*T-Mss 1994-017

Guide to the J. Edward Bromberg Papers, 1924-1951

Billy Rose Theatre Division



The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts New York, New York

The Billy Rose Theatre Division. New York Public Library.
40 Lincoln Center Plaza
New York, NY 10023-7498
(212) 870-1639

theatrediv@nypl.org

http://nypl.org/research/lpa/the/the.html

Processed by: Charles A. Moran Date Completed: August, 2004 Encoded By: Charles A. Moran

©2004 The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: J. Edward Bromberg Papers, 1924-1951

Creator: Bromberg, J. Edward, 1903-1951

Call Number: *T-MSS 1994-017

Extent: 1.18 linear feet; (4 boxes)

Repository: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Billy Rose Theatre Division.

New York, New York

Abstract: J. Edward Bromberg, actor, director, and producer, was part of the

Civic Repertory Theatre, the Group Theatre, and the Actors' Laboratory Theatre as well as a leading character actor in motion pictures. His papers contain scripts, correspondence, playbills, press releases, and

clippings that document his career.

Languages

Represented:

English

Administrative Information

Source: The papers were donated by Marcia Bromberg and Conrad Bromberg in

1994.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance

notice may be required.

Preferred J. Edward Bromberg Papers, *T-MSS 1994-017; Billy Rose Theatre

Citation: Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Biography

J. Edward Bromberg was born Joseph Bromberger on December 25, 1903 in Temesvar, Hungary (now Timisoara, Romania) and came to the United States with his parents when he was five years old. He was to grow up to be a short, dark and stocky character actor, one of the finest supporting players for both the theatre and motion pictures in the nineteen thirties and forties. He was an original member of the Civic Repertory Theatre, the Group Theatre and the Actors' Laboratory Theatre.

Bromberg graduated from Stuyvesant High School, in New York City, where he had been involved in the drama club. He dropped out of City College to work as a salesman and laundryman while studying acting with the Russian teacher Leo Bulgakov. His made his acting debut in 1926 at New York's Greenwich Village Playhouse. Bromberg joined Eva Le Gallienne's company, the Civic Repertory, for five years before signing a two-year contract with the Theatre Guild.

A friend of Morris Carnovsky, his work came to the attention of Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford, and Lee Strasberg. This led to an invitation for Bromberg to be part of the formation of the Group Theatre, whose mission was to produce Broadway plays that explored social and moral issues by developing acting techniques that emphasized emotional realism and psychological depth. Bromberg headlined two major roles for the Group in *Men in White* and *Gold Eagle Guy*. He also had a large supporting role in Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing*, which he would also later direct in 1946 for the Actors' Laboratory Theatre.

In 1936, Bromberg gave into the temptation of motion pictures and was signed by Twentieth Century Fox. He played a series of character roles in 54 films from 1936-1950, depicting father figures, villains and ethnic types. While in Hollywood, he helped found the Actors' Laboratory Theatre in an effort to bring quality stage drama to the West Coast. He also lent his talents to directing as well as acting. In the last two years of his life, he taught and acted in New York City.

Bromberg was a victim of blacklisting when he was named as a member of the Communist Party in Hollywood. He refused to answer questions put to him by the House Committee on Un-American Activities in June of 1951. Bromberg died of a heart attack on December 6, 1951 at the age of 47 while appearing in *The Biggest Thief In Town* in London. On December 23, 1951 a memorial service was held to celebrate his twenty-five year contribution to American theatre as an artist and teacher. It was attended by hundreds of artists.

Scope and Content Note

The J. Edward Bromberg Papers consist of a contract, scripts, a poster, playbills, flyers, correspondence, press releases, photographs, a scrapbook, some writings, ephemera, a sketched portrait, and a large collection of clippings documenting his 25-year career. While much of the papers are related to Bromberg's acting and directing career from 1926-1951, some relate to his life and other interests such as painting. Also included are a collection of press releases, clippings and letters regarding his participation in the Group Theatre. Other highlights of the collection are a well-preserved scrapbook covering Bromberg's work from 1928-1930 at the Civic Repertory Theatre, an autographed program by the cast of *Anna Christie*, which included Ingrid Bergman, a letter from Fritz Lang and a large photograph collection of the different productions he worked on as an actor or director, as well as autographed pictures from Eva Le Gallienne and Danny Kaye.

