



The New York Public Library Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Censorship files on the play, *Maya*

1927-1928

*T-Mss 2001-022

Summary

Creator: Actor-Managers, Inc

Title: Censorship files on the play, *Maya*

Date: 1927-1928

Size: .21 linear feet. (1 box)

Abstract: Actor-Managers, Inc., was a New York theatrical production organization which in February 1928 staged Simon Gantillon's French play *MAYA* (1924), in an English translation by Ernest Boyd, with Aline MacMahon in the lead role of a prostitute. City authorities contacted the producers and demanded that the show close, lest the owners of the theater, the Shuberts, be penalized under the provisions of the 1927 "Wales Padlock Law," a morals act which gave the authorities the right to close a theater whose owners were deemed in violation of the law for up to one year. The producers of *MAYA* offered to make textual cuts, and received letters of support from various prominent critics, actors, and other citizens, but the play was closed. The Actor-Managers, Inc. files on the censorship of Simon Gantillon's play *MAYA* span 1927-1928, but are mostly concentrated in February and March 1928, during the height of the controversy. Included is a copy of the 1927 law which became known as the "Wales Padlock Law," by which the production of *MAYA* was closed, several drafts of letters from the producers to the city District Attorney's office, defending *MAYA* and challenging the order to close it, numerous letters of support to the producers, two letters withholding support, a letter from playwright Simon Gantillon offering biographical material about himself and the stage history of his play *MAYA*, a letter from Lee Shubert confirming the closing date of the New York production, articles about the *MAYA* controversy, a petition to repeal the Wales Padlock Law signed by a number of prominent theatrical figures, including Harold Clurman, Leo G. Carroll, and Louis Calhern, and several press releases from the Actor-Managers organization about the controversy.

Preferred citation: Censorship files on the play, *Maya*, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Actor-Managers, Inc., was a New York theatrical production organization which in February 1928 staged Simon Gantillon's French play *MAYA* (1924), in an English translation by Ernest Boyd, with Aline MacMahon in the lead role of a prostitute. City authorities contacted the producers and demanded that

the show close, lest the owners of the theater, the Shuberts, be penalized under the provisions of the 1927 "Wales Padlock Law," a morals act which gave the authorities the right to close a theater whose owners were deemed in violation of the law for up to one year. The producers of MAYA offered to make textual cuts, and received letters of support from various prominent critics, actors, and other citizens, but the play was closed.

Scope and Content Note

The Actor-Managers, Inc. files on the censorship of Simon Gantillon's play MAYA span 1927-1928, but are mostly concentrated in February and March 1928, during the height of the controversy. Included is a copy of the 1927 law which became known as the "Wales Padlock Law," by which the production of MAYA was closed, several drafts of letters from the producers to the city District Attorney's office, defending MAYA and challenging the order to close it, numerous letters of support to the producers, two letters withholding support, a letter from playwright Simon Gantillon offering biographical material about himself and the stage history of his play MAYA, a letter from Lee Shubert confirming the closing date of the New York production, articles about the MAYA controversy, a petition to repeal the Wales Padlock Law signed by a number of prominent theatrical figures, including Harold Clurman, Leo G. Carroll, and Louis Calhern, and several press releases from the Actor-Managers organization about the controversy.

Key Terms

Subjects

Censorship -- New York (State) -- New York
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings
Correspondence
Petitions

Names

Actor-Managers, Inc
Boyd, Ernest
Gantillon, Simon, 1890-
Gantillon, Simon, 1890-
MacMahon, Aline, 1899-1991
Shubert, Lee, 1873?-1953