

Guide to the Howard Dietz Papers, 1915-1976

JPB 06-31

Music Division

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

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Howard Dietz Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 06-31
Creator:	Dietz, Howard
Extent:	5 linear feet (9 boxes)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract: Howard Dietz was a musical theater lyricist and motion picture publicist. This collection contains mainly material on his 1974 autobiography, *Dancing in the Dark: Words by Howard Dietz*, such as background research materials, correspondence, scrapbooks, manuscripts and publicity materials. The collection also contains items pertaining to various events and exhibitions dedicated to Dietz' career during the 1970s.

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

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Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

Biographical Note

Howard Dietz was born in New York City on September 6, 1896. He was educated in New York's public schools and he enrolled in Columbia University's School of Journalism, as a member of the class of 1917. He worked as a contributing journalist and writer for various publications while at Columbia and simultaneously was an assistant at Phillip Goodman's advertising agency. During World War I, Dietz left Columbia to enlist in the United States Navy and edited the magazine *Navy Life*.

After the war Dietz worked as a motion picture promoter and publicist, becoming Publicity Director for Goldwyn Pictures Corporation. When assigned to create a trademark for the company Dietz used the mascot of his alma mater, Columbia as the basis for the "Leo the Lion," which became the famous trademark of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer when Goldwyn merged with Metro Pictures Corporation and Louis B. Mayer Pictures. Howard Dietz also went to M-G-M in 1924, beginning his thirty year sojourn there as Director of Advertising and Publicity, eventually becoming a Vice-President and member of the Board of Directors. In addition to the Leo trademark, Dietz' achievements at M-G-M include inventing Greta Garbo's catch-phrase, "I want to be alone," creating the advertising slogan "More stars than there are in the Heavens" and planning and orchestrating the 1939 premiere of *Gone With the Wind* in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dietz' second career as a lyricist was developing and thriving simultaneously with his publicity career. Dietz' first lyric to be heard on Broadway was a collaboration with composer Arthur Samuels, "Alibi Baby" for the W.C. Fields vehicle, *Poppy* (1923). Though that lyric was uncredited it brought Dietz to the attention of one of Broadway's most successful composers, Jerome Kern and the two collaborated on the score for *Dear Sir* (1924). Dietz next job was filling in some lyrics for the Gershwins' *Oh, Kay!* (1926) when Ira Gershwin was ill. In 1927, Dietz and Morrie Ryskind provided the lyrics for Henry Souvaine and Jay Gorney's music for *Merry-Go-Round*.

Dietz' first major hit came with the revue *The Little Show* (1929) which starred Clifton Webb, Libby Holman and Fred Allen and introduced such hits as "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan" and "Moanin' Low." *The Little Show* was also Dietz' first collaboration with Arthur Schwartz, his most frequent composer. Dietz and Schwartz followed *The Little Show* with a less successful sequel, *The Second Little Show* and the very successful *Three's a Crowd*, both in 1930. *Three's a Crowd* featured the stars of *The Little Show* and introduced another Dietz and Schwartz standard, "Something to Remember You By." Their next collaboration was *The Band Wagon* (1931) which starred Fred and Adele Astaire and introduced their most famous song "Dancing in the Dark," as well "High and Low" and "New Sun in the Sky." *The Band Wagon* was made into an M-G-M film directed by Vincente Minnelli in 1953, again starring Astaire, with a script by Betty Comden and Adolph Green built around songs from various Dietz and Swartz shows.

Throughout the 1930s Dietz and Schwartz continued to write hit revues, including *Flying Colors* (1932), which featured "Alone Together" and "Louisiana Hayride" and *At Home Abroad* (1935) as well as book shows such as *Revenge with Music* (1934) with "If There is Someone Lovelier Than You" and "You and the Night and the Music" and *Between the Devil* (1937) which

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introduced “I See Your Face Before Me” and “By Myself.” In later years, Dietz devoted more of his time to his career as a publicist, taking occasional breaks to work on book shows, including *Sadie Thompson* (1944) with Vernon Duke and *The Gay Life* (1961) and *Jennie* (1963) with Schwartz. Dietz also wrote lyrics for English language productions of *Die Fledermaus* (1950) and *La Bohème* (1952) for the Metropolitan Opera Company.

Dietz was also involved with various other administrative positions throughout his career, including serving as director of the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) from 1959-1961. He also ran the publicity and promotion of war bonds for the United States Treasury during World War II. Dietz was also a painter, whose works received various exhibitions. In 1974 he published his autobiography, *Dancing in the Dark: Words by Howard Dietz*.

In 1917 Dietz married Elizabeth Bigelow Hall and they divorced in 1936. Shortly after his divorce, Dietz married Tanis Guinness and they had one daughter, Liza, born in 1938, but divorced after fourteen years. Dietz’ third marriage, to the Broadway costume designer, Lucinda Ballard, lasted until his death on July 30, 1983 from Parkinson’s Disease.

