

**The New York Public Library
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Billy Rose Theatre Division**

**Washington Square Players
Designs, Posters and Scripts
ca. 1915-1918**

***T-VIM 2013-149**

Summary

Title: Washington Square Players Designs, Posters and Scripts, ca. 1915-1918

Size: 1.7 linear feet (1 box)

Preferred citation: Washington Square Players Designs, Posters and Scripts, ca. 1915-1918, *T-VIM 2013-149, Billy Rose Theatre Division The New York Public Library.

Historical note

The Washington Square Players was an independent, non-commercial theatre group founded in 1914 by Lawrence Langner, Edward Goodman, Philip Moeller, Lee Simonson, and others wanting to produce plays of artistic merit. The group was seminal in beginning the "little theatre" or "art theatre" movement in the U.S., attracting innovative theatre artists. Their first production opened at the Bandbox Theatre in 1915, later moving to the Comedy Theatre as the group became more successful. Katharine Cornell acted with them. Productions included works by Zoë Akins, Susan Glaspell, Maurice Maeterlinck, and Eugene O'Neill. The group ended in 1918, due to World War I and financial difficulties. Several members of the group went on to form the Theatre Guild.

Scope and content note

The collection contains original costume, set, backdrop, and poster designs (mostly color), and published plays for productions by the Washington Square Players, ca. 1915-1918. Although many of the 69 designs are for unidentified productions, titles represented include *Aglavaine and Selysette* by Maurice Maeterlinck, adapted and translated by Ralph Roeder, with costume designs by Joseph Platt (J.B. Platt), 1916; *The Hero of Santa Maria* by Kenneth Goodman and Ben Hecht, with costume designs by William Rienecke, ca. 1917; *The Death of Tintagiles* by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Philip Moeller, with unsigned costume designs, 1917; *The Magical City* by Zoë Akins, with unsigned set design, and White Studio photograph, 1916. Other designers represented are Elsie R. Brown, Muriel V. Sibell, Robert L. Lawson, and Robert Locker. Posters include *Bushido* by Takeda Izumo, 1916, and *Plots and Playwrights* (three short plays), Comedy Theatre, 1917 (poster by George C. Evans). There are also 5 drawings (4 are pencil and ink) by Clara Tice, including "an impression of the Dolly Sisters." Published playscripts include acting versions of *Another Way Out* (one-act play) by Lawrence Langner, and two copies of *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell; all were published as part of the *Plays of the Washington Square Players* series by Frank Shay in 1916, and are stamped "W.E. Pennington" on the title pages.

Container list

Published Plays (Acting Versions), 1916 (Frank Shay, publisher; stamped "W.E. Pennington.")
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<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	<i>Another Way Out</i> (One-act Play) by Lawrence Langner
1	2	<i>Trifles</i> by Susan Glaspell (Includes 2 copies.)
		Designs and Drawings, ca. 1915 - 1918
1	3	Elsie R. Brown - Costumes; Muriel V. Sibell - Set; (Possibly for <i>King Lear's Wife</i> by Gordon Bottomley, Includes color on paper designs (4 costume designs and 1 set design); signed.
		Robert L. Lawson - Sets and Drapes
1	4	Cottage Drop Includes color on paper with piece attached to verso behind cutout for eyes; initialed "R.L."
1	4	Indian Dance (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	4	O'Denishawn - Drape (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	4	Spectacle Shop (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	4	Untitled (Native American Scene?) (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	4	Untitled (Ophthalmologist's Office?) Includes color on paper design, mounted on paper.
1	4	Untitled (Cottage with Arched Fence and Cupids) Includes color on paper design, mounted on paper.
1	5	Society Fair (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	5	Untitled (Aqua Printed Proscenium Curtain with Black and White Checkerboard Floor and Greek Motifs) Includes color on paper design, mounted on paper (leaf folded in half); initialed "R.L. L."
1	5	Untitled (Matisse-like Orange-Red Drapery with Female Figure in Lower Right Corner) (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	5	Untitled (Orange and Blue Egyptian Columns and Steps with Female Figure in Lower Right Corner) (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
1	5	Untitled (Stone Patterns with Blue Arches at Top of Proscenium and Red- Black Patterned Curtains) (Includes color on paper design; initialed "R.L.")
		Robert Locker
		Grecian Number - Costume Designs (Unidentified production.)
1	6	Dancing Girls Includes 2 color on paper designs; signed "Locker."
1	6	Girls and Stage Door Johnnies Includes color on paper design with additional small sketch on right side; signed "Locker."
1	6	Helen of Troy Includes color on paper design with pencil drawing of back of costume and additional notes; signed "Locker."
1	6	The Goat and Miserly Servant Includes 2 costume designs on 1 sheet; black and white on paper with notes; signed "Locker."
1	6	The Slaves Includes black and white on paper costume design with notes; signed "Locker."
1	6	White Slaves Includes black and white on paper costume design with notes; signed "Locker."
1	6	Set Design - Large Redwood Tree (Possibly) Includes color on paper set (?) design; "Silver Spring" "Opening Here," "Costume Colors - Faun, Gnome, Nymph" on right side; signed "Locker."

