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Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Ruth Mitchell papers

1887-1999 [bulk 1946-1999]

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Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2012.

Summary

Creator: Mitchell, Ruth, 1919-2000

Title: Ruth Mitchell papers

Date: 1887-1999 [bulk 1946-1999]

Size: 15.8 linear feet (40 boxes, 1 oversized folder, 1 tube)

Source: Donated by Florence Klotz, 2001.

Abstract: Ruth Mitchell was a stage manager, director, producer and the assistant to the acclaimed director and producer Harold Prince, working on Broadway from the late 1940s through the late 1990s. This collection consists mainly of production files, most notably scripts with extensive technical cues, for the 50 odd shows that Mitchell stage managed, assistant directed or produced. Some personal files are also included.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Processing note: Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2012.

Creator History

Ruth Mitchell was a stage manager, director, producer and the assistant to the acclaimed director and producer Harold Prince, working on Broadway from the late 1940s through the late 1990s. Born Ruth Kornfeld in Newark, New Jersey in 1919, Mitchell grew up attending Broadway shows and began her career in the theatre as a performer. She appeared in the ensemble of the musicals *The Time*, the

Place and the Girl (1942) and Follow the Girls (1944). On her third show, Annie Get Your Gun (1946), though she appeared on stage, she found her true place backstage, as the assistant to the director, Joshua Logan. She went on to stage manage two plays directed by Logan Happy Birthday (1946) and Mister Roberts (1948). She also was stage manager on three important musicals, The King and I (1951), Pipe Dream (1955) and Bells Are Ringing (1956).

In 1957, Mitchell worked with Harold Prince for the first time when she stage managed West Side Story, which he and his partner Robert E. Griffith produced. After her next show, Gypsy (1959), Mitchell would work exclusively on Prince productions for the following 40 years until her retirement. During the 1960s she was the stage manager on such shows as Fiorello (1959), A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1962), She Loves Me (1963), Fiddler on the Roof (1964), Cabaret (1966) and Zorba (1968).

During the 1970s, Mitchell also took on assistant directing and producing, with such shows as Company (1970), Follies (1971), The Great God Brown (1972), A Little Night Music (1973), Candide (1974) and Pacific Overtures (1976). Mitchell was Prince's assistant for On the Twentieth Century (1978), Sweeney Todd (1979), Play Memory (1984), End of the World (1984), The Phantom of the Opera (1988), Kiss of the Spider Woman (1993) and Show Boat (1994). She was a producer on Merrill We Roll Along (1981), A Doll's Life (1982), Grind (1985) and Roza (1987). Mitchell was involved in the early stages of Parade (1999), but failing health prevented her from working on the Broadway production.

Mitchell's career was notable not only for being involved in many of the most acclaimed musicals of the second half of the twentieth century, but for her success, as one of the only women working in a male-dominated profession. Mitchell's partner, Florence Klotz, was a costume designer who worked on many shows with Mitchell. Ruth Mitchell died on November 3, 2000 in New York.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists mainly of production files, most notably scripts with extensive technical cues, for the 50 odd shows that Mitchell stage managed, assistant directed or produced, the majority of which were directed and produced by Harold Prince. Some personal files are also included.

The bulk of this collection is production files, arranged alphabetically by title. for musicals, plays and operas Mitchell worked on from the 1940s through the 1990s, including such landmark musicals as The King and I (1951), West Side Story (1957), Gypsy (1959), Fiddler on the Roof (1964), Cabaret (1966), Company (1970), Sweeney Todd (1979), Evita (1979) and The Phantom of the Opera (1988). The most notable items in the production files series are Mitchell's scripts and cue books for these productions, many of which have stage directions, technical cues and notes regarding direction, which will be an increasingly valuable resource for researchers. Other production files include general items pertaining to the productions, such as photographs, programs, souvenir books, press coverage, background research, contact sheets, rehearsal schedules, sheet music, agreements, lists of investors and correspondence. In her frequent roles as stage manager, assistant director and assistant to the director, Mitchell kept many technical files, including stage manager's notes, costume designs, lighting plots, set designs and plots, prop lists and hair and costume bibles.

