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Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the
John Springer Associates records
1966-1982
*T-Mss 2001-024

Compiled by Susan Malsbury, May 2013

Summary

Creator: John Springer Associates

Title: John Springer Associates records, 1966-1982

Size: 21.31 linear feet (51 boxes)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: John Springer Associates is a New York City-based entertainment public relations firm founded by publicist John Springer in the mid-1950s that represents actors, singers, and literary figures; films and television shows; plays; and special events. The John Springer Associates records consists of correspondence, client files, and photographs.

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

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

Preferred citation: John Springer Associates records, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Material was refoldered as necessary and reboxed. The bulk of the correspondence and the client files appear to have been previously collapsed prior to processing. This is apparent by pencil markings on the documents indicating a filing system by client name and often obvious groupings of a particular clients file which have been foldered and alphabetized when apparent.

Creator history

John Springer Associates is a New York City-based entertainment public relations firm founded by publicist John Springer in the mid-1950s that represents actors, singers, and literary figures; films and television shows; plays; and special events. John Springer (1916-2001) was born in Rochester, New York, and had an interest in theater and motion pictures from a young age. After graduating from college, he went to work as a publicist at RKO and 20th Century Fox before founding John Springer Associates. His firm's first client was actor Richard Burton. In addition to Springer, staff at the firm consisted of associate publicists and administrative staff members. The firm maintained a large roster of individual clients, but often only worked actively for them as needed, for the promotion of a new project or to publicly address a personal life event that might garner public scrutiny. Springer was famed for his discretion—he often successfully represented noted rivals or represented both parties during a divorce, as he did for Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.

Clients have included stage, film, and television actors such as Lauren Bacall, Warren Beatty, Richard Burton, Julie Christy, Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Marlene Dietrich, Mia Farrow, Henry Fonda, Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Janet Leigh, Myrna Loy, Marilyn Monroe, Al Pacino, and Elizabeth Taylor, among many others. Broadway and Off-Broadway plays have included *The Glass Menagerie* (1965), *The Front Page* (1969), *Our Town* (1969), *Irene* (1973), *Equus* (1974), *Poor Murderer* (1976), and *First Monday in October* (1978). The firm was unique in representing American as well as European motion pictures. American films have included *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), and *My Dinner with Andre* (1981). European films have included *The Breach* (1970), *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975), *Scenes from a Marriage* (1973), *Wedding in Blood* (1973), *The Man Who Loved Women* (1977), *A Special Day* (1977), *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (1979), and *Beau Pere* (1981).

In addition to individual plays and films, the John Springer Associates also represented special events including the New York Film Festival and the Spoleto Festival, an Italian-based performing arts festival that formed a United States counterpart in 1977, the American International Pictures retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, and other tributes and fundraisers. The firm is still actively representing clients at the time of this writing (2013) under the name Springer Associates PR and is headed by Springer's son Gary Springer.

Source: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/01/movies/john-springer-85-hollywood-publicist-dies.html>>
Accessed May 14, 2013.

Scope and content note

The John Springer Associates records consist of correspondence, client files, and photographs. Client files make up the bulk of the collection and consist of correspondence, inter-office memoranda, scripts, outlines of publicity projects and campaigns, press releases and other publicity material, and press junket schedules. Additionally, there are biographical files containing capsule biographies of the firm's clients and a small amount of news clippings.

The correspondence contains letters to and from agents, gossip columnists, critics, other publicists, directors, and producers. Correspondence in the collection details all aspects of the firm's work on a client's behalf, including arranging interviews, photo shoots, public appearances, and responding to queries from the press. There is little correspondence from clients themselves.

Photographs consist of publicity shots, head shots, film stills, theater performances, and snapshots. Researchers are advised to research all three series when researching a client. Though the firm has been representing clients for over five decades, the collection material represents a limited period (1966 to 1982) of the firm's work.

Clients represented in the collection include Phyllis Diller, Richard Fleischer, Peter Fonda, Peggy Lee, Mike Nichols, Hal Prince, Lyn Revson, Debbie Reynolds, Elizabeth Taylor, and Liv Ullman; the plays *Equus*, *Hertzl*, *Poor Murderer*, and *The Mooney Shapiro Songbook*; the films *Beau Pere*, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Equus*, *Fritz the Cat*, *The Man Who Loved Women*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *My Dinner with Andre*, *Scenes from a Marriage*, *Two English Girls*, and *Wedding in Blood*; and the Walt Disney Film Festival, the California Shakespeare Festival, the New York Film Festival, and the Spoleto Festival. Some of the publicity material for European films represented by the firm is in French, Italian, and Spanish.