Organization

The collection is organized into five series and thirteen sub-series. They are:

- Series I: Personal Papers
 - o Sub-series 1: Biographical Materials
 - o Sub-series 2: Writings
 - o Sub-series 3: Work as a Painter
 - o Sub-series 4: Ephemera
- Series II: Productions
 - o Sub-series 1: The Group Theatre
 - o Sub-series 2: Theatrical
 - Sub-series 3: Motion Pictures
 - o Sub-series 4: Radio
- Series III: Photographs
 - o Sub-series 1: Personal
 - o Sub-series 2: The Group Theatre
 - o Sub-series 3: Theatrical
 - o Sub-series 4: Motion Pictures
 - Sub-series 5: Unknown Productions
- Series IV: Scrapbooks
- Series V: Oversized Material

Series Descriptions/Container List

Series I: Personal Papers, 1924-1951

8 folders

By type of material

This series contains material pertaining to J. Edward Bromberg that does not relate to any specific production he performed in or directed. It includes passports, memorial notices, a press release, art catalogues, personal writings, membership cards, and collected clippings.

Sub-series 1: Biographical Materials, 1924-1951 4 folders

This sub-series contains clippings and other material about his life both inside and outside the theater, non-theatrical clippings he collected and passports used by him and his family.

b. 1 f. 1 Passports, 1947-1948

The passports included are Bromberg's and a joint passport for his wife and son.

b. 1 f. 2 Miscellaneous, 1935-1951

Materials included are memorial notices, a press release, Bromberg's bio from a Who's Who in Europe, and a resume.

b. 1 f. 3 "Interesting Faces", n.d.

Collected clippings of faces.

b. 1 f. 4 Clippings, 1924-1951

Includes clippings about Bromberg's life.

Sub-Series 2: Writings, 1947, n.d.

1 folder

This sub-series includes three pieces of writing by Bromberg: a comedy sketch, a feature article, and an art catalogue introduction.

b. 1 f. 5 Writings

Sub-series 3: Work as a Painter, 1947, n.d.

2 folders

This sub-series contains written evidence of Bromberg's work as a painter, but no examples of his work. There are two auction catalogues that have the listing of a piece by Bromberg, and two letters speaking about his work as a painter.

- b. 1 f. 6 Catalogues, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 7 Correspondence, 1947

Sub-series 4: Ephemera, 1939-1951

1 folder

This sub-series includes membership cards, union cards, library cards, business cards, and a greeting card.

b. 1 f. 8 Cards, 1939-1951

Series II: Productions, 1926-1951

68 folders

By type and chronological

This series contains material pertaining to theatrical, motion picture, and radio productions with which Bromberg was involved. It includes a contract, scripts, playbills, programs, correspondence, and clippings relating to his work as an actor or director.

Sub-series 1: The Group Theatre, 1931-1939

16 folders

Chronological

This sub-series consists of material documenting Bromberg's work as one of the original actors of the Group Theatre. It includes correspondence, press releases, and various clippings.

- b. 1 f. 9 Personal correspondence, 1930-1934, n.d.
 - Letters dealing with Bromberg's acting career during his Group Theatre days.
- b. 1 f. 10 Press releases, ca. 1931-1939

Press releases for various Group productions involving Bromberg.

b. 1 f. 11 Miscellaneous clippings, 1932-1935, n.d.

Clippings about the Group Theatre in general.

b. 1 f. 12 The House of Connelly, clippings, 1931

Clippings and a promotional pamphlet of collected reviewer comments about the production of *The House of Connelly*.

b. 1 f. 13 *1931*-, clippings, 1931

Includes copies of two loose scrapbook pages and a clipping about the production of 1931-.

b. 1 f. 14 Night Over Taos, clippings, 1932

Clippings of caricatures and reviews including comments on Bromberg's acting versatility in the production of *Night Over Taos*.

b. 1 f. 15 *Big Night*, clippings, 1933

Clippings about the production of *Big Night*.

b. 1 f. 16- *Men in White*, clippings, 1933-1934

17 2 folders

Clippings with caricatures and photos of the players in *Men in White*, most notably of Bromberg who had a leading role.

