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THE BILLY ROSE THEATRE COLLECTION

Lester Polakov, 1916-
Papers, 1972-1973

✓ 7-11-1972-125

8-MWEZ
+
n.c.
29,336
29,337+++
29,338+++
jem 4/92

*T- MSS 1992-025

MAIN ENTRY: Lester Polakov, 1916-

TITLE: Papers, 1972-1973

SIZE: 3 boxes (4.3 lin. ft.)

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT: Lester Polakov, set and costume designer, was born in 1916. In 1973 he designed the sets for Robert Wilson's play THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOSEPH STALIN. He has also created designs for industrial stage shows, exhibitions, and films.

DESCRIPTION: The collection consists of papers, photographs, programmes, a scrapbooks, set designs, and blueprints from Lester Polakov's designs for THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOSEPH STALIN by Robert Wilson.

INTRODUCTION

The Lester Polakov Papers were donated to the Billy Rose Theatre Collection by Mr. Polakov on April 21, 1992. All of the papers were received in good condition.

ARRANGEMENT NOTES

The Lester Polakov Papers are arranged into the following three series: 1. Papers; 2. Set designs; 3. Technical drawings.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Lester Polakov, set and costume designer, was born in 1916. He began his career designing sets in summer stock from 1936-1940. From 1938-1941 he worked on Broadway shows as an assistant to designers such as Harry Horner, Boris Aronson, and Albert Johnson. In 1973 he designed the sets for Robert Wilson's play THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOSEPH STALIN. He has also created designs for industrial stage shows, exhibitions, and films. From 1955-1958 he taught theatrical design at Columbia University, and from 1958 to the present he has been the director of the Lester Polakov Studio of Stage Design, now known as the Studio and Forum of Stage Design.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Lester Polakov Papers consist of papers, photographs, set designs, and technical drawings regarding his set designs for Robert Wilson's play THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOSEPH STALIN. Polakov first designed the sets when the play was produced at the DET NY Teater Copenhagen, and then he used those designs as reference when he designed the sets at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The material was received in good order and good condition. The final arrangement of the material is as close to the original arrangement as possible.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES I -- PAPERS, 1973 2.5 lin. in.

This series consists of Lester Polakov's resume, correspondence to Mr. Polakov, a contract, programmes, and a scrapbook of designs and photographs from the production.

SERIES II -- SET DESIGNS, 1973 1.6 lin. ft.

This series consists of original set designs. They are arranged by Act wherever possible, and by size for conservation reasons.

SERIES III -- TECHNICAL DRAWINGS, 1972-1973 2.4 lin. ft.

This series consists of ground plans, lighting plans, and set designs including those for the DET NY Teater Copenhagen, which Polakov used as research for his designs for the Brooklyn Academy of Music production. There are also unidentified set designs.

LESTER POLAKOV PAPERS

SERIES I. PAPERS

BOX NO. 1 (8-MWEZ + n.c. 29,336)

Folder No.

- 1 Papers: 1973
- 2 Programmes: 1973
- 3 Scrapbook: 1973

SERIES II. SET DESIGNS

BOX NO. 2 (8-MWEZ + n.c. 29,337 +++)

1. Prelude to Act VII: "First, the singing red elephant does a solo. Then the Polar Bear pops up from below." 1973
 2. Interlude in Act IV: 1973
 3. Miscellaneous pieces - painted cutouts: 1973
 4. Act I. Beach scene, sky: 1973
 5. Act I. Beach scene, stormy sky: 1973
 6. Act II. House drop: 1973
 7. Act III. Cave mouth backing: 1973
 8. Act IV. Pyramid to rise: 1973
 9. Act IV. Mountain-lake drop: 1973
 10. Act IV. Murder scene - stone wall: 1973
 11. Act VI. Bedroom drop: 1973
 12. Act VI. House, boarded-up, drop: 1973
 13. Act VII. Planet scrim drop: 1973
 14. Desert Drop: n.d.
 15. Act VII. Nebula drop: 1973
 16. Act VII. The planet: 1973
 17. VI. Desert drop: 1973
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SERIES III. TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

Box No. 3 (8-MWEZ + n.c. 29,338 +††)

1. Opera House master lighting layout: 9/30/73
 2. Brooklyn Academy of Music revised ground plan for Robert Wilson's DEAFMAN GLANCE: n.d.
 3. Pencil drawing of orchestra pit platforms, leadoffs, wire rays: Nov. 1973
 4. Miscellaneous Small Pieces: 1973
 5. Elevations: Irregular Drops and Miscellaneous Scenery: 1973
 6. Folder entitled "Miscellaneous Research and Old Stuff" and Index to drawings and financial record
 7. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan by Johan Keller: September 11, 1972
 8. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan: corrected July 27, 1973.
 9. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act I Beach: corrected July 27, 1973.
 10. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act II Prolog: House. Drawing Room: corrected July 27, 1973.
 11. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act III Cave: corrected July 27, 1973.
 12. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act IV Prolog: Murder; Prelude: Mountain-lake. Forest; Interlude: Stalin's Room: corrected July 27, 1973.
 13. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act V Temple: corrected July 27, 1973.
 14. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act VI Bedroom and Desert: July 20, 1973
 15. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan Act VII Prolog: Iceberg planet; Finale: Moscow Burns: corrected July 27, 1973.
 16. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan hanging items: July 19, 1973.
 17. DET NY Teater Copenhagen scenepan hanging items: July 19, 1973.
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POLAKOV, LESTER, 1916-

For additional information ask librarian in the
Cornell-McClintic Room for the finding aid.

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POLAKOV, LESTER, 1916-
LESTER POLAKOV PAPERS, 1972-1973

FINDING AID
(POLAKOV, LESTER)

4.3 lin. ft. (3 boxes) of papers, photographs, programs,
a scrapbook, set designs, and blueprints from Lester
Polakov's designs for THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOSEPH
STALIN by Robert Wilson.

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POLAKOV, LESTER, 1916-
LESTER POLAKOV PAPERS, 1972-1973

8-MWEZ

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N.C.

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4.3 lin. ft. (3 boxes) of papers, photographs,
programs, a scrapbook, set designs, and blueprints
from Lester Polakov's designs for THE LIFE AND DEATH OF
JOSEPH STALIN by Robert Wilson.

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