There is a small series of personal files, arranged alphabetically by subject, including personal material and professional activities not associated with particular productions. Personal Files consist of address books, appointment books, awards and biographies of Mitchell and frequent collaborators Harold Prince and Stephen Sondheim. There are also items from Mitchell's childhood and youth, such as school projects, poems and scrapbooks. Personal photographs include a family collection dating back to 1887.

Later photos have casual snapshots of Mitchell as an adult with various friends and head-shots of Mitchell, her partner, Florence Klotz and other friends and colleagues. Also here are Mitchell's correspondence with former New York Mayor John V. Lindsay, and materials pertaining to his campaigns. Other items include general theatre industry files, which pertain mostly to the New York theatrical unions.

This collection has a substantial audio/visual component. There are over 100 items in a variety of formats such as VHS and Betamax videocassettes, audiocassettes, reel to reels and long-playing records. These are recordings of live performances, readings and demos of new works, documentaries, award shows and press reel footage. Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access. Inquiries regarding audio materials in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at rha@nypl.org.

Key Terms

Subjects

Musical theater -- United States -- 20th century

Theater -- Production and direction -- United States -- 20th century

Theater -- Stage management -- United States -- 20th century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs

Programs

Scrapbooks

Scripts

Sound recordings

Video recordings

Occupations

Theatrical producers and directors -- United States -- 20th century

Theatrical stage managers -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Bennet, Michael

Bock, Jerry

Ebb, Fred

Grossman, Larry

Harnick, Sheldon

Kander, John

Klotz, Florence

Lloyd Webber, Andrew, 1948-

Logan, Joshua

Prince, Harold, 1928-

Sondheim, Stephen

Container List

Series I: Productions 1935-1999

- b. 33 f. 1 *Annie Get Your Gun-Sheet Music Cover* undated
- b. 41 f. 1 *Antique Epigraphs-Photograph* 1984
- b. 41 f. 2 *Astaire Variations* 1983
- b. 1 f. 1 *Baker Street-Master Script* 1965 April
- b. 1 f. 2 *Bye Bye Broadway-Script* undated
By Terrence McNally
- b. 1 f. 3 *Boris Gudonov-Program and Libretto* 1980
Lyric Opera of Chicago
Cabaret 1966-1988, undated
- b. 1 f. 4 *Agreements* 1966
- b. 41 f. 3 *Award Certificate (Outer Circle)* 1967
- b. 1 f. 5 *Costume, Hair and Prop Photographs* undated
- b. 1 f. 6 *Production Information* 1967
Includes correspondence, clippings, cast lists and schedules.
- b. 35 *Scrapbook-Broadway* 1967
- b. 38 *Scrapbook-London* 1966-1969
Also includes material on Broadway production as well as *It's a Bird, It's a Plane...It's Superman* and *Zorba*
- b. 2 f. 1-4 *Scripts, with Blocking Cues* 1966, 1988, undated
- b. 9 f. 6 *Script with Cues*
- b. 10 f. 1 *Programs* 1967, 1970
Tony Awards and Vienna production
- b. 2 f. 5 *California Suite-Script* 1977 November
- b. 10 f. 2 *A Call on Kuprin-Program* 1961
Candide 1973-1974, 1998
- b. 10 f. 3 *Photographs* 1973
- b. 3 f. 6 *Production Information* 1974
- b. 3 f. 5 *Programs* 1973, 1998
- b. 3 f. 1-4 *Scripts* 1974
Includes scripts with and without cues
Company 1970, 1993, undated
- b. 4 f. 1 *Investor List* undated
- b. 4 f. 2 *Program* 1993
The Original Cast in Concert
- b. 36 f. 1 *Scrapbook* 1970
- b. 4 f. 3-5 *Scripts, with Technical Cues* 1970, undated
Folder 3 includes photograph of set model, folder 5 includes set design
- b. 33 f. 2 *Sheet Music, "Marry Me a Little"* undated
- b. 32 f. 6 *Slides* undated
A Doll's Life 1981-1983, undated
- b. 37 *Bound Score* 1983

Series I: Productions (cont.)