b. 1 f. 18 Gold Eagle Guy, press release, 1934

Press release promoting the Boston production of *Gold Eagle Guy*.

b. 1 f. 19 Gold Eagle Guy, clippings, 1934

Various clippings about the production *Gold Eagle Guy*, a show in which Bromberg played the lead.

b. 1 f. 20 Weep for the Virgins, clippings, 1935

Clippings about the production Weep for the Virgins.

b. 1 f. 21 Waiting for Lefty, publicity, ca. 1935

A flier for the production Waiting for Lefty.

b. 1 f. 22- Waiting for Lefty, clippings, 1935

23

2 folders

Clippings about the production *Waiting for Lefty* including the premiere.

b. 1 f. 24 Awake and Sing, clippings, 1939

Clippings about the revival production of *Awake and Sing* by the Group Theatre.

Sub-series 2: Theatrical, 1926-1951

42 folders

Chronological

This sub-series covers the twenty-five year theatrical career of J. Edward Bromberg outside of his involvement with the Group Theatre. Material represented in the sub-series are a production contract, two scripts, playbills, programs, correspondence and

clippings.

b. 1	f. 25	Miscellaneous programs, 1926-1927 Two programs from the beginning of Bromberg's acting career. One is for a production of <i>The Emperor Jones</i> .
b. 1	f. 26	Civic Repertory Theatre miscellaneous clippings, ca. 1929-1930 Clippings about various productions that Bromberg acted in with the Civic Repertory Theatre, started by Eva Le Gallienne.
b. 1	f. 27	Foreign Affairs, clippings, 1932 Clippings on the production of Foreign Affairs.
b. 1	f. 28	Both Your Houses, clippings, 1933 Clippings on the production of Both Your Houses.
b. 1	f. 29	Anna Christie, programs, 1941 Two playbills, one autographed by the cast which included Ingrid Bergman.
b. 1	f. 30	Anna Christie, clippings, 1941 Clippings, including copies of loose scrapbook pages.
b. 1	f. 31	Jacobowsky and the Colonel, script-scene, 1944 Script for a scene with Bromberg's character, Szabuniewicz, in Jacobowsky and the Colonel.
b. 1	f. 32	Jacobowsky and the Colonel, programs, 1944 Programs, including a playbill, for Jacobowsky and the Colonel.
b. 1	f. 33	Jacobowsky and the Colonel, clippings, 1944
b. 1	f. 34	Awake and Sing, correspondence, 1946 Letter to Bromberg, from Fritz Lang, about Bromberg's Actors' Lab revival of Awake and Sing.
b. 1	f. 35	Awake and Sing, playbills, 1946 Playbills for the Actors' Lab revival of Awake and Sing, directed by Bromberg who also played the role of Uncle Morty.
b. 1	f. 36	Awake and Sing, clippings, 1946 Clippings about the Actors' Lab revival production of Awake and Sing, some from a loose scrapbook page.
b. 1	f. 37	Volpone, correspondence, 1945 Letter to Bromberg from the director, Morris Carnovsky,

		congratulating his performance and work in Volpone.
b. 1	f. 38	<i>Volpone</i> , programs, ca. 1946 Playbills to different productions and performances of <i>Volpone</i> .
b. 1	f. 39	<i>Volpone</i> , promotional material, ca. 1946 A mailing and a flier advertising productions of <i>Volpone</i> .
b. 1	f. 40	Volpone, clippings, 1946 Clippings, from a loose scrapbook page.
b. 1	f. 41	Toplitzky of Notre Dame, correspondence, 1947 Letter to Bromberg from the producer concerning the run of the production of Toplitzky of Notre Dame.
b. 1	f. 42	Toplitzky of Notre Dame, program, 1946 Playbill for Boston production of Toplitzky of Notre Dame.
b. 1	f. 43	Toplitzky of Notre Dame, clippings, 1946-1947
b. 1	f. 44	The Actors Lab Theatre miscellaneous programs, 1948, n.d. Two playbills for the Actors' Lab productions of <i>A Bell for Adano</i> , which Bromberg produced and <i>All My Sons</i> , which lists Bromberg as part of the production committee.
b. 1	f. 45	All You Need Is One Good Break, script, n.d. Script for a scene from All You Need Is One Good Break with written annotations by Bromberg.
b. 1	f. 46	All You Need Is One Good Break, correspondence, n.d. Letter to Bromberg from Laura Scott praising the production of All You Need Is One Good Break.
b. 1	f. 47	All You Need Is One Good Break, promotional material, 1948, n.d. A pamphlet, flier and press release advertising the production of All You Need Is One Good Break.
b. 1	f. 48	All You Need Is One Good Break, programs, 1948-1950 Playbills for different productions of All You Need Is One Good Break.
b. 1	f. 49	All You Need Is One Good Break, clippings, 1948-1950 Clippings about the productions of All You Need Is One Good Break with some loose scrapbook pages.
b. 1	f. 50	Dracula, program, 1949 Playbill for the production of Dracula, Bromberg's first

