
F. 14	<i>Moment of Rage</i> , 1963
F. 15	<i>The Old Lady Shows Her Medals</i> , 1963
F. 16	<i>Out of Date</i> , undated (Proposed Off-Broadway revue.)
F. 17	<i>Rabbit Trap</i> , 1956-1957 and undated
F. 18	<i>The Secrets of Stella Crozier</i> , 1963
F. 19	<i>The Soldier Ran Away</i> , 1962
F. 20	<i>Somebody's Waiting</i> , 1960
F. 21	<i>Spring of Love</i> , 1961
F. 22	<i>Troubled Heart</i> , 1962-1963
F. 23	<i>Whatever is Your Own</i> , 1962
F. 24	<i>The Young Avengers</i> , 1963
F. 25	<i>Zone Four</i> , 1961
<b><u>Series II: Scripts, 1962-1963 and undated</u></b>	
<b>Box 4</b>	
F. 1	<i>Asleep in Mexico</i> , undated (Sam Hall.)
F. 2	<i>Cockeyed Kite</i> , undated (Joseph Caldwell.) <i>Duchess and the Smugs</i> , 1962 (Adapted by Ellen Violett from a story by Pamela Frankau.)
F. 3	Commercial portions, 1962
F. 4	Telecast script (Originally marked, "rehearsal script," with numerous additions and notes.)
F. 5	<i>I Hear You Singing</i> , undated (Greer Johnson.) <i>A Joyful Noise</i> , undated (Greer Johnson.)
F. 6	Carbon copy, undated
F. 7	Mimeographed copy, undated (Includes note indicating Bill Nichols had optioned script.)
F. 8	Typescript, undated

Theatre Guild *United States Steel Hour* Records

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
F. 9	<i>Poor Ebenezer</i> , undated (Book, music and lyrics by Joe Feagins.)
<b>Box 5</b>	
F. 1	<i>The Soldier Ran Away</i> , 1962 (By Nicholas E. Baehr, adapted from a short story by Kay Boyle.)
F. 2	<i>The Troubled Heart</i> , 1963 (Arthur Hailey.) <i>The Young Avengers</i> , 1963 (Robert Crean.)
F. 3	Commercial portions
F. 4	Telecast script