

**THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**  
**THE BILLY ROSE THEATRE COLLECTION**

**ARDEN-PEERLESS PAPERS**  
**1886-1910**

**\*T-MSS 1958-003**  
**EHE 4/95**

MAIN ENTRY: Arden, Wallace, d. 1903.

TITLE: Arden-Peerless Papers

SIZE: .25 lin ft. (1 box)

ACCESS: Unrestricted

SOURCE: Gift of Lena K. Arden

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT: Wallace Arden, English actor and theatrical manager, and English actress Katie Peerless, were husband and wife.

DESCRIPTION: The Arden-Peerless papers consist of a small amount of incoming letters, clippings, cabinet photographs, and a few miscellaneous personal papers.

RELATED MATERIALS: Cabinet photographs removed from the collection consist of 16 autographed portraits of actors, 25 portraits ,identified unsigned, and 5 production shots. They were placed in the Photograph Files. Cabinet photographs depicting scenes from unidentified plays starring Peerless and Arden and ones of unidentified actors and actresses remain with the Arden-Peerless Papers.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Arden-Peerless Papers were given to the Billy Rose Theatre Collection by their daughter, Lena K. Arden of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

## ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The Arden-Peerless Papers are arranged in three series:

- Series I- Papers
- Series II- Clippings
- Series III- Photographs

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON WALLACE ARDEN AND KATIE PEERLESS

English actor and theatrical manager, Wallace Arden starred in *Hans the Boatman*, *Carl the Clockmaker* and other plays. He also served as the acting manager at a few provincial Theatre Royals. He died in 1903.

English actress Katie Peerless was on the English stage for sixteen years appearing in music halls and legitimate productions and excelling in pantomime. She had principal roles in many plays including *East Lynne*, *Cissy*, *The Prime Minister*, and *The Coleen Brun*, the play version of the opera, *Lily of Killarney*. She married Wallace Arden during the 1889-1890 season and they toured together playing opposite each other.

The couple had two daughters, Lena K. and Gladys A. Arden; the elder appeared in several roles alongside her mother. In 1899 Katie Peerless Arden visited her mother in New Bedford, Massachusetts, nursed her in sickness, and decided to remain there, giving up plans to return to the stage, after the death of her husband in 1903. For a time she operated the store of her brother, Joseph Boardman, in Howland Village, Massachusetts. Her daughters were well known in musical circles in New Bedford. Katie Peerless died at 81 on July 5, 1946, in New Bedford.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Arden-Peerless Papers consist of incoming letters, a few miscellaneous personal papers, a scrapbook of clippings of reviews, and unidentified cabinet photographs.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

### Series I - Papers [1893-1910]

Papers consist of correspondence: incoming letters [1893-1899 and n.d.] to Wallace Arden and incoming letters [1898-1910] to Katie Peerless, a United States immigration card [1898] for Wallace Arden, a stage date book [1902], a handwritten fragment from an unidentified script, and bills and receipts from a 1901 production of *A TRIP TO CHINATOWN*. The letters to Wallace Arden concern his work on various productions including letters of thanks for his managerial skills and of congratulations for his performances. The three letters to Katie Peerless concern her employment as an actress and later travels.

### Series II - Clippings [1886-1898]

This series consists of a photocopy of a scrapbook [1886-1898] of clippings of reviews of various productions which Arden managed or in which Arden and/or Peerless appeared as well as photocopies of loose clippings [1890-1894 and n.d.] that were stored inside the scrapbook.

### Series III - Photographs [undated]

This series contains cabinet photographs of unidentified actors and actresses and of scenes from an unidentified play in which Wallace Arden and Katie Peerless appeared together. It also has one photograph of Katie Peerless in a peasant costume that is attached to a piece of cracked glass and was formerly in a blue plush horseshoe shaped frame.

## Container Listing

### Series I: Papers

Box 1, folder 1	Papers, 1898-1902 and undated / Wallace Arden
Box 1, folder 2	Letters to Wallace Arden, 1893-1899 and undated
Box 1, folder 3	Letters to Katie Peerless, 1898-1910
Box 1, folder 4	<i>A trip to Chinatown</i> (Musical), 1901 / Charles Hale Hoyt

### Series II: Clippings

Box 1, folder 5	Arden-Peerless scrapbook, 1886-1898 and undated
Box 1, folder 6	Clippings, 1890-1894 and undated / Wallace Arden

### Series III: Cabinet Photographs

Box 1, folder 7	Arden-Peerless cabinet photographs
Box 1, folder 8	Cabinet photographs of English actresses
Box 1, folder 9	Cabinet photographs of English actors
Box 1, folder 10	Photograph / Katie Peerless

**SEPARATION SHEET**  
**CABINET PHOTOGRAPHS REMOVED TO LIBRARY'S PHOTOGRAPH**  
**FILES**

The portrait photographs are of actors, both English and American, in and out of character, taken ca. 1890. Autographed cabinet photographs are of the following actors and actresses: Frank Archer, Leonora Brabarn (?), Lawrence Daly, Fred Eastman, John Findley, Victor Gouriet, George Harker, Dolly Harmer, J.(?) W.(?) Macklin, Katie Peerless, Harry Starr, William Terriss, and Haidee Wright.

Identified but unsigned cabinet photographs are of Wallace Arden, Philip Beck, Kyrle Bellew, Louise Leslie Carter, John Clayton, Rose Coghlan, H. B. Conway, Georgie Corlass, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Daly and daughter Elsie, Dolly Harmer, Arthur Hardy, Mr. [John?] Hare, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Fred Leslie, Minnie Palmer, Katie Peerless, Edward Terry, Allen Thomas, and Van Biene.

Five cabinet photographs are production shots of *Niobe* by Harry and Edward Paulton produced by the Wallace Erskine and Charles Macdona Comedy Company ca. 1895, with Wallace Arden, Katie Peerless and others.