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Billy Rose Theatre Division**

Guide to the
HB Studio records

1939-2009
*T-Mss 2010-105

Compiled by Susan Malsbury, October 2011

Summary

Creator: HB Studio

Title: HB Studio records, 1939-2009

Size: 8.27 linear feet (22 boxes, 2 other items)

Source: Donated by HB Studio, 2011

Abstract: This collection contains the records of HB Studio, an acting school founded by actor Herbert Berghof in New York City in 1945, and the personal and professional papers of Berghof and his wife, actress Uta Hagen. Material includes correspondence, administrative files, appointment books, diaries, photographs and photo albums, production files, scrapbooks, a small amount of personal material, and sound and video recordings.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photography and photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required. Inquiries regarding audio and video materials in the series may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Copyright information: For permission to publish, contact the Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Preferred citation: HB Studio records, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Custodial history: Records were maintained by HB Studio prior to donation.

Processing note: Select photographs were removed from frames. Material was reboxed. Original folder titles were maintained when apparent.

Related collections

HB Playwrights Foundation, Inc. records. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof papers. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Creator history

HB Studio

HB Studio was founded in New York City in 1945 by Viennese actor and director Herbert Berghof as a workplace for the teaching of acting that encouraged experimentation based on classic traditions of theater. Berghof sought to create an institution that allowed for the continuity of education with the opportunities for performance that could include both established actors and beginning students.

Berghof began teaching classes in the evenings in a rented space at the Charles Weidman Dance Studios on 16th Street. In 1947, his future wife, actress Uta Hagen began teaching as well and also took on a leadership role at the Studio. As the classes grew in popularity, Berghof needed more space to hold classes. He found an empty loft in Chelsea in 1950. Over the next decade, the space was renovated and enrollment continued to grow. More teachers joined the ranks including Mildred Dunnock, Betty Field, Lee Grant, Mira Rostova, Eli Wallach, and Jo Van Fleet, many of whom had been former students of Berghof's. Other early students included Jack Albertson, Barbara Barrie, Orson Bean, Charles Grodin, Harvey Korman, Jack Lemmon, E. G. Marshall, Steve McQueen, Anne Meara, Geraldine Page, Charles Nelson Reilly, Jason Robards, George Segal, Maureen Stapleton, and Jerry Stiller. In addition to the classes, Berghof and Hagen began to produce plays to an audience of friends and colleagues, without payment or advertising.

Though the Studio was flourishing creatively, it was struggling financially. Berghof and Hagen were increasingly taking on more administrative duties, but did not have the skills or inclination to manage the business end of the fledgling organization. The Studio was run loosely, with students responsible for the collection of class fees and no central administration to delegate tasks. To solve this, Berghof hired Phillipa Hastings, a stage manager, to be the Studio's first director. Under her leadership, the Studio was soon able to financially support itself without losing its creative openness. HB Studio continued to maintain a strong central leadership. Past directors have included Muriel Burns, Ellen Bernstein, Peter Mawe, Aggie Garret, and Tom Grasso.

In the late 1950s, Berghof and Hagen once again made plans to move the Studio. Though the loft functioned adequately as class space, it was too small and cramped for the productions that were now being produced regularly. In April 1958, Berghof and Hagen began plans to purchase a former stable at 120 Bank St., in the West Village. Though the property was out of their price range, students from the Studio, headed by Olga Bellin and Tom McCready, started the Building Fund. Current and past students, friends, and colleagues all donated money. This grassroots effort was successful and by July they had signed the mortgage and hired Gruen Associates, headed by Angelo Chiarella, to transform the stable into an education and performance space. Construction began in October and the official opening was in April the next year. In the early 1960s, Berghof was able to buy the one-story garage at 124 Bank St. with earnings from his work on the film *Cleopatra*, and the building was converted into a theater that could seat eighty people. A few years later, 122 Bank St. was purchased with an inheritance received by Hagen and the Studio complex was finally complete.