		experience in summer stock theatre.
b. 1	f. 51	The Journey of Simon McKeever, programs, 1949 Carnegie Hall programs for the production of The Journey of Simon McKeever, directed by Bromberg.
b. 1	f. 53	The Journey of Simon McKeever, clipping, 1949
b. 2	f. 1	The Big Knife, program, 1949 Playbill for the production of The Big Knife.
b. 2	f. 2	The Big Knife, scrapbook pages, 1949 Loose scrapbook pages containing material on the production of The Big Knife.
b. 2	f. 3	The Big Knife, clippings, 1949 Clippings about the Lee Strasberg directed production of Clifford Odets' <i>The Big Knife</i> , co-starring Bromberg.
b. 2	f. 4	My Fiddle's Got Three Strings, program, 1950 Playbill for the production of My Fiddle's Got Three Strings.
b. 2	f. 5	My Fiddle's Got Three Strings, clippings, ca. 1950 Brief clippings about the summer production of My Fiddle's Got Three Strings from a loose scrapbook page.
b. 2	f. 6	<i>They Know What They Wanted</i> , program, ca. 1951 Program, for the production of <i>They Know What They Wanted</i> , directed by and co-starring Bromberg.
b. 2	f. 7	They Know What They Wanted, clippings, 1951
b. 2	f. 8	Not For Children, programs, 1951 Two playbills for productions of Not For Children.
b. 2	f. 9	Not For Children, clippings, 1951
b. 2	f. 10	Let Me Hear The Melody, clippings, 1951
b. 2	f. 11	The Royal Family, programs, 1951 Playbills for the production of The Royal Family.
b. 2	f. 12	The Royal Family, clippings, 1951
b. 2	f. 13	The Biggest Thief In Town, contract, 1951 Contract and correspondence to Bromberg for the London production of The Biggest Thief In Town.

The Biggest Thief In Town, clippings, 1951

b. 2 f. 14

Sub-series 3: Motion Pictures, 1936-ca.1949 9 folders

Chronological

This sub-series consists of material from seven of the fifty-four motion pictures in which Bromberg appeared. Included are a premiere program invitation, correspondence, and clippings.

b. 2	f. 15	The Crime of Dr. Forbes (Motion picture), clippings, 1936
b. 2	f. 15	Suez (Motion picture), clippings, 1938 Clippings about the motion picture Suez including a six page layout in The Hollywood Reporter.
b. 2	f. 17	Hollywood Cavalcade (Motion picture), program invitation, ca. 1939 Program invitation to the premiere of the motion picture Hollywood Cavalcade.
b. 2	f. 18	Hollywood Cavalcade (Motion picture), correspondence and clippings, 1939 Correspondence, with clippings, about the motion picture Hollywood Cavalcade.
b. 2	f. 19	The Mark Of Zorro (Motion picture), clipping, 1940
b. 2	f. 20	Invisible Agent (Motion picture), clipping, 1942
b. 2	f. 21	A Song Is Born (Motion picture), correspondence, 1948 Correspondence and forwarded letter concerning Bromberg's perfomance and look in the motion picture A Song Is Born.
b. 2	f. 22	A Song Is Born (Motion picture), clippings, 1948
b. 2	f. 23	Guilty Bystander (Motion picture), clipping, 1949 Clipping, with plot synopsis.
		Sub-series 4: Radio, ca.1947 folder

This sub-series consists of a transcribed radio interview Bromberg gave on a show called *Personality Time*.

b. 2 f. 24 *Personality Time*, interview transcript, ca. 1947 Transcribed radio interview of Bromberg.

