

Guide to the Gerome Ragni Papers, 1952-1984

***T-Mss 1992-027**

Billy Rose Theatre Division

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

Contact Information

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Billy Rose Theatre Collection
40 Lincoln Center Plaza
New York, New York 10023-7498
Phone: 212/870-1639
Fax: 212/870-1868
Email: theatrediv@nypl.org
Web address: <http://www.nypl.org/research/lpa/the/the.html>

Processed by: Diana Bertolini
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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Gerome Ragni Papers
Collection ID:	*T-Mss 1992-027
Creator:	Ragni, Gerome
Extent:	13 linear feet (14 boxes)
Repository:	Billy Rose Theatre Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Abstract:	Gerome Ragni was a theater actor, lyricist and librettist from the 1950s through the 1980s. He is most noted as one of the authors and original stars of <i>Hair</i> (1968). This collection consists mainly of professional files pertaining to Ragni's theater and film projects. Most of the material in this collection relates to <i>Hair</i>. The collection also includes some personal items.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

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Source

The Gerome Ragni Papers were donated to the Billy Rose Theatre Division in 1992 by Irene Ragni.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

Biographical Note

Gerome Ragni was born Jerome Bernard Ragni in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on September 11, 1935. He attended Scott Township High School, in the suburbs of Pittsburgh in the early 50s and appeared in various school productions there. In 1954, Ragni made his professional stage debut in a Washington D.C. production, *Shadow and Substance*. His acting career was put on hold when Ragni enlisted in the United States Air Force on Jan 31, 1955. Later that year he took a special course in medical administration. He received his honorable discharge, with the rank of Airman Third Class on January 30, 1963, though he had been relieved from active service in 1958.

Following his years in the Air Force, Ragni moved to New York and found work in the rapidly growing Off-Broadway theater community. He appeared in such productions as a revival of Jean Anouilh's *Legend of Lovers* (1959), Joe Papp's Shakespeare in the Park: Belvedere Lake production of *Julius Caesar* (1959), *War* (1963) and *Viet Rock* (1966). In 1964 he met fellow actor James Rado, who would become a major figure in Ragni's personal and professional life and they both appeared in *The Knack* (1964) and *Hang Down Your Head and Die* (1964). In 1964, Ragni also made his Broadway debut in the ensemble of Alexander Cohen's production of *Hamlet*, which starred Richard Burton and Ragni subsequently appeared in the filmed version of that production.

In 1965 Ragni and Rado began writing a rock musical that would depict contemporary life in New York's East Village, the hippie movement, the anti-Vietnam war protests and the generation gap, symbolized in a central metaphor of long hair. In early 1967 they teamed up with Canadian composer Galt McDermot, who provided the music for their book and lyrics. Ragni and Rado's original intent with *Hair* was to introduce the uptown Broadway world to that other world downtown and they tried to interest mainstream musical theater producers, such as David Merrick and Hal Prince, but Joe Papp, the head of a prominent downtown theater, was the only one interested in the project. *Hair* opened Off-Broadway at the Public Theater on October 29, 1967, with Ragni in one of the lead roles, Berger. The Off-Broadway production was a critical and financial success and produced a cast album.

Michael Butler, the heir to a Chicago fortune, came to see the show one night and decided to finance and produce its transfer to Cheetah, a disco nightclub in the theater district in December of 1967 and eventually to Broadway. Ragni, Rado and McDermot made significant revisions to the show, writing several new songs and a largely new book. Rado, who had occasionally played the central role, Claude, in the Off-Broadway production, agreed to take it on full time in the Broadway version. *Hair* opened on Broadway on April 19, 1968. The show received ecstatic reviews, and was especially championed by Clive Barnes of *The New York Times*. The production was also phenomenally popular with audiences, running for 1,750 performances.

A national tour and sit-down productions of the show played in other major U.S. cities, including the Los Angeles production, in which Ragni and Rado again played Berger and Claude. The show has also been performed in dozens of other countries and in many different languages. In 1979 *Hair* was made into a film directed by Milos Forman. Its hit songs, such as "Aquarius" and "Let the Sun Shine In" have been covered by many singers.

