

The New York Public Library
The Billy Rose Theatre Division

Aline Bernstein Designs
1922-1984
***T-VIM 2010-026**

Summary

Main entry:	Bernstein, Aline
Title:	Aline Bernstein Designs, 1922-1984
Size:	6 linear feet (8 boxes)
Abstract:	Costume and set designs and correspondence of Aline Bernstein, New York City designer for theater, opera and dance productions from 1920s to 1950s.
Preferred citation:	Aline Bernstein designs, The Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Biographical note

Costume and set designer Aline Bernstein was born in New York City in 1882. She was the daughter of Rebecca and actor Joseph Frankau. She married Theodore Bernstein, a stockbroker, in 1902.

Bernstein graduated at the New York School of Applied Design and later on studied with portraitist Robert Henri. She began designing costumes and sets as the main designer for the Neighborhood Playhouse from 1924 until 1927. Among the early productions that helped build her reputation were and *The Little Clay Cart* (1924) and *The Dybbuk* (1925). Bernstein also designed for Broadway, as well as for operas and dance productions. Notable shows include *The Game of Love and Death* (1929), *Happy Time* (1950), and *Regina* (1949) an opera for which Bernstein's designs won a Tony Award in 1950.

In 1926, Bernstein was the first woman to be admitted to membership in the male-dominated Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of the American Federation of Labor. In 1937 she became co-founder and director of the Museum of Costume Art, which merged with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1946 as The Costume Institute. Bernstein served as its president for the last 9 years of her life until 1955.

Bernstein was also the author of 3 books: two novels *Three Blue Suits* (1933) and *The Journey Down* (1938), published by A. Knopf; and *An Actor's Daughter* (1941), an autobiography of her early life. In 1925 she met the 25-year old Thomas Woolf, with whom she had an affair that lasted for five years. Their relationship is mentioned in many of his books.

Aline Bernstein died in 1955 in New York City.

Scope and content note

The Aline Bernstein Collection consists of correspondence, and costume and set designs by Aline Bernstein New York City designer for theater opera and dance performances from the 1920s to 1950s.

The designs include color designs and preliminary pencil sketches, many with swatches attached. The majority of the designs are for costumes, with a smaller number for set designs. The correspondence mainly consists of letters of appreciation by readers of Bernstein's two novels, *Three Blue Suits* (1933) and *The Journey Down* (1938). The collection also includes some letters and postcards (1929-1930) by author Thomas Wolfe, with whom Bernstein had a relationship in 1925-1930.

Container list

		Correspondence, 1925-1952, 1984, undated
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	A-D, 1932-1952, undated
	2	E-M, 1933-1952, undated
	3	N-W, 1925-1951, undated
	4	Wolfe, Thomas, 1930-1931, 1984, undated Includes typescripts, and a 1984 letter from the Estate of Thomas Wolfe.
	5	Unidentified, 1937-1941, undated Letters with first name only, or illegible signature.
	6	Clippings, 1933-1941, undated
	7	<i>Off Stage Noises</i> , undated Text by Aline Bernstein. Typed.
		Costume and set designs, 1922-1951, undated
2	1	<i>L' Aiglon</i> , 1934 Original set designs in color. Play.
	2	<i>American Landscape</i> , 1939 Original set designs in color and pencil sketches. Play.
	3	<i>Burning Bright</i> , 1950 Original costume designs in color, and pencil sketches. Includes swatches. Play.
	4-5	<i>Caesar and Cleopatra</i> , 1925 Original costume designs in color, and pencil sketches. Includes swatches. Play.
3	1	<i>The Eagle Has Two Heads</i> , 1947 Original costume designs, pencil sketches. Play.
	2	<i>An Enemy of the People</i> , 1950 Original costume designs, sketches and drawings in pencil. Includes swatches and 1 color sample. Play.
	3	<i>Faust</i> , 1950? Original set designs and cut-outs in color, and pencil sketches. Includes 1 letter, possibly related to the production. Opera.
	4	<i>Feathers in a Gale</i> , 1943 Original costume designs, some in color. Includes swatches. Play.
	5	<i>The Game of Love and Death</i> , 1929 Original costume designs in color. Includes swatches. Play.
	6	<i>Grand Street Follies of 1929</i> , 1929 Original set designs in color. Includes program.
	7-8	<i>The Happy Time</i> , 1950 Original costume designs in color, mounted, and pencil sketches. Includes swatches. Play.
4	1-4	<i>Harriet</i> , 1944 Original costume designs, sketches, swatches and color samples, and clippings. Play.
5	1-3	<i>The Innocent Voyage</i> , 1943 Original costume designs, mounted, in color, and some pencil sketches. Includes swatches. Play.
6	1-2	<i>Let's Make an Opera</i> , 1950 Original costume designs, mounted, in color, and some pencil sketches. Includes swatches.
	3	<i>The Lion Tamer</i> , 1926 Original costume designs.
	4-5	<i>The Little Clay Cart</i> , 1924 Original costume designs on board, in color and pencil sketches. Play.
	6	<i>Mary Rose</i> , 1951 Original costume designs in color. Includes swatches. Play.
7	1-3	<i>Regina</i> , 1949

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| 8 | 1 | Original costume designs in color, and pencil sketches. Includes swatches. Opera.
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 1930
Original costume designs in color. Includes swatches. Play. |
| | 2 | <i>The Royal Fandango</i> , undated
Original costume designs in color. |
| | 3 | <i>Salut au Monde</i> , 1922
Original costume designs in color. Dance performance. |
| | 4 | <i>The Spellbound Child (L'Enfant et les Sortilèges)</i> , 1946
Original costume designs in color. Dance performance. |
| | 5 | <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , 1926?
Original costume designs in color. Play. |
| | 6 | <i>We, the People</i> , 1933
Original set designs in color. Play. |
| | 7 | <i>The Would-Be Gentleman</i> , 1928
Original costume designs in color. Play. |
| | | Unidentified productions, undated |
| | 8 | Costume designs, undated
Original costume designs in color, and pencil sketches. |
| | 9 | Set designs and fabric sample, undated |