Series III: Photographs, 1928-1951, n.d.

38 folders

By subject

This series consists of photographs documenting the life and career of J. Edward Bromberg. Included are photographs of both a personal and professional nature.

Sub-series 1: Personal, n.d.

2 folders

By subject

This sub-series includes personal and promotional photographs of Bromberg.

b. 2 f. 25 J. Edward Bromberg, n.d.

Photographs of J. Edward Bromberg. Included are different headshots, a photographer's proof with note, a photo of him with a note to his parents, and a headshot negative.

b. 2 f. 26 Friends and family, n.d.

Includes photographs of Bromberg with unidentified friends and with his family.

Sub-series 2: The Group Theatre, ca.1933-1935, n.d. 3 folders

Chronological

Photographs include production shots of two of the Group's plays, and an undated company photo.

b. 2 f. 27 Company, n.d.

Photograph of The Group Theatre Acting Company.

b. 2 f. 28 *Men In White*, ca. 1933-1934

Photographs of the production.

b. 2 f. 29 *Awake and Sing*, 1935

Photographs of the Group production of *Awake and Sing*.

Sub-series 3: Theatrical, 1928-1951

14 folders

Chronological

This sub-series includes photographs of Bromberg's theatrical
productions outside of the Group Theatre. Included are production,
cast, and rehearsal photographs of plays he performed in or directed.

b. 2	f. 30	Civic Repertory Theatre, 1928, n.d. Includes an autographed photograph of Eva Le Gallienne and a company rehearsal photograph.
b. 2	f. 31	Romeo and Juliet, 1929 Photograph of Bromberg as Mercutio in the Civic Repertory Theatre's production of Romeo and Juliet.
b. 2	f. 32	Jacobowsky and the Colonel,1944 Photographs of scenes from the Theatre Guild's production of Jacobowsky and the Colonel.
b. 2	f. 33	Awake and Sing, 1946 Actors' Lab production of Awake and Sing, also directed by Bromberg. Notes on the back of photos.
b. 2	f. 34	Volpone, ca. 1946 Photographs of cast stills and rehearsals for the production.
b. 2	f. 35	Toplitzky of Notre Dame, 1946-1947 Includes a photograph of the marquee sign with pictures of the actors, and photographs of scenes featuring Bromberg singing in the production.
b. 2	f. 36	Dracula,1949 Photographs of the summer stock production.
b. 2	f. 37	The Big Knife, 1949 Photograph of a scene from the production.
b. 2	f. 38	The Journey of Simon McKeever, 1949 Photographs of Bromberg directing a rehearsal.
b. 2	f. 39	All You Need Is One Good Break, 1950 Promotional photographs.
b. 2	f. 40	Born Yesterday, 1950 Photographs of the production.
b. 2	f. 41	Not For Children, ca. 1951 Headshot.
b. 2	f. 42	Royal Family, 1951 Photographs of scenes from the production.

b. 2 f. 43 *They Know What They Wanted*,1951 Photographs of the production.

Sub-series 4: Motion Pictures, 1936-1950 19 folders

Chronological

This sub-series includes photographs from motion pictures in which Bromberg appeared. Types of photographs included are scene, set, test, location, cast, and promotional stills. Some photographs include notations and one includes a letter of correspondence.