- 1 6 Back Drop - Black and White Mountain Top in Circle with Sun, Fence Door and Checkerboard Floor
Includes black and white design on paper with dimensions and sketch of fence in pencil.
- J. B. (Joseph) Platt
Costume Designs
Aglavaine and Selysette by Maurice Maeterlinck, adapted and translated by Ralph Roeder, 1916
- 1 7 Aglavaine (Includes color on paper design; signed.)
1 7 Meleandre (Includes color on paper design; signed.)
1 7 Untitled
Includes 3 color on stock designs for Pierrot-like, figure, little girl and plump man in top hat and coat (19th Century?); signed.
- 1 8 Set Designs - Untitled
Includes 4 color set designs (1 on paper, 3 on board) of a carousel, a carnival scene, and 2 house exteriors; "Bella the Bareback Bride" on 1 design; "J.B. Platt" on 4 versos.
- William Rienecke
The Hero of Santa Maria by Kenneth Goodman and Ben Hecht, ca. 1917
Costume Designs (Includes 4 color on board costume designs.)
- 1 9 Edw. Martin Fisher - "Toady"
"Dear Pennington - Will call on you this P.M. I just these roughs [sic] to see if I'm on the right track. - Rienecke" on verso
- 1 9 Nathan Fisher
1 9 Marty
1 9 Untitled (Red-haired Woman with Bun in Long Skirt and High-necked Blouse)
- Clara Tice
- 1 10 "An Impression of the Dolly Sisters"
Includes black and white on paper drawing; unsigned; caption taken from verso.
- 1 10 Untitled - Japanese Male Figures (Includes 2 black and white drawings; signed.)
1 10 Untitled
Includes 2 items: 1 black and white drawing of nude female with Pierrot figure, and 1 color drawing of nude females on trapeze.
- Roland Young (?)
- 1 11 *The Magical City* by Zoë Akins, 1916
Includes 1 color on board set design with play title and "Roland Young" and 1 White Studio photo of set ; photo edges are torn; relationship to Roland Young is unclear.
- Unsigned
- 1 11 *The Death of Tintagiles* by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Philip Moeller, 1917
Costume Designs
Includes 4 color on paper designs with notes in pencil.
- 1 12 A Princess
1 12 Aglovale
1 12 Tintagiles
1 12 The Handmaidens
- Untitled and Unsigned
Set or Backdrop Designs
- 1 12 Fenced Landscape Scene with Arched Opening with Fountain (Includes color on paper design.)
1 13 Totem Pole, Round Face and Female Figure (Includes color on paper design.)

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| 1 | 13 | Castle on Hill with Princess and Three Male Figures (Includes color on paper design.) |
| 1 | 13 | Fence with Columns and Arched Gate, with Male and Female Statues on Pedestals (Includes color on stock design.) |
| 1 | 13 | Jungle or Rainforest Scene with Monkey and Bird (Includes color on paper design.) |
| 1 | 13 | Night Sky and View of Town with Three Tall Columns and Two Figures (Includes color on stock design.) |
| 1 | 13 | Tudor Style Palace Room with Throne Chair, Table, Crest and Window (Includes color on stock design.) |
| 1 | 13 | Screen (?) with Arched Trellis with Cupid Figures, Female Figure and Two Pencil Drawings of Elizabethan Males on Pedestals (Includes color on paper design.) |
| 1 | 14 | Living Room Interior with Arched Doorways and Victorian Sofa (Includes color on paper design.) |
| 1 | 14 | Mountains with Cliffs and Water (Includes color on paper design.) |
| 1 | 14 | Desert (?) Sky with Clouds and Cactus (Includes color on paper design.) |
| 1 | 14 | Mushroom Design with Insect Crawling on Plant
Includes color on stock design; pencil sketch of woman on verso. |
| 1 | 16 | Greek Motif Designs
Includes color on paper designs, 1 with beer barrel in lower right corner. |
| 1 | 16 | Evening Scene with Lanterns, Trees, Fence and Bench (Includes color on board design.) |
| | | Costume Designs |
| 1 | 15 | Ethnic Costume Designs
Includes 3 color on paper designs and 1 pencil on stock design. |
| 1 | 15 | Pantomime (?) Costume Designs
Includes 2 color on paper designs, possibly for mimes. |
| | | Posters, 1917 and ca. 1915-1918 |
| 1 | 17 | <i>Bushido</i> by Takeda Izumo, translated by M. C. Marcus, 1916
Includes paper mounted on paper; edges torn or missing; fragile condition. |
| 1 | 17 | "Center of Interest - Washington Square Players Present a Big New Bill" (with Penguins)
Includes color on stock design with pencil sketch on verso. |
| 1 | 17 | "Something to See - Progressive - Oh My Yes" (with Caterpillar and Pierrot Collared Head) (Includes color on stock design.) |
| 1 | 17 | <i>Plots & Playwrights [Plots and Playwrights]</i> (Three Short Plays) - Comedy Theatre, 1917
Includes color on stock design; "Geo. C. Evans" also on poster. |