The Studio thrived in its new space. In addition to the acting classes, a playwrights department was created with Gil Pearlman, Norman Rosten, Horton Foote, and William David Roberts as teachers. Movement, ballet and jazz, fencing, speech, costume and stage make-up classes were also offered. The HB Playwrights Foundation was officially created in 1965 to provide separate administrative support for the production of plays. As before, the productions were strictly volunteer efforts on the part of the directors and actors and sought to allow experimentation and growth away from commercial influences.

Following Berghof's death in 1990, Hagen became head of the Studio until her own death in 2004. HB Studio is still an active organization at the time of this writing (2011) and upholds many of the beliefs of its founder. Functioning as a non-profit, it offers a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum of study for students of all levels, free from commercial pressures. Noted alumni have included Anne Bancroft, Candice Bergen, Matthew Broderick, Billy Crystal, Hope Davis, Drea DeMatteo, Robert DeNiro, Faye Dunaway, Rita Gardner, Whoopi Goldberg, Harvey Keitel, Jane Krakowski, Jessica Lange, John Leguizamo, Dina Merrill, Bette Midler, Liza Minnelli, Alfred Molina, Al Pacino, William Packard, Sarah Jessica Parker, Amanda Peet, Christopher Reeve, Paul Roebing, Eva Marie Saint, Annabella Sciorra, Kyra Sedgewick, Molly Shannon, Barbra Streisand, Lily Tomlin, and Sigourney Weaver.

Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof

Uta Thyra Hagen (1919-2004) was born in Germany to Oskar and Thyra Hagen. Her father had begun the Göttingen Handel Festival and her mother was a Danish opera singer and teacher. When Hagen was six, the family moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where her father founded the Department of Art History at the University of Wisconsin. Hagen was attracted to acting at an early age, training briefly at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London in 1936. She made her Broadway debut as Nina in *The Sea Gull* (1938). That same year, she married actor José Ferrer and starred with Ferrer and Paul Robeson in the production of *Othello*. Hagen and Ferrer had one daughter Leticia ("Letty") in 1940. Hagen met Berghof in 1947 when they were both in the Broadway production of *The Whole World Over*. Hagen originated the role of Georgie Elgin in Clifford Odets' *The Country Girl* (1950), winning her first Tony Award in 1951. Hagen went on to perform the title role in *Saint Joan* (1951), as well as starred in *Tovarich* (1952), *In Any Language* (1952), *The Magic and the Loss* (1954), and *Island of Goats* (1955). Hagen and Berghof were married in 1957.

In the early 1950s Hagen's liberal political views and activities caused her to be blacklisted from television and Broadway and subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. In 1962, Hagen made her return to Broadway starring in the acclaimed *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, earning her a second Tony Award in 1963. Her subsequent Broadway appearances included *The Cherry Orchard* (1968), *You Never Can Tell* (1986), *Mrs. Klein* (1995), *Collected Stories* (1998), and *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks* (2001). Hagen also appeared in the film *The Boys from Brazil* (1978), for which she was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, and in *Reversal of Fortune* (1990). Her television appearances include the soap opera *One Life to Live* (1986) and television movie *Seasonal Differences* (1987); she received Daytime Emmy Award nominations for both.

Hagen continued to teach at HB Studio and her master classes became the basis for her two classic acting texts, *Respect for Acting* (1973), co-written with Haskel Frankel, and *A Challenge for the Actor* (1991). Uta Hagen's *Acting Class* (2001) video captured Uta's classroom teaching on film. Also a gourmet cook, Hagen wrote a cookbook, *Love for Cooking* (1976).