After their success with *Hair*, Ragni and Rado played themselves in *Lions Love* (1969), a film by Agnes Varda about Hollywood celebrity. Ragni's next Broadway musical, another collaboration with Galt McDermot, *Dude* (1973), was not successful critically or commercially. In the 1980s, the *Hair* trio of Ragni, Rado and McDermot reunited for another musical, *YMCA* (also titled *Sun*) which was not produced.

On May 18, 1963, Ragni was married to his wife, Stephanie. The marriage produced one child, a son Erick, but the couple divorced in the 1970s. Gerome Ragni died of cancer on July 10, 1991.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists mainly of professional files pertaining to theater and film projects written by Gerome Ragni, or in which he appeared as an actor. There are items from productions Ragni acted in during school and later in New York, such as *Hamlet* (1964), *Hang Down Your Head and Die* (1964), *The Knack* (1964) and *Viet Rock* (1966) but the majority of the material in this collection pertains to the original Broadway production of *Hair* (1968). There is also some material on subsequent projects Ragni was involved with such as *Dude* (1973) and the film *Lions Love* (1969). This collection also contains personal items, including correspondence with Ragni's family and friends and documents on his Air Force service. The strength of this collection is its extensive coverage of the many productions of *Hair* in the U.S. and internationally, represented here with photographs, programs, posters and press materials. The collection includes material as early as 1952, when Ragni was in high school and as late as 1984.

Organization

The collection is organized into nine series. They are:

- Series I : Personal Files
- Series II : Scripts
- Series III : Production Files
- Series IV : Scores
- Series V : Publicity Materials
- Series VI : Programs
- Series VII : Photographs
- Series VIII : Posters
- Series IX : Oversized Items

Series Descriptions

Series I : Series I : Personal Files, 1955-1984

1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains various personal items of Ragni's and his sister Irene's. The bulk of this material is Ragni's personal correspondence, with his sister and with James Rado, Earl Scott and other friends. This series also includes official documentation of Ragni's military service.

Series II : Scripts, 1972-1979 **2 boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains scripts for two shows written by Ragni, *Hair* and *Dude*, in various stages of their revision process.

Series III : Production Files, 1967-1979 **1 box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains production files pertaining to *Hair*, with certain items on *Dude* and *Lions Love*. The materials in this series include audition notes, background information, correspondence, directories, invitations, schedules, song lists, ticket stubs and Ragni's Tony award nomination.

Series IV : Scores, 1967-1970 **1 box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains published vocal selections to *Hair* and its spin-off album, *DisinHAIRited* as well as piano/vocal versions of various songs from the show.

Series V : Publicity Materials, 1959-1979 **2 boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains publicity materials pertaining to various theater and film productions which were written by Gerome Ragni, or in which he appeared, especially *Hair*. This material includes press clippings, magazines, advertisements and various promotional items, such as buttons, flyers and stickers.

Series VI : Programs, 1972-1977 **2 boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains programs for Ragni's productions. Most of these programs are for *Hair*, including many programs for the numerous regional and international productions. There are also programs for various other Broadway and Off-Broadway Ragni shows.

Series VII : Photographs, 1962-1970 **3 boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains photographs of Ragni productions, most of which are from *Hair*, covering the original Broadway production and the many subsequent productions, and a few photos of other Ragni shows. There are also some personal photos of Ragni, his friends and family.

Series VIII : Posters, 1964-1973 **1 box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains many posters for *Hair*, including posters from international productions, as well as posters for other Ragni productions, *Dude*, *Hamlet*, *Lions Love* and *Viet Rock*.

Series IX : Oversized Items, Undated **1 box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical.

This series contains oversized items, such as several drawings and the cover and various pages from Irene Ragni's scrapbook on *Hair*.