A Doll's Life (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 6 Costume Bible undated
- b. 4 f. 7 Script with Costume Sketches 1982
- b. 5 f. 1-3 Scripts 1981, 1982
Scripts include various production files such as schedules and contact sheets
- The End of the World* 1984
 - b. 5 f. 4 Script with Contact Sheets and Photographs of Set
 - b. 6 f. 1-3 Scripts
 - b. 6 f. 4 Contact Sheets
- Evita* 1978-1987
 - b. 41 f. 4 Photograph and Poster
 - o. 1 Photograph
 - b. 6 f. 5-6 Production Information and Stage Manager's Notes
 - b. 7 f. 1-2 Programs
 - b. 7 f. 3 Publicity Materials
 - b. 7 f. 4-6 Scripts
Most scripts include technical cues and production/stage management notes. Box 9 folders 3 and 4 are Spanish translations.
 - b. 8 f. 1-5 Scripts
 - b. 9 f. 1-4 Scripts
 - b. 9 f. 5 *Souvenir Book, The Legend of Eva Peron*
 - b. 10 f. 4 *La Fanciulla del West-Program* 1978
- Fiddler on the Roof* 1962-1987
 - b. 28 f. 5 Activity Sheets 1966
 - b. 10 f. 5 Photographs undated
One photograph of the Broadway opening night party and an extensive selection of color and black and white production shots from the London production, starring Topol.
 - b. 10 f. 6 Programs 1972, 1981, undated
Various productions
 - b. 33 f. 3 Program-London 1987
 - b. 10 f. 7 Prop and Song Lists 1964
 - b. 10 f. 8-11 Scripts with Cues 1962, 1964, undated
Box 10, Folder 8 contains 90 minute "Tab Version"
 - b. 11 f. 1-2 Scripts with Cues 1964, undated
- Fiorello* 1959-1961, undated
 - b. 11 f. 3 Agreements 1960
 - b. 11 f. 4 Cue Book undated
 - b. 11 f. 5 Plots and Prop Lists undated
 - b. 11 f. 6 Programs 1959-1961
 - b. 11 f. 7 Scripts
- Follies* 1970-1972, undated
 - b. 12 f. 1 Agreements, Investor Lists 1970
 - b. 12 f. 2 Background Research 1970 November 6
Ziegfeld Club Anniversary Ball program
 - b. 12 f. 3 Costumes Designs undated

Series I: Productions (cont.)

Follies (cont.)

- b. 41 f. 5 Costumes Design undated
- b. 12 f. 4 Photographs undated
 - b. 40 Poster undated
- b. 12 f. 5 Press 1972
- b. 12 f. 6 Script 1971 April 4
 - A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* 1962-1963, undated
- b. 12 f. 7 Cue Book undated
- b. 28 f. 6 Focus Charts and Cue Sheets 1962
- b. 41 f. 10 London Production-Advertisement 1963
- b. 12 f. 8 Photographs and Press undated
 - Broadway and London
- b. 12 f. 9 Programs 1962
 - Broadway and London
- b. 12 f. 10 Script 1962 May 8
- b. 12 f. 11-12 *Great God Brown-Scripts* undated
 - Grind* 1985, undated
- b. 12 f. 13 Costumes Sketches undated
- b. 13 f. 1-2 Scripts with Stage Manager's Notes and Production Information 1983
- b. 13 f. 3 *Gypsy-Script* undated
- b. 13 f. 4 *Haggar the Horrible-Script with Blocking Cues* 1986 May 28
 - This script is from a staged reading
- b. 13 f. 5 *Happy Birthday-Program and Script with Cues* undated
- b. 13 f. 6 *Harold and Maude-Production Information and Costume Sketches* 1979
 - It's a Bird, It's a Plane...It's Superman* 1966
- b. 14 f. 1 Agreements
- b. 14 f. 2 Blocking Script
- b. 36 f. 2 Scrapbook
 - The King and I* undated
- b. 14 f. 3-5 Photographs
- b. 14 f. 6 Programs
 - Kiss of the Spiderwoman* 1990-1995
- b. 14 f. 7 Photographs of Sets undated
- b. 14 f. 8 Programs 1992-1995
 - Broadway, London, Tampa and SUNY Purchase
- b. 14 f. 9 Script 1990
 - Rehearsal script from an early version on the show including many songs cut or replaced before the Broadway production
 - A Little Night Music* 1972-1977
- b. 15 f. 1 Photographs 1973-1977
- b. 41 f. 6 Photograph 1973
- b. 15 f. 2 Program 1973
- b. 15 f. 9 Production Information 1974