Inquiries regarding visual materials in the series may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Arrangement

The John Springer Associates records are organized into the following series:

Series I: Correspondence, 1971-1981

Series II: Client Files, 1966-1981

Series III: Photographs, 1966-1982

Key terms

Subjects

Motion picture industry -- Public relations

Public relations

Theater -- Public relations

Events

American Film Festival -- (New York, N.Y.)

Festival of the Two Worlds

Spoleto Festival USA

Names

Burton, Richard, 1925-1984

Diller, Phyllis

Fonda, Henry, 1905-1982

John Springer Associates

Lee, Peggy, 1920-2002

Springer, John, 1916-2001

Taylor, Elizabeth, 1932-2011

Special formats

Contracts

Negatives

Photographs

Scripts

Slides

Video recordings

Container list

Series I: Correspondence, 1971-1981 (10 boxes)

The majority of the correspondence represents a wide range of clients and date spans. There is also small amount of correspondence that was previously arranged by year (1980).

Correspondence is primarily between John Springer, or one of his associates, and agents, gossip columnists, critics, other publicists, directors, and producers. There is little correspondence directly from clients. Letters detail arrangements for interviews, photo shoots, public appearances, and includes replies to queries from press members and other interested parties. The correspondence also details the contractual arrangements between the firm and clients, such as the fees paid to the firm. The fees varied by client, but were usually a fixed annual sum or percentage of client's earnings. Almost all of the firm's clients from the 1970s are represented in the correspondence, including Phyllis Diller; Richard Fleischer; Mike Nichols; Hal Prince; Debbie Reynolds; Liv Ullman; movies like Fritz the Cat, and Equus; and festivals like the Walt Disney Film Festival and the California Shakespeare festival.

The small amount of correspondence arranged by year is an incomplete alphabetical run (A-F) from the 1980s. This run also includes one folder called "Specials to columnists" that consists of outgoing letters to New York City-based columnists, including many to Liz Smith.

| | | |
|------|-------|--------------------|
| b.1 | f.1-5 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.2 | f.1-4 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.3 | f.1-5 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.4 | f.1-5 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.5 | f.1-5 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.6 | f.1-4 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.7 | f.1-4 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.8 | f.1-4 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.9 | f.1-4 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.10 | f.1-4 | General, 1971-1981 |
| b.10 | f.5-9 | 1980 |

Series II: Client Files, 1966-1981 (35 boxes)

The client files are arranged alphabetically by client followed by general files of clients not represented in the alphabetical run. This series also contains biographical files and news clippings.

The client files can consist of correspondence, inter-office memoranda, scripts, outlines of publicity projects and campaigns, press releases and other publicity material, and press junket schedules. Occasionally they contain scripts, typescript drafts, or scores, or reflect a personal matter like buying a work of art or booking a vacation. Material in the client files varies depending on a client's particular publicity needs and the length of time they contracted with the firm. Plays, films, or special events usually contracted the firm for a few months while individual actors, dancers, or singers often remained clients for many years.

Clients represented in the alphabetical run include actors Henry Fonda and Debbie Reynolds; director Richard Fleischer; singer Peggy Lee; the play *Poor Murderer*; films *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *My Dinner with Andre*, and *Scenes from a Marriage*; and the documentary *The Children of Theater Street*. There is a particularly large amount of material representing the stage and film versions of *Equus* and the firm's first client, Richard Burton. In addition to her own client files, material relating to Elizabeth Taylor can be found in the Burton files during the duration of their marriage, from 1966 to 1976. Also included is the American International Pictures retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art; the Spoleto Festival, both the original Italian festival and the first United States festival in 1977, and a tribute to Josephine Baker held one year after her death at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Other clients represented in the general files include dancers Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux and Patricia McBride; the play *Cyrano*; the national tour of the musical *The Music Man*; and many films, including *Beau Pere*, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, *The Day of the Dolphin*, *Dressed to Kill*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Funny Girl*, *Jabberwocky*, *The Man Who Loved Women*, *Pink Flamingos*, *The Seduction of Mimi*, and *Sophie's Choice*, among others. The general files also represent a tribute to Harold Clurman to raise funds for the Clurman Theater, an American Film Institute tribute to Bette Davis, and the openings of various New York City restaurants including the reopening of *Gallagher's*. Throughout the general files, there is material relating to the New York Film Festival, from 1966 to 1980, including schedules, press lists, and publicity packets for individual films. To see the full extent of films that were screened during these years, please consult the alphabetical listing of films maintained by on the New York Film Festival's website: <http://filmlinccom.siteprotect.net/archive/nyff/nyfffestlista.htm>

Biographical files contain capsule biographies of clients that were used in-house or sent to publications. News clippings are from publications outside of the New York City metropolitan area, and represent newspapers from across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

There is one video recording of a public service spot on drug abuse featuring Will Rogers and Elizabeth Taylor. Inquiries regarding visual materials in the series may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Series II: Client Files, 1966-1981 (cont.)