	<u>Series I: Personal Files, 1955-1984</u>
Box 1	
F. 1	Address book, Undated
	Air Force documents, 1955-1963
F. 2	Honorable discharge with medical examination reports, 1963 Jan. 30
F. 3	Relief of active service documents, 1958 Nov. 30
F. 4	Report of medical examination, 1958 Nov. 13
F. 5	School of Aviation Medicine diploma, 1955 July 29
F. 6	Blank postcards, 1967-1968, Undated
	Correspondence, 1958-1984, Undated
F. 7	Between James Rado and Gerome Ragni, 1965, Undated
	From Gerome Ragni, 1958-1984, Undated
F. 8	General, 1984
F. 9	To sister Irene Ragni, 1958, 1968, Undated
	To Gerome Ragni, 1969-1973, Undated
F. 10	From Dan Santilli, 1971
F. 11	From Earl Scott, 1969-1971, Undated
F. 12	From various correspondents, 1971-1973, Undated
F. 13	To Irene Ragni, 1959-1973, Undated
F. 14	Telephone messages, 1970, 1971
	Miscellaneous items, 1961, Undated
F. 15	Gerome Ragni, 1961, Undated
F. 16	Irene Ragni, Undated
	<u>Series II: Scripts, 1972-1979</u>
	<i>Dude</i> , 1972, Undated
Box 2	
F. 1	Script, 1972
F. 2	<i>Nothing About Nothing: The Children's Musical to "Dude,"</i> Undated
	<i>Hair</i> , 1977, 1979, Undated
F. 3	Fotonovel, published edition, 1979
F. 4	Off-Broadway version, Undated
F. 5	Screenplay, second draft, 1977 Aug. 19
Box 3	
F. 1	Oversized galleys with mimeograph, Undated
	<u>Series III: Production Files, 1967-1979</u>
	<i>Dude</i> , 1972-1973, Undated
Box 4	
F. 1	Correspondence, 1972-1973
F. 2	Song list, undated
F. 3	Towel, Undated
	<i>Hair</i> , 1967-1979, Undated
F. 4	Audition notes and schedules, 1968 Feb.
F. 5	Chinook tribe information, Undated
F. 6	Contact list, San Francisco, Undated
	Correspondence, 1967-1971, Undated
F. 7	General, 1967-1971, Undated
F. 8	Letters to Ragni and Rado, 1970, Undated
F. 9	Directory, Undated
	<i>DisinHAIRited</i> , 1970, Undated

	Bios, 1970 Jan.
F. 10	McDermot
F. 11	Ragni and Rado
F. 12	Correspondence, 1970
F. 13	Folder, 1970 Jan.
F. 14	Liner notes, 1970 Jan.
F. 15	Notes, Undated
F. 16	Film version-survey, Undated
F. 17	Folder, Undated
F. 18	German cast album-Liner notes, Undated
F. 19	Guest list-Washington D.C., Undated
F. 20	Copy of Al Hirschfeld drawing, Undated
F. 21	Hit Parade list, 1969 Apr. 25-May 2
	Invitations, 1968-1971, Undated
F. 22	Detroit premiere, 1970 June 22
F. 23	London, Second birthday, 1971 Sep.27
F. 24	Los Angeles, 1968 Dec. 3
	New York, 1969-1971
F. 25	Second birthday, 1970 Apr. 26
F. 26	Third anniversary, 1971 May 9
F. 27	Paris, May 31
F. 28	Tokyo- Opening night party, 1969 Aug. 29
F. 29	Toronto, 1970 Jan. 11
F. 30	Washington D.C., 1970 Mar. 12
	Lyrics, 1967, Undated
F. 31	<i>Dead End</i> , 1967, Undated
F. 32	<i>Easy to Be Hard</i> , Undated
F. 33	<i>Where Do I Go</i> , 1967
F. 34	<i>White Boys</i> , 1967
F. 35	Schedule for out of town openings, 1969-1970
F. 36	Script excerpt with Berger's songs, Undated
F. 37	Swedish review summary, 1968 Sep.
	Tickets, 1968-1979, Undated
F. 38	Broadway voucher, Undated
F. 39	Film premiere, 1979 Mar. 12
F. 40	Los Angeles Premiere, 1968 Dec. 3
F. 41	Tokyo, Undated
F. 42	Washington D.C., 1971 Mar. 12
F. 43	Tony Award nomination, Best Musical Play-Author, 1968-1969
	<i>Lions Love</i> , 1972
F. 44	Financial records and correspondence, Feb.-Mar.
F. 45	Memo regarding auditions, July 10
	Various lyrics, Undated
F. 46	<i>My Dog Gaines</i>
F. 47	<i>Patti's Vision</i>
	<u>Series IV: Scores, 1967-1970</u>
	<i>Hair</i> , 1967-1970
	Published music, 1968, 1970
Box 5	
F. 1	<i>DisinHAIRited</i> , Album of Songs, 1970
F. 2	Vocal Selections, 1968