	t	est, location, cast, and promotional stills. Some photographs included and one includes a letter of correspondence.
b. 2	f. 44	Oscar Hammerstein (Motion picture), n.d. Test still.
b. 2	f. 45	Under Two Flags (Motion picture) and/or Four men and a Prayer (Motion picture), 1936/1938 Production photographs of either Under Two Flags and/or Four Men and a Prayer.
b. 2	f. 46	Reunion (Motion picture), ca. 1936 Promotional pictures of Bromberg's role.
b. 2	f. 47	Girls' Dormitory (Motion picture), 1936 Rehearsal, scene, and promotional photographs, some with notations on the back.
b. 2	f. 48	Sins of Man (Motion picture), 1936 Promotional photographs and a "behind-the-scenes" photograph featuring playwright Clifford Odets visiting the set.
b. 2	f. 49	Crime of Dr. Forbes (Motion picture), 1936 Promotional, set, and scene photographs, some with notations.
b. 2	f. 50	Star for a Night (Motion picture), 1936 Promotional and production stills.
b. 2	f. 51	Suez (Motion picture), 1937-1938 Scene, test, and location photographs.
b. 2	f. 52	I'll Give A Million (Motion picture), ca. 1938 Test and production stills.
b. 2	f. 53	The Baroness and the Butler (Motion picture), 1938 Set and production stills.
b. 2	f. 54	Jesse James (Motion picture), 1939

Production stills.

b. 2	f. 55	Hollywood Cavalcade (Motion picture), ca. 1939-1940 Make up stills and photograph of Bromberg's arrival at the premiere with his wife.
b. 2	f. 56	The Return of Frank James (Motion picture), ca. 1940 Headshot.
b. 2	f. 57	The Mark of Zorro (Motion picture), 1940 Set, makeup, and production stills.
b. 2	f. 58	Cloak and Dagger (Motion picture), 1946 Set and production stills.
b. 2	f. 59	I Shot Jesse James (Motion picture), 1948 Cast and crew photograph with letter to Bromberg.
b. 2	f. 60	A Song Is Born (Motion picture), 1948 Promotional photographs and an autographed photograph from Danny Kaye.
b. 2	f. 61	A Guilty Bystander (Motion picture), ca. 1949-1950

Sub-series 5: Unidentified Productions, n.d.

Set and production stills.

1 folder

This sub-series includes photographs of unknown or unidentified productions, both theater and film. They appear to include production stills and test pictures. One series of photgraphs features Peter Lorre.

b. 2 f. 62 Unidentified, n.d.

Series IV: Scrapbooks, 1928-1930, n.d.

1 box

Chronological

This series contains J. Edward Bromberg's scrapbook covering his time at the Civic Repertory Theatre from 1928-1930, and loose pages from an undated scrapbook. Material included in the scrapbooks are letters, photographs, and clippings.

b. 3 f. 1 Scrapbook, 1928-1930

This scrapbook contains letters and clippings documenting Bromberg's career at the Civic Repertory Theatre from 1928-1930.

b. 3 f. 2 Scrapbook, ca. 1948

This is a loose page from a scrapbook with a photograph and clipping for the production of *All You Need Is One Good Break*.

b. 3 f. 3 Scrapbook, ca. 1949

This is a loose page from a scrapbook with a handwritten table of contents.

Series V: Oversized Material, ca. 1926-1951

1 box

By size and type

This series consists of oversized material. Included are a theatrical poster, personal, theatrical and motion picture photographs, a loose scrapbook page about Bromberg's work as a painter, a sketch of Bromberg and magazine layout clippings on certain productions.

b. 4 f. 1 Sketch of J. Edward Bromberg, n.d.

A portrait sketch in ink of J. Edward Bromberg; the artist is unidentified.

b. 4 f. 2 Scrapbook page, 1947

A loose scrapbook page with a letter from Esther Robles about Bromberg's painting being used in a show, as well as an art catalogue with a introduction written by Bromberg.

b. 4 f. 3 Photograph - Bromberg, J. Edward, 1937

A signed portrait photograph of J. Edward Bromberg.

b. 4 f. 4 Awake and Sing, photograph - The Group Theatre, ca. 1935 Photograph of the Group Theatre's premiere production of Awake and Sing.

b. 4 f. 5 Volpone, clippings, 1945

Life magazine layout featuring the production of Volpone.

b. 4 f. 6 Clippings, 1946

Screen Guide magazine layout about the Actors' Lab production of Awake and Sing.

b. 4 f. 7 The Lady From Alfa Que Que, photograph, ca. 1926-1931

Photograph of the Civic Repertory Theatre's production of *The Lady From Alfa Que Que*.

b. 4 f. 8 Romeo and Juliet, photograph, 1927-1929

Photographs of the Civic Repertory's productions of *Romeo and Juliet*.