Scope and Content Note

This collection mainly consists of materials from Dietz' autobiography, *Dancing in the Dark: Words by Howard Dietz*, (1974) including background materials, manuscripts, publicity materials and press coverage. The collection also contains items pertaining to parties and concerts organized by or dedicated to Dietz as well as materials from two exhibitions on Dietz' career. Some of the background materials in the collection date as far back as 1915, to Dietz' early career, but the bulk of the collection is material from the late sixties and the seventies. The highlights of this collection are the many drafts of the autobiography and the correspondence between Dietz and major figures in film and theater.

Organization

The collection is organized into 2 series. They are:

Series I: Events and Exhibitions, 1959-1976

Series II: *Dancing in the Dark: Words by Howard Dietz*, 1915-1976

Series Descriptions

Series I: Events and Exhibitions, 1959-1976

1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains materials on events organized by or dedicated to Dietz, such as birthday celebrations given for him by ASCAP, a party he planned for Moss Hart in 1959 and the concert of Dietz songs from the *Lyrics and Lyricists* series in 1974. The series also includes materials from two exhibitions at the Port Washington Library, near his home on Long Island, dedicated to Dietz' career.

Series II: *Dancing in the Dark*, 1915-1976

8 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series consists of materials from Dietz' 1974 autobiography, *Dancing in the Dark: Words by Howard Dietz*. The series contains extensive background research materials, such as articles, biographies, correspondence, notes, scrapbooks, manuscripts and publicity materials. This series also includes materials on the paperback edition of the book, the launch party and the press coverage, as well as many drafts of manuscripts for the book, including galleys and photos used in the book

Box/Folder Description

Series I: Events and Exhibitions, 1959-1976

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Barbara Cook concert-Press coverage, Undated
		Dietz' Birthday Celebrations, 1974, 1976, Undated
		ASCAP Parties, 1974, 1976
		1974
	2	Correspondence, birthday wishes and thank-yous
	3	Guest lists
	4	Invitation
	5	Press release
		1976
	6	Correspondence
	7	Guest lists
	8	Invitation
	9	Photos
	10	Press Coverage, Sep. 8
	11	Parody lyrics, Undated
		Moss Hart party, 1959-1960, Undated
	12	Correspondence, 1959-1960, Undated
	13	Press coverage, 1959 Dec. 29
	14	Scripts/lyrics, 1959
	15	Interview with Maurice Leving, 1975 Jan. 15
		<i>Lyrics and Lyricists</i> at the 92nd St YMHA, 1974, Undated
	16	Business Correspondence, 1974 Sep.-Nov.
	17	Contact sheets, 1974
	18	Correspondence, 1974 May-Nov.
	19	Notes/script materials, 1974 Aug. 1, Undated
	20	Press coverage, 1974 Oct.-Nov., Undated
		Port Washington Library exhibitions, 1965-1974, Undated
	21	Captions for photographs, Undated
	22	Correspondence, 1973-1974, Undated
	23	Events calendars, 1974 Aug., Sep.
	24	Excerptps from Dietz' autobiography used in exhibition, Undated
	25	Identification cards and quotations, Undated
	26	Invitation list, Undated
	27	List of paintings by Dietz used in exhibition, Undated
	28	Lyric for <i>1898</i> , 1974 July 29
	29	Program, 1965 Feb.
	30	Press coverage, 1974 Aug.
	31	<i>That's Entertainment!</i> Premiere-Press coverage, Undated

Series II: *Dancing in the Dark: Words by Howard Dietz*, 1915-1976

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
2	1	Author questionnaire, Undated
		Background materials, 1915-1974, Undated
	2	Article- <i>The Hatchet Man</i> by Dietz, from <i>Variety</i> , 1965 Jan. 6
		Biographical materials , 1949-1971, Udnated
		Dietz, 1971, Udnated
	3	<i>Facts of Life</i> -Drafts, <i>Undated</i>
		From Joan Taylor, 1971
	4	Interview, Apr. 21