	Songs, Piano/vocal, 1967
F. 3	<i>Aquarius</i>
F. 4	<i>Dead End</i>
F. 5	<i>Easy to be Hard</i>
F. 6	<i>Electric Blues</i>
F. 7	<i>Explanetooch</i>
F. 8	<i>Frank Mills</i>
F. 9	<i>Good Morning Starshine</i>
F. 10	<i>Hair</i>
F. 11	<i>Where Do I Go?</i>
F. 12	<i>United Artists Fake Book-Ragni's copy, 1970</i>
	<u>Series V: Publicity Materials, 1959-1979</u>
	Advertisements- <i>Hair</i> , Undated
Box 6	
F. 1	Audio magnetics corporation
F. 2	<i>DisinHAIRited</i> standing advertisement
F. 3	New York
F. 4	Quotes from New York critics
F. 5	RCA records
F. 6	Sweden
F. 7	Wig City
	Buttons, Undated
F. 8	<i>Hair</i> -“Spring is Hair”
F. 9	Washington D.C. peace march
	Clippings, 1959-1979, Undated
F. 10	<i>Dude</i> , 1972-1973
	<i>Hair</i> , 1967-1979
F. 11	Boston, 1970, Undated
F. 12	Toronto, Canada, 1969-1970, Undated
F. 13	Chicago, 1969 Oct.
F. 14	Detroit, 1970, Undated
F. 15	Film adaptation, 1978, 1979, Undated
	Foreign productions, 1968-1971, Undated
F. 16	1968-1971, Undated
F. 17	Undated
F. 18	Munich, Germany, 1968, Undated
F. 19	Los Angeles, 1968-1970, Undated
F. 20	Mexico, 1969
F. 21	Miami, 1973
	New York
F. 22	1967
F. 23	1968
F. 24	1969
F. 25	1970-1975
F. 26	Undated
F. 27	Pittsburgh, 1968, 1974, Undated
F. 28	San Francisco, 1970
F. 29	Seattle, 1970, Undated
F. 30	Stockholm, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark, 1969, 1970
F. 31	London, United Kingdom, 1968-1971, Undated
F. 32	Various productions, 1969, Undated

