



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Wally Harper papers

1960-2009

*T-Mss 2017-035

Processed by Heather Halliday, 2018.

Summary

Creator: Harper, Wally

Title: Wally Harper papers

Date: 1960-2009

Size: 4.29 linear feet (12 boxes)

Source: Donated by Harper's surviving partner, Allan J. Gruet, in 2017.

Abstract: Wally Harper (1941-2004) was an American musical theater director, arranger, composer, conductor, and pianist. The Wally Harper papers document his theater career, particularly his later work, including some of his numerous collaborations with singer Barbara Cook, through scores, arrangement notes, lyric sheets, scripts, and a scrapbook.

Conditions Governing Access:

Audio and video recordings are unavailable pending digitization.

Preferred citation: Wally Harper papers, *T-Mss 2017-035. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Heather Halliday, 2018.

Creator History

Wally Harper was an American musical theater director, arranger, composer, conductor, and pianist born in Akron, Ohio in 1941. Harper's mother, a music teacher, helped foster his early interest in music by encouraging young Harper to play piano at church. After attending the New England Conservatory and the Juilliard School of Music, he began working on Broadway in 1965, arranging vocals for *Half a Sixpence*.

Harper is best known for his collaborations with Barbara Cook. He was instrumental in reviving her later career as a cabaret singer, co-writing and arranging Cook's music and lyrics as well as accompanying her on piano. When the two met in the mid-1970s, the soprano was in semi-retirement after having achieved success in the 1950s and 1960s in a string of Broadway ingénue roles. Harper and Cook's partnership lasted 30 years, yielding many popular performances and recordings.

Harper created dance arrangements for Stephen Sondheim's original 1970 version of *Company* and for its 1995 revival. He also directed, arranged, and played piano in Barbara Cook's *Mostly Sondheim* in 2002. Other credits include *My One and Only*, *The Grand Hotel*, *Billy*, *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public*, and revivals of *Irene* and *Peter Pan*.

Towards the end of his life, Harper also collaborated with playwright Sherman Yellen on the musicals *Josephine Tonight!*, inspired by Josephine Baker, *Say Yes!*, which was about the 1939 World's Fair, and *Lucky in the Rain*.

Harper died in 2004 at the age of 63.

Scope and Content Note

The Music Files, comprising the great bulk of the collection, consist primarily of scores, including reduction scores, full scores, specific instrument parts, chorus scores, and lead sheets. Some song lists, lyric sheets, arrangement notes, theatrical scripts, and published sheet music are also present in this section. Most of this material relates to theatrical performances and musical concerts. Some relates to arrangements Harper created for musical recordings or production work he performed for albums, including Broadway cast recordings. Collaborators include Barbara Cook, Sherman Yellen, Malcolm Gets, Tommy Tune, and David Zippel. Music Files are arranged alphabetically by production title, collaborator name, or subject.

The few Scrapbook Files hold photographs, invitations, letters, and some news clippings.

The Audio and Moving Image Files include audio recordings of music by Barbara Cook, Tommy Tune, Nathan Lane, and The Pointer Sisters; audio relating to rehearsals or performances of *Gypsy*, *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public*, *Josephine Tonight!*, *Say Yes!*, and *Lucky in the Rain*; video of a *Grand Hotel* workshop performance; videos of a performance at the White House, and various television appearances by Barbara Cook. Audio and moving image recordings are unavailable pending digitization.

Key Terms

Subjects

Arrangers (Musicians)

Conductors (Music)

Musical theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Occupations

Composers

Pianists.

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scores
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Names

Cook, Barbara
Gets, Malcolm
Harper, Wally
Pace, Pat
Tune, Tommy
Yellen, Sherman
Zippel, David
Zito, Torrie

Container List

Music 1920, 1960-2009

- b. 1 f. 1-3 **Bock, Jerry** circa 1970, 1998
Includes *The Rothschilds* and *The Bock and Harnick Show*.
- Cook, Barbara**
- b. 1 f. 4-5 **Song Lists of Performances** 1980, 2000-2004
Many lists include dates, venue names, or cities where specific concerts took place.
- b. 1 f. 6-8 *Mostly Sondheim* 2000-2002
b. 2 f. 1-2
- b. 12 f. 1 "A Wonderful Guy" circa 2001
Full score.
- b. 2 f. 3-5 *Count Your Blessings Christmas Album* 2003
b. 8 f. 1
- b. 2 f. 6 *Barbara Cook's Broadway* 2004
b. 8 f. 2
- Gets, Malcolm**
- b. 8 f. 3 circa 2000-2001
- b. 3 f. 1 **Album Project** 2000-2001
b. 8 f. 4
- b. 12 f. 2 "The Guy is a Dope" circa 2001
Full score.
- b. 12 f. 3 "The Sweetest Sounds" circa 2001
Full Score.
- b. 3 f. 2 **Harnick, Sheldon**
- b. 3 f. 3 *Irene* 1973
b. 8 f. 5
- b. 8 f. 6-7 **Orphan Scores** 1970s-1990s
b. 11 f. 1
Scores that do not indicate a connection to any particular theatrical production, concert, artist, or album. Song titles include: "A Broadway Baby," "Broadway Melody," "Hollywood," "It Takes Nothing," "Love Meeting Waltz," "Mister Saxophone," "Oh, Such a Lovely Tomorrow," "Paint and Paper Ballet," and "The Rushes."
- b. 11 f. 2-4 **Pace, Pat** 1960-1966
- b. 11 f. 5-6 *The Rhythm of 1812*
Piano parts and full score.
- b. 11 f. 7 *Singin' In the Rain* circa 1986
- b. 8 f. 8-9 **Tune, Tommy** circa 2002
b. 12 f. 4
b. 9 f. 1-3
Full score and instrument parts for "It's Not Where You Start."
- b. 3 f. 4 **Untitled Project**
Songs include "The Future is You," "I Always Say Hello," "What Did I Have?," and "A Sleepin' Bee."
- b. 9 f. 4 *White Nights* 1974
- Yellen, Sherman**
- b. 3 f. 5-10 *Lucky In the Rain* 1997
b. 4 f. 1-3
b. 10 f. 1-2
Instrument parts.
- b. 4 f. 4-13 *Say Yes!* 1997-2000
b. 5 f. 1-7
b. 6 f. 1-3
b. 10 f. 3-4
Includes Harper's composition and arrangement notes for various iterations of scores and scripts; revisions for the Berkshire Theater Festival production.

Music (cont.)

Yellen, Sherman (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 4-7 *Josephine Tonight!* 2001-2009
- b. 7 f. 1-4 Includes reduction scores, lead sheets, and various iterations of the script.
- b. 7 f. 5 Zakrzewski, Paul 1969-1971
- b. 10 f. 5-7 Includes lead sheets and reduction scores for *Sensations* and *Brother Dear*.
- b. 7 f. 6 *Ziegfeld Follies* 1920
- Published sheet music for the song "I Was a Florodora Baby."
- b. 7 f. 7 Zippel, David 1977-1983
- b. 10 f. 8 Lyric sheets, scores, and lead sheets.
- b. 11 f. 8 Zito, Torrie
- b. 7 f. 8-9 Scrapbook 1961-2001
- b. 10 f. 9 The disassembled Scrapbook Files include official White House photographs showing Harper meeting Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Herbert Walker Bush, and Bill Clinton during Harper's White House performances and visits. Scrapbook files also include a few letters, personal photographs and mementos.

Audio and Moving Images 1980-2002

Audio recordings and moving images are unavailable pending digitization.