Box/Folder	Description
	5 Various materials
	6 Various biographies, Undated
	7 Friends of Dietz, 1949, 1968, Undated Correspondence, 1918-1973, Undated
	8 1927-1873, Undated
	9 Fan letters to Dietz while in Navy, 1918 Howard Dietz' writings, 1925-1946, Undated
	10 1925-1946, Undated
	11 Contributions from "Freckles" (Dietz' nickname), Undated
	12 Liza Dietz' writings, Undated
	13 L.D.'s writings, Undated Notes, 1973, Undated
	14 Columbia School of Journalism, 1973
	15 Miscellaneous hand-written notes, Undated Possible topics, 1923-1972, Undated
	16 Articles, 1923-1972, Undated
	17 Notes, 1970-1972, Undated
	18 Publicity materials, 1957, Undated Scrapbooks, 1915-1920
	19 1915-1920
	20 <i>The Conning Tower</i> , 1916-1917
	21 U.S. Council on NATO-Report and letter, 1952
	22 Various information, 1951, Undated
	23 Carlotta Williams program, 1974
3	Bantam paperback edition, 1974-1976, Undated
	1 Correspondence, 1974-1976, Undated
	2 Layout, 1975 Oct. 21
	3 List of people to send book to, Undated
	4 Press coverage, 1976
	Correspondence, 1972-1976, Undated
	5 Business correspondence, 1972-1976, Undated
	6 Regarding publication, 1972-1974, Undated
	7 1974-1976, Undated
	8 General correspondence, 1973-1976, Undated
	9 1974
	10 1975-1976, Undated
	11 Requesting pictures for book, 1973 Oct. 24
	12 Launch Party, 1974
	13 Correspondence
	14 Guest lists
	15 List of names for credits, Undated Manuscripts, 1966-1974, Undated
	16-17 Lucinda Ballard's copy with comments, Undated
	18 Excerpts-Copies to be gone through, Undated
	19 Extras, 1974
	20 Foreword by Alan Jay Lerner
	21 Introductions
	22 Quotes about book from various people
	23 Title page and photo captions Galley, 1974, Undated
4	1 Oversized galley, Undated
5	1 Photocopy of galley, 1974 (Uses earlier title <i>Dancing in the Dark with Howard Dietz</i>)
	2-4 Material for book, Undated

Box/Folder	Description
	5 Material not used in book, Undated
	Sections of book, 1966-1972, Undated
	6 <i>The Agent</i> , 1967-1970
	7 <i>B</i> , 1966
	8 <i>Greta Garbo</i> , 1970
	9 <i>Samuel Goldwyn</i> , 1971
	10 <i>Gone With the Wind</i> , 1967, Undated
	11 <i>Phillip Goodman</i> , 1966, 1972, Undated
6	1 <i>Jean Harlow</i> , 1970
	2 <i>Jerome Kern</i> , 1971
	3 <i>Ernst Lubitsch</i> , 1966
	4 <i>Maurice Maeterlinck</i> , 1970
	5 <i>Herman J. Mankiewicz</i> , 1967-1968
	6 <i>The Marx Brothers</i> , 1969-1970
	7 <i>Louis B. Mayer</i> , 1971
	8 Miscellaneous articles, 1971, 1972
	9 <i>Opera</i> , Undated
	10 <i>Dorothy Parker</i> , 1970 Jan. 26
	11 <i>Parkinson's Disease</i> , Undated
	12 <i>Publicity Stunts</i> , 1970
	13 <i>Television</i> , Undated
	14 <i>Irving Thalberg</i> , 1967, Undated
	15 <i>Alexander Wolcott</i> , Undated
	Various sections, 1969-1972, Undated
	16 1969
	1970
	17 Jan.-July
7	1 July
	2 1971
	3 1972
	4 Undated
	Typed manuscript with hand-written revisions, Undated
	5 Pages 1-120
	6 Pages 121-295
	7 Various articles, 1966
8	1-4 Various pages with revisions, Undated
	5 Material from Chester Kopaz, 1925-1973, Undated
	6 Miscellaneous and unfinished pieces, 1967-1972, Undated
	Photos, 1925-1974, Undated
	7 Rudolph Bing, 1952
	8 Captions and reductions with pages from book, 1974
	Dietz, 1925, 1968, Undated
	9 1968, Undated
9	1 With family, Undated
	2 With Si Seadler, 1925
	3 Dietz' paintings, Undated
	4 Clark Gable and Carole Lombard, 1939
	5 Vincente and Liza Minnelli, Undated
	6 Pages from book with photos, 1974
	7 Photo caption list, Undated
	8 Photostats of book pages with comments, Undated
	9 Posed photos of stars, Undated
	(Includes Claudette Colbert, Garbo, Kitty Carlisle Hart. Judy Garland and Mary Martin.)
	Production shots from shows, 1931, 1932, Undated

Box/Folder	Description
	<i>The Band Wagon</i> , 1931, Undated
10	Broadway production-Fred and Adele Astaire, 1931
11	Film version-Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan, 1953
12	<i>Flying Colors</i> , 1932
13	<i>Inside America</i> , Undated
14	<i>The Little Show</i> , Undated
15	London Palladium Benefit- <i>Triples</i> , Danny Kaye, Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier, 1951
16	Production still from film <i>Anchors Aweigh</i> , 1945
17	Irving Thalberg and Norma Shearer with their son, Undated
18	Press coverage, 1973-1975, Undated
19	Press releases, 1974