F. 33	Washington D. C., 1967-1971
Box 7	
F. 1	<i>Hamlet</i> , 1964
F. 2	<i>Hang Down Your Head and Die</i> , Undated
F. 3	<i>Hushed Were Their War Cries</i> , 1975 June 20
F. 4	<i>Julius Caesar</i> (Shakespeare in the Park), 1959 Aug. 16
F. 5	<i>The Knack</i> , 1965
F. 6	<i>Lions Love</i> , Undated
F. 7	YMCA (also called <i>Sun</i>), Undated
F. 8	<i>Viet Rock</i> , Undated
	Flyers, Undated
F. 9	<i>Dude</i> -Memphis State University Theatre <i>Hair</i>
F. 10	Detroit
F. 11	Munich, Germany
F. 12	Tokyo, Japan
F. 13	The Lovers tarot card
F. 14	Amsterdam, Netherlands
F. 15	Pittsburgh
F. 16	<i>Lions Love</i>
F. 17	Frisbee, <i>Hair</i> , Fourth birthday promotion, 1973 May 2 Magazines, 1964-1976, Undated <i>Hair</i> , 1969-1970, Undated
F. 18	<i>Harpers Bazaar: Comment on Culture USA</i> , Undated <i>Journal of the American Tribal Love-Rock Ecosystem</i> , 1970, Undated
F. 19	<i>Earth</i> , Undated
F. 20	<i>Head</i> , 1970 Feb.
F. 21	<i>Tribe</i> , Undated
F. 22	<i>Kosa</i> , Undated
F. 23	<i>Muziek Parade</i> , 1970 Feb.
F. 24	<i>Royal York</i> , 1970 Feb.
F. 25	<i>Saturday Review</i> , 1969 June 14
F. 26	<i>Sepia</i> , 1969 Nov.
F. 27	<i>Talent News</i> , 1969 Jan.
F. 28	<i>This Week in Israel</i> , 1970 May 28-1970 June 4
F. 29	<i>Where: Boston</i> , 1970 Apr. 28
F. 30	<i>Where: Detroit</i> , 1970 June 20
F. 31	<i>Hamlet-Modern Screen</i> , 1964 June
F. 32	<i>Lions Love-Skrien: Filmschrift</i> , 1969 Oct. Various magazine stories- <i>Hair</i>
F. 33	1968
F. 34	1969
F. 35	1970-1976
F. 36	Undated Postcards- <i>Hair</i> , Undated
F. 37	Tokyo, Japan
F. 38	Los Angeles
F. 39	Seattle
F. 40	Press releases- <i>Hair</i> , 1970, Undated Stickers, Undated

F. 41	<i>Dude</i>
	<i>Hair</i>
F. 42	Boston
F. 43	Broadway
F. 44	Montreal, Canada
F. 45	Chicago
F. 46	Detroit
F. 47	Foreign
F. 48	Germany
F. 49	Seattle
F. 50	London, United Kingdom
F. 51	Various
	<u>Series VI: Programs, 1972-1977</u>
	<i>Dude</i> , 1972-1973
Box 8	
F. 1	Broadway Playbill, 1972 Oct.
F. 2	Memphis State University Theatre, 1973 July 27-Aug. 11
F. 3	Saint Mary's Episcopal Church Concert, 1973 Mar.
F. 4	<i>Godspell</i> , Pittsburgh, Undated
	<i>Hair</i> , 1968-1977, Undated
F. 5	Argentina, Undated
F. 6	Boston, 1970 Feb., Mar.
F. 7	Brazil, Undated
	Canada, 1970
F. 8	Montreal, Sept.-Oct.
F. 9	Toronto, Jan.
F. 10	Chicago, 1969 Oct.
F. 11	Soborg, Denmark, 1968-1969
F. 12	Detroit, 1970 June
F. 13	Film version, 1979
F. 14	Helsinki, Finland, 1969
F. 15	Paris, France, 1969 June
	Germany, 1969, Undated
F. 16	Berlin, 1969
F. 17	Munich, Undated
F. 18	Tel Aviv, Israel, 1970
F. 19	Italy, Undated
Box 9	
F. 1	Tokyo, Japan, autographed by cast, Undated
F. 2	Los Angeles, 1968
F. 3	Memphis, Undated
F. 4	Miami, Undated
F. 5	Amsterdam, Netherlands, Undated
F. 6	New Jersey, Playhouse on the Mall, 1974 June
	New York, 1967-1977
	Broadway, 1968-1977
F. 7	Birthday celebration at St. John the Divine, 1971 May 9
F. 8	Fourth Birthday Party, 1972 May 7
F. 9	Playbills, 1968-1977
F. 10	Souvenir brochures, 1968, 1970
F. 11	Cheetah, New York, 1967 Dec.