- b.22 f.2-6 American Greetings Corporation - Arnold, Stanley, 1972-1981, undated
- b.23 f.1-7 Arnold, Stanley - Burton, Richard, 1966-1978, undated
- b.24 f.1-5 Burton, Richard, 1966-1978
- b.25 f.1-4 Burton, Richard, 1966-1978
- b.26 f.1-6 Burton, Richard, 1966-1978
- b.27 f.1-6 Burton, Richard, 1966-1978
- b.28 f.1-6 Burton, Richard, 1966-1978
- b.29 f.1-7 California Shakespearean Festival - Diller, Phyllis, 1972-1978
- b.30 f.1-5 Diller, Phyllis - *Equus* (film), 1966-1979
- b.31 f.1-8 *Equus* (play) - Fonda, Henry, 1966-1979
- b.32 f.1-5 Fonda, Henry, 1966-1970
- b.33 f.1-5 Fonda, Henry - *Fritz the Cat*, 1966-1972
- b.34 f.1-7 *George M. - Herzl*, 1973-1981
- b.35 f.1-6 Huston, John - *Lost and Found*, 1970-1979
- b.36 f.1-7 *The Man Who Fell to Earth - Poor Murderer*, 1972-1981
- b.37 f.1-6 Prince, Hal - Revson, Lyn, 1966-1978
- b.38 f.1-9 *Road Games* - Spoleto Festival (Italy), 1972-1981
- b.39 f.1-6 Spoleto Festival (U.S.A.), 1976-1977
- b.40 f.1-5 Spoleto Festival (U.S.A.) - Taylor, Elizabeth, 1973-1979
- b.41 f.1-6 Taylor, Elizabeth - *The Trial of Billy Jack*, 1974-1981
- b.42 f.1-5 Tribute to Josephine Baker - Walt Disney Productions, 1970-1977
- b.13 f.1-6 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.14 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.15 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.16 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.17 f.1-4 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.18 f.1-4 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.19 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.20 f.1-4 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.21 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.22 f.1 Other Clients, 1966-1981
- b.42 f.6-8 Biographical Files, undated
- b.43 f.1-4 Biographical Files, undated
- b.43 f.5-6 News Clippings, 1971-1980
- b.44 f.1-4 News Clippings, 1971-1980

Series III: Photographs, 1966-1982 (9 boxes)

The photographs are arranged by format. The majority of the photographs are prints, but there are some negatives and a small amount of slides. The prints are arranged alphabetically by client followed by prints of clients not represented in the alphabetical run. The print files consist of contact sheets, publicity photographs, head shots, film stills, theater performances, and snapshots.

Subjects in the alphabetical run include Dirk Bogarde, Phyllis Diller, Richard Fleisher, Robert Forster, David Frost, Florence Henderson, Myrna Loy, Patrick O'Neal, and Dore Schary. There are extensive photographs of both the play and film version of *Equus*. Other plays include *Night Watch* and *Oliver*, and other films include *Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, *Seven Brothers*, *A Touch of Class*, and *Two English Girls*. Additionally, there are publicity photographs of films screened during select years of the New York Film Festival (1968 to 1972, and 1980 to 1981).

Subjects in the other client files include Jane Alexander, Colin Blakely, Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Richard Burton, Ian Charleson, Henry Fonda, Jane Fonda, Anthony Hopkins, Patricia McBride, Jeanne Moreau, Jack Nicholson, Patrick O'Neal, Anthony Perkins, Joan Plowright, Frances Sternhagen, and Elizabeth Taylor. The plays *Candide*, *Herzl*, *The Moony Shapiro Songbook*, *Poor Murderer*, and films *Chariots of Fire*, *Fritz the Cat*, *The Handy Man*, *Jabberwocky*, and *Wedding in Blood* are also represented.

The slides document a Nikolais Dance Theater performance (1975) and also include stills from an unidentified film shot in a desert. The negatives are the complement to the prints in the collection.

Print Files

- b.48 f.1-13 *America - Equus* (film), 1969-1977, undated
- of.1 *Beauty Knows No Pain*, 1972
- b.49 f.1-15 *Equus* (play) - *Melvin and Howard*, 1980, undated
- b.50 f.1-8 *Men of Bronze - Night Watch*, 1968-1977
- b.51 f.1-13 Nikolais Dance Theatre - *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, 1966-1973
- b.45 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1967-1982
- b.46 f.1-5 Other Clients, 1967-1982
- b.47 f.1-6 Other Clients, 1967-1982
- b.52 f.1 Slides, 1975, undated
- b.52 f.2-5 Negatives, undated
- b.53 f.1 Negatives, undated