



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Richard Beckhard papers

1937-1990 [bulk 1937-1947]

*T-Mss 2002-011

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

Summary

Creator: Beckhard, Richard, 1918-1999

Title: Richard Beckhard papers

Date: 1937-1990 [bulk 1937-1947]

Size: 1.2 linear feet (4 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

Source: Donated by Sandra Barty, 2002.

Abstract: Richard Beckhard (1918-2000) was a theatrical stage manager and actor who worked on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and in regional theaters. The collection, dating 1937 to 1990, consists mostly of material documenting Richard Beckhard's work as a stage manager and holds scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, photographs, and printed matter.

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Processing note: Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

Creator History

Richard "Dick" Beckhard (1918- 2000) was a stage manager born in New York City, the son of Bruno and Isabel Beckhard. As a teenager, he managed a Highland, New York theatrical group. He worked as an assistant stage manager, director, and actor at Pomona College from 1936 to 1939.

Following graduation from Pomona College, Beckhard found success with uncle, Arthur J. Beckhard's production of *The Male Animal*. This show held performances throughout the United States, from 1939 to 1942 and starred Mary Astor and Elliott Nugent. The production eventually made its way to Broadway. Richard Beckhard held dual positions as the stage manager and in the feature role of Nutsy Miller. In 1942, a feature film inspired by the play starred Henry Fonda, Olivia de Havilland and Joan Leslie.

Beckhard's theatrical career was interrupted by WWII. Photographic evidence in the collection indicates that Beckhard joined the American Red Cross and was stationed in New Guinea, from 1943 to 1944, near Camp Sentani, the U.S. Navy Rest Camp.

Beckhard resumed his career after the war. He worked as an assistant stage manager with uncle Arthur J. Beckhard (1899-1961), a managing producer. Joint productions included *Woman Bites Dog* at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey, and productions at the Tanglewood Theatre and Martha's Vineyard Playhouse.

In 1950, his theatrical manager expertise was sought by members of the National Training Laboratories (NTL) who wanted him to develop training sessions. This request led to a new career as a founder of the field of organizational development and an adjunct professorship at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

Beckhard died in New York City at the age of 81. He was survived by his wife, Sandra Barty.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dated from 1937 to 1990, documents the theatrical career of stage manager Richard Beckhard (1918-2000). The collection contains scrapbooks, photographs and printed matter such as programs and reviews.

Two scrapbooks document his work in the theater. The Pomona College scrapbook, dating to the late 1930's, recounts his work as an amateur actor, director and producer. The second scrapbook, dating from 1939 to 1942, holds memorabilia of *The Male Animal* with congratulatory telegrams, theatrical reviews, theatrical programs, photographs, and a poster for the Cort Theatre.

Loose theatre programs are mostly from productions that he staged managed with Arthur J. Beckhard. Reviews of some plays are located under printed matter.

There are a variety of photographs that document Beckhard's work in the theatre, film work, and during World War II. Beckhard had a feature part in the 1942 *Stage Door Canteen*. Prior to being stationed abroad, a photograph shows Beckhard with a teenage Lauren Bacall at a New Year's Eve party in 1943. Bacall had yet to be discovered by Hollywood.

Theatrical photographs include autographed photographs of actors who appeared in *The Male Animal*, and scenes from the play.

The remaining material is photographs of Richard Beckhard, family and friends, Germany post World War II, and New Guinea during the years 1943 to 1944. Photographs of New Guinea focus mostly on Camp Sentani, the U.S. Navy Rest Camp, the United States Red Cross, soldiers, and local scenery.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged into Scrapbooks, Photographs, Printed Matter and Assorted Materials

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)

Photographs

Posters

Scrapbooks

Theater programs

Subjects

College theater -- United States

Pomona College -- Theater department

Theater -- 20th century

Occupations

Producers (managers)

Titles

The male animal: a comedy in three acts

Names

Beckhard, Arthur J.

Pomona College (Claremont, Calif.). Theater Department

Container List

Scrapbooks

- b. 1 f. 1-3 Pomona College 1937-1939 (Disbound)
- b. 2 f. 1-13 The Male Animal 1939-1942 (Disbound)
 - o. 1 The Male Animal (Poster)

Photographs

- b. 3 f. 1-2 Actors 1940s
- b. 3 f. 3 Bacall, Lauren and Beckhard, Richard 1943
- b. 3 f. 4 Beckhard, Arthur J. and Beckhard, Richard
- b. 3 f. 5 Family and Friends 1940s
- b. 3 f. 6 Germany. Post WWII
- b. 3 f. 7-13 New Guinea and the Philippines 1943-1944
- b. 3 f. 14 Scenic
 - Photographs by George French.
- b. 3 f. 15 Stage Door Canteen 1943
 - Film still.
- b. 3 f. 16 Wild Money 1937
 - Film still.
- b. 3 f. 17 Unidentified images plays and individuals

Printed Matter

Programs

- b. 3 f. 18 "Another Part of the Forest" 1946
- b. 3 f. 19 "Great Big Doorstep" 1942
- b. 3 f. 20 Martha's Vineyard Playhouse 1946-1947
- b. 3 f. 21 Tanglewood Theatre 1947
- b. 3 f. 22 "Woman Bites Dog" 1946

Reviews

- b. 3 f. 23-24 *All in Favor* 1942
- b. 3 f. 25 *Another Part of the Forest* 1946
- b. 4 f. 1 *Great Big Doorstep* 1942
- b. 4 f. 2 *Petticoat Fever* c. 1943
- b. 4 f. 3 *Skylark* 1942
- b. 4 f. 4 *Suspect* 1942
- b. 4 f. 5 *What Big Ears!* 1942
- b. 4 f. 6 *Woman Bites Dog* 1946
- b. 4 f. 7 Assorted Printed Matter 1930s-1940s

Assorted Materials

- b. 4 f. 8 General Correspondence 1940s, 1990
- b. 4 f. 9 Lake Sentani. U.S. Navy Rest Camp 1945
 - Brochure
- b. 4 f. 10 Ticket Stub