F. 12	Off-Broadway, Public Theater, 1967-1968
F. 13	Philadelphia, Undated
F. 14	Pittsburgh, 1971 May 24
F. 15	San Francisco, 1969
F. 16	Seattle, 1970 Apr.
F. 17	Belgrade, Serbia, Undated
F. 18	Washington D.C., 1971 Mar.
F. 19	<i>Hamlet</i> , 1964 Apr.
F. 20	<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> , 1973 June
	<i>The Knack</i> , 1966, Undated
F. 21	Chicago, Undated
F. 22	New York, 1966
F. 23	<i>Legend of Lovers</i> , 41 st Street Theatre, Undated
F. 24	<i>Lions Love</i> , New York Film Festival, 1968 Sep.-Oct.
F. 25	<i>Rainbow</i> , by James Rado, Undated
F. 26	<i>School Daze</i> , 1952 Apr. 18
F. 27	YMCA, Undated
	<u>Series VII: Photographs, 1962-1970</u>
Box 10	
F. 1	<i>Dude</i> , Ragni photographed by Dagmar, Undated
	<i>Hair</i> , 1968-1970, Undated
F. 2	Broadway publicity photo, 1970
F. 3	Broadway rehearsal photos, Undated
F. 4	Collage of photos of various scenes, Undated
F. 5	Dagmar's contact sheets, rehearsals, Undated
F. 6	Dagmar rehearsal photos, 1968
F. 7	Headshots of various actors with vital statistics, Undated
F. 8	London, Undated
F. 9	Galt McDermot, Undated
F. 10	Production shots from Irene Ragni's scrapbook, Undated
F. 11	James Rado, Undated
	Gerome Ragni
F. 12	Photographed by Marc B. Weiss, in color, Undated
F. 13	With McDermot and Rado, Undated
F. 14	With Rado, Undated
F. 15	With Rado and Michael Butler outside Biltmore Theater
F. 16	Recording session, Undated
	Second birthday, 1970
F. 17	Cast on stage
F. 18	Celebration in Central Park
F. 19	Various productions, Undated
F. 20	<i>Hamlet</i> , Rehearsal shots, Undated
	Personal photos of Ragni, 1969, Undated
F. 21	Undated
F. 22	With Rado and friends-Contact sheets, Undated
F. 23	With son, Erick Ragni, 1969, Undated
F. 24	With various friends, Undated
F. 25	<i>Waltz of the Toreadors</i> , 1962 Aug.
F. 26	Unidentified photos, Undated
	Oversized photos, Undated
Box 11	

F. 1	<i>Dude</i> , Promotional photo
	<i>Hair</i>
F. 2	Birthday celebration in Central Park
F. 3	Boston production
F. 4	Broadway production
F. 5	Unidentified productions
Box 12	
F. 1	Unidentified Spanish language production shot, autographed by cast
<u>Series VIII: Posters, 1964-1973</u>	
Box 13	
F. 1	<i>The Cockettes and Sylvester</i> concert, with drawing on back, Nov. 7
F. 2	<i>Dude</i> , Memphis State University, 1973 May
	<i>Hair</i> , 1967, 1968, Undated
F. 3	<i>Aquarius</i> single, Vince Edwards, Undated
F. 4	Broadway, Oversized poster, 1968
F. 5	Cheetah, Undated
F. 6	<i>DisinHAIRited</i> , Rough sketch and final version, Undated
	Foreign productions, 1968, Undated
F. 7	Amsterdam, Undated
F. 8	Berlin, Undated
F. 9	Brazil, Undated
F. 10	Helsinki, Undated
	London, Undated
F. 11	Cast album
F. 12	Shaftesbury Theatre
F. 13	Munich, 1968
F. 14	Sweden, 1968
	Off-Broadway, 1967, Undated
F. 15	Cast album, Undated
F. 16	Public Theater, 1967
F. 17	<i>Hamlet</i> , 1964
F. 18	<i>Lions Love</i> , 1969
F. 19	<i>Melba Moore at the Waldorf Astoria</i> , Undated
F. 20	<i>Viet Rock</i> , Undated
<u>Series IX: Oversized Items, Undated</u>	
Box 14	
F. 1	Scrapbook cover and pages, Undated
F. 2	Various drawings, Undated