Herbert Berghof (1909-1990) was born in Vienna to Paul and Regina (Sternberg) Berghof. His father was a railroad stationmaster. Berghof attended the University of Vienna and the Vienna State Academy of Dramatic Art and studied with Alexander Moissi, Max Reinhardt, and Lee Strasberg. He spent twelve years honing his craft on the European stage before emigrating to the United States in 1938 to escape Nazi persecution. In the United States, Berghof found work as a teacher at Erwin Piscator's Dramatic Workshop at the New School for Social Research and at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Berghof first garnered acclaim in the United States in an adaptation of *Nathan the Wise* (1942), then appearing on Broadway in *The Innocent Voyage* (1943), *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944), *Hedda Gabler* (1948), *Miss Liberty* (1949), *The Deep Blue Sea* (1952), *The Andersonville Trial* (1959), and *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (1969). He also appeared in summer stock productions such as *Design for Living* (1943) and *The Guardsman* (1951). Berghof was also well known for directing the first American staging of *Waiting for Godot* (1956).

In addition to their individual stage careers, Berghof and Hagen adapted, produced, and performed together works such as *Cyprienne* (1955), *The Daily Life* (1955), and *The Queen and the Rebels* (1959). They also toured with productions of *The Play's the Thing* (1952), *The Lady's Not for Burning* (1953), *The Affairs of Anatol* (1957), and *Charlotte* (1980), a play that was translated by Berghof and Hagen, produced and directed by Berghof, and starred Hagen. Berghof and Hagen lived in Greenwich Village and had a summer home in Montauk, Long Island.

Scope and content note

This collection contains records of HB Studio, and the personal and professional papers of Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof. Records relating to HB Studio are fragmentary and include administrative files, invoices and blueprints relating to the 120 Bank St. property, a small amount of teaching material, and a scrapbook. Material relating to Hagen and Berghof makes up the bulk of the collection and includes correspondence, appointment books, diaries, photographs and photo albums, production files, scrapbooks, and a small amount of personal material.

Sound recordings consist of productions, interviews with Hagen, recordings of classes and lectures given by Berghof and Hagen on acting, and one recording of an HB Studio Faculty Meeting on January 1, 1991. Video recordings include productions, interviews and television appearances, award shows, Hagen's memorial service, and original footage from Uta Hagen's Acting Class, a two-part video of her master classes.

This collection contains material similar to that found in the Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof papers, 1889-2004 and in the HB Playwrights Foundation, Inc. records, 1909-2001 currently held in the Billy Rose Theatre Division at this library. Inquiries regarding audio and video materials in the series may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Arrangement

The HB Studio records are organized into the following series:

Series I: HB Studio, 1939-2009

Series II: Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof, 1942-2003

II. A. Uta Hagen, 1948-2003

II. B. Herbert Berghof, 1962-1990

II. C. Photographs, 1943-1972

II. D. Productions and Professional Projects, 1942-1999

II. E. Scripts, 1972-2000

Series III: Sound and Video Recordings, 1951-2004

Key terms

Subjects

Acting -- Social aspects
Acting -- Study and teaching
Theater -- Production and direction
Theater -- United States

Places

West Village (New York, N.Y.)

Names

Berghof, Herbert
Hagen, Uta, 1919-2004
HB Studio

Special formats

Appointment books
Blueprints (reprographic copies)
Diaries
Negatives
Photo albums
Photographic prints
Scrapbooks
Scripts
Slides (photographs)
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Container list

Series I: HB Studio, 1939-2009 (7 boxes, 2 tubes)

This series is arranged alphabetically and is a small cross-section of office files containing administrative files, attendance records, architectural records, photographs, and a scrapbook. Attendance records document weekly class attendance from 2003-2007. Administrative files contain material documenting office procedures, the history of HB Studio, as well as a small amount of Studio publications. Correspondence is primarily from prospective students requesting catalogs, inquiring after scholarships, or desiring to attend classes taught by Berghof or Hagen. Additionally, professional actors wrote looking for employment. Records regarding the 120 Bank St. property include invoices that reflect the 1959 renovations of the property and floor plans for the building. Photographs are of unidentified productions. The scrapbook documents both the early years of Berghof's acting career and the founding of HB Studio. It contains photographs of Berghof and his acting classes, brochures and programs from Berghof's performances and from productions he produced, class schedules, plans and fundraising materials for the 120 Bank St. property, and vocal exercises by Marian Rich. Weekly notices included timely information for students and teachers, as well as notices of classes and performances.

The majority of the material in this series reflects Berghof and Hagen's roles at HB Studio and not the actors who were their students or colleagues. For additional administrative files regarding the Studio, see the Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof papers, 1889-2004.

- b.1 f.1-2 Correspondence, 1960-2009
120 Bank St. Property
- b.21 f.1 General, undated
- b.21 f.2 Correspondence, 1956-1966
- t.23 Architectural Drawings, 1958-1959
- t.24 Architectural Drawings, 1958-1969
- b.22 Architectural Drawings, 1958-1997
- b.1 f.3 Contractor Invoices, 1959
- b.21 f.3-4 Donations, 1958
- b.1 f.4 Acting Exercises, undated
- b.1 f.5 Class Attendance Sheets, 2002-2008
- b.1 f.6-7 Class Contact Sheets, 2004
- b.1 f.8 Class Contact Sheets, 2005
- b.2 f.1 Class Contact Sheets, 2005
- b.2 f.2 History, 1975-1995
- b.21 f.5 Lecture Series, 1960-1963
- b.2 f.3 News Clippings, 1965-1970
- b.2 f.4 Notes, 1960s
- Photographs
- b.14 Contact Sheets, undated
- b.2 f.5 Negatives, undated
- b.14 Photo Album, undated
- b.2 f.6 Slides, undated

Series I: HB Studio, 1939-2009 (cont.)

- b.2 f.7 Publicity Cards, 1968-1969
- b.15 Scrapbook (1 of 2), 1939-1957
- b.16 Scrapbook (2 of 2), 1939-1957
- Staff
- b.2 f.8 General, 1985-2002, undated
- b.2 f.9 Brochure Duty, 1988-2002, undated
- b.2 f.10 Manuals and Instructions, 1965-2003
- b.2 f.11 Weekly Notices, 2005

Series II: Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof, 1942-2003 (16 boxes)

This series is arranged into five subseries: II. A. Uta Hagen, II. B. Herbert Berghof, II. C. Photographs, II. D. Productions and Professional Projects, and II. E. Scripts. For additional material reflecting the personal and professional activities of Berghof and Hagen, see Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof papers, 1889-2004, and in the HB Playwrights Foundation, Inc. records, 1909-2009.

II. A. Uta Hagen, 1948-2003

This subseries is arranged alphabetically. Correspondence primarily relates to Hagen's work at HB Studio and from various theaters and non-profit companies that she donated money to. Appointment books, calendars, and diaries document Hagen's day-to-day activities, both professional and personal. The diaries are in both English and German and are interleaved with programs, newspaper clippings, and travel mementos. Personal material includes a guest book from Hagen and Berghof's Montauk home and various parties, as well as FBI files on Hagen regarding her leftist activities and subpoena by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Unsorted material consists of documents relating to a group trip to Germany, a newspaper clipping regarding Hagen's Montauk home, and a Max Factor pamphlet on stage make-up with Hagen's notes. Writings include typescripts of chapters of Hagen's text, *A Challenge for the Actor*, some containing holograph edits.

Correspondence

- b.2 f.12 General, 1954-2000
- b.3 f.1-3 General, 1954-2000
- b.3 f.4 Pierce, David Hyde, 2001, undated
- b.3 f.5 Wieder, Howard, 1991
- b.12 Appointment Books, 1951-1998
- b.3 f.7 Biographical Information
- b.3 f.5 Calendars, 1968-1997
- b.13 Diaries, 1951-1961
- Personal Material
- b.3 f.6 Actors' Equity Association--Contracts and Riders, 1996-2001
- b.4 f.1-3 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Files, 1946-1955

Series II: Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof, 194... (cont.)

II. A. Uta Hagen, 1948-2003 (cont.)

Personal Material (cont.)

b.4 f.4 Hayman, D'Arcy--*Art and Man* Typescript, 1965 October

Guest Books

b.4 f.5 80th Birthday Party, 1999

b.5 f.1 Montauk House, 1963-1968

b.5 f.2 Unidentified Event, 1990

b.5 f.3 Invitation List--A Salute to Uta Hagen, 1972

b.5 f.4 Montauk House--Specifications, 1962

b.17 National Medal of Arts, 2003 March 6 (Award)

b.5 f.5 News Clippings, 1962-1998

b.5 f.6 Unsorted, 1960, undated

Scrapbooks

b.17 1948

b.17 1950

Writings

b.5 f.7-8 *A Challenge for the Actor*-- Typscripts, 1992, undated

b.6 f.1-9 *A Challenge for the Actor*-- Typscripts, 1992, undated

b.20 *Love for Cooking*--Promotional Poster, undated

II. B. Herbert Berghof, 1962-1990

This subseries is arranged alphabetically. Herbert Berghof's correspondence holds letters from potential students, from rights holders negotiating performance rights, and letters raising funds for the 120 Bank St. property. Additionally his correspondence has letters from the poet and playwright William Packard. Personal materials includes forms regarding Berghof's admission to the Lenox Hill Hospital for medical treatment, a eulogy Berghof wrote for actor Bert Lahr, and Berghof's obituary.

b.6 f.10 Correspondence, 1962-1978

b.6 f.11 Biographical Information, undated

b.6 f.12 Personal Materials, 1980-1990

b.6 f.13 Published Works

Der Gute Gott von Manhattan by Ingeborg Bachmann (Dedicated to Berghof and Hagen)

Krapp's Last Tape by Samuel Beckett (Annotated by Berghof)

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare (Annotated by Berghof)

II. C. Photographs, 1943-1972

This subseries is arranged alphabetically by subject. Loose photographs are of Berghof and Hagen, and of various productions. There are photo albums and scrapbooks of various productions, such as Cyprienne and The Queen and the Rebels, and of Hagen's early years as an actress. Additionally, there is a photo album of their Greenwich Village apartment before and after a fire (1971-1972).

b.7 f.1 Greenwich Village Apartment, 1971-1972

Series II: Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof, 194... (cont.)

II. C. Photographs, 1943-1972 (cont.)

- b.19 Hagen and Berghof--Photo Album, 1943-1952
- b.17 Hagen and Berghof--Portraits, undated
- b.19 McKechnie, Donna--Portrait, undated

II. D. Productions and Professional Projects, 1942-1999

This subseries is arranged alphabetically by production. These files regard both Hagen's and Berghof's work in theatre and television productions like *Mrs. Klein*, *Target*, *Charlotte*, and *Kojak: The Belarus File*, among others. Files include correspondence, cast lists, legal agreements, news clippings, photographs, playbills, promotional material, schedules, scripts, and theatrical notes. The acting exercises for *Charlotte* have letters written by Hagen from *Charlotte's* perspective. Many scripts, particularly *A Report to An Academy and Queen and the Rebel's* contain extensive annotations in Berghof's hand. The script for *Caligula* contains Aaron Ashers' edits of the original New Directions publication of the play.

- b.7 f.2 General, 1945-1985
- b.7 f.3 *August, August, August*--Script, undated
- b.7 f.4 *The Belarus File*--Correspondence, 1984
- b.7 f.5 *Caligula*--Correspondence and Notes, 1958-1959
Charlotte, undated
- b.7 f.6 Acting Exercises, undated
- b.7 f.7 Playbills and Reviews, 1980-1982
- b.7 f.8 Prompt Book, 1982
- b.7 f.9 Script, 1978
- b.8 f.1 Script, 1979
- b.8 f.2 *Collected Stories*--Playbill, 1999
- b.20 *Collected Stories*--Promotional Posters, undated
- b.8 f.3 *Cyprienne*--Scrapbook, 1955
- b.8 f.4 *Die Schwaermer*--Correspondence, 1981
- b.8 f.5 *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*--News Clippings and Notes, 1969
- b.8 f.6 *Les Blanes*--News Clippings and Production Schedule, 1970
- b.8 f.7 *Les Chaises*--Script, undated
- b.8 f.8 *The Lady's Not for Burning*--Photographs, 1953
- b.9 f.1 *Mrs. Klein*--Reviews, 1995
Nathan the Wise, 1942-1970
- b.9 f.2 General, 1942-1970
- b.9 f.3 Script, 1965
- b.9 f.4 *Off-Shore Wind*--Correspondence, 1958
The Queen and the Rebels, 1967
- b.9 f.5 General, 1959 (Includes photographs)

Series II: Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof, 194... (cont.)

II. D. Productions and Professional Proj... (cont.)

The Queen and the Rebels, 1967 (cont.)

- b.9 f.6 Correspondence, 1959
- b.9 f.7 Script, 1958
- b.9 f.8 *A Report to an Academy*--Program and Scripts, 1967
- b.9 f.9 *Reversal of Fortune*--Crew List, 1989
- b.9 f.10 *The Sunset Gang*--Call Sheets, 1990
- Target*
- b.9 f.11 General, 1984
- b.9 f.12 Actor Employment Agreement, 1984
- b.10 f.1 Photographs, 1985-1986
- Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
- b.10 f.2-4 Scripts, undated
- b.18 Scripts, undated

II. E. Scripts, 1972-2000

This subseries is arranged alphabetically. The William Packard monologues are fifty-nine short monologues signed by Packard. Little Juggling Tricks Almost Chinese was translated by Berghof and Holder Kunkel.

- b.10 f.5 *The Advertisement*, undated
- b.10 f.6 *Dear but Deadly*, undated
- b.10 f.7 *Dogs*, undated
- b.10 f.8 *Houdini*, 2000
- b.11 f.1 *Little Juggling Tricks Almost Chinese*, undated
- Packard, William
- b.11 f.2-5 Monologues, 1998
- b.11 f.6 Poetry, undated
- b.11 f.7 *Pilgrim Songs from Here and There*, 1972
- b.11 f.8 *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, 1995

Series III: Sound and Video Recordings, 1951-2004

Sound and video recordings reflect both HB Studio and Hagen and Berghof's professional work. Sound recordings consist of recordings of productions, interviews with Hagen, recordings of classes and lectures given by Berghof and Hagen on acting, and one recording of an HB Studio Faculty Meeting on January 1, 1991. Productions include rehearsals, readings, and performances of *Collected Stories*, *Fidelio*, *A Horse Story*, *Leonce and Lena*, *Off-Shore Wind*, *Othello*, *Poor Murderer*, *Prometheus Bound*, *Pygmalion*, *A Report to the Academy*, *This Side of Paradise*, *Silver Fox*, *The White Row*, as well as recordings from the Charlotte tour (1980-1982). Interviews with Hagen include an interview done by Studs Turkel, and various radio appearances. Additionally, the sound recordings have music cues and a small amount of commercial music.

Video recordings are of productions, interviews and television appearances, award shows, Hagen's memorial service, and original footage from Uta Hagen's Acting Class, a two-part video of her master classes produced by former students Pennie duPont and Karen Ludwig. Productions include television, film, and stage performances of *The Boys from Brazil*, *Charlotte*, *A Doctor's Story*, *MacBeth*, *One Life to Live*, *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*, *The Sunset Gang*, *Those Lips*, *Those Eyes*, and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. Television appearances such as interviews on *This is America* with Dennis Wholey (1996), *The Today Show* (1991), *Broadway Beat*, and *Inside Broadway* (1992). Award shows include the Tony Awards (1990, 1991), the Living Legacy Awards (1994), the Drama Desk Awards (1995-1996), and the Emmy Awards (1986) are also held in this series.