- Series I: Productions (cont.)
A Little Night Music (cont.)
- b. 15 f. 3-6 **Scripts 1972-1977**
Broadway, London and National Tour and one page from movie script
 - b. 15 f. 7 *Love for Love-Script with Set Plots* undated
 - b. 15 f. 8 *Madame Butterfly-Photograph* 1982
Merrily We Roll Along 1981
 - b. 16 f. 1 Contact Sheets
 - b. 16 f. 2 Photographs of Set Models
 - b. 16 f. 3 Script with Cues
 - b. 16 f. 4 *Mr. Roberts-Photographs* undated
On the Twentieth Century 1977-1980, undated
 - b. 41 f. 7 Opening Night Card 1978
 - b. 16 f. 5 Photographs undated
 - b. 16 f. 6 Programs 1978-1980
 - b. 16 f. 7-8 Scripts 1977, undated
 - b. 16 f. 9 *Othello-Programs* 1981
James Earl Jones, Christopher Plummer and Kelsey Grammer
Pacific Overtures 1975-1976, undated
 - b. 17 f. 1 Background Research 1975
 - b. 17 f. 2 Prop List 1975
 - b. 17 f. 3-9 Scripts 1975-1976, undated
Broadway and London
 - b. 18 f. 1 Sketch and Slide undated
 - b. 18 f. 2 *Parade-Script* 1997
Reading starring Matthew Broderick and Carolee Carmello. Many songs have different lyrics in
this script from those later performed on Broadway
The Petrified Prince 1994, 1995
 - b. 18 f. 3 Program 1995
 - b. 18 f. 4 Script 1994
The Phantom of the Opera 1986-1992, undated
 - b. 33 f. 4 Libretto 1987
 - b. 41 f. 8 Photographs-London 1986
 - b. 18 f. 5 Production Information 1989-1992
 - b. 18 f. 6 Programs 1986-1988
London, New York, Toronto, Vienna
 - b. 18 f. 7 Press undated
 - b. 19 f. 1-2 Scores 1987, 1989
Scripts 1986-1989, undated
 - b. 19 f. 3-6 London 1986
 - b. 20 f. 1-3 New York 1987, 1989, undated
 - b. 20 f. 4 Japanese Translation 1988
 - b. 18 f. 8 Sets undated
Plots and photographs of models
 - b. 20 f. 5-6 Stage Management Monthly Binders 1989

Series I: Productions (cont.)

- Pipe Dream* undated
Opened on Broadway in 1955
- b. 21 f. 1 Photographs
 - b. 33 f. 5 Photograph
 - b. 21 f. 2 Script
 - b. 21 f. 3-6 *Play Memory-Scripts* 1983-1984
Folder 6 includes technical plots
 - b. 21 f. 7 *Ragtime Blues-Script* 1975
 - b. 22 f. 1 *The Recital-Scripts* undated
 - b. 22 f. 2 *Remember the Day-Program* 1935
Roza 1983-1987, undated
 - b. 22 f. 3 Costume Sketches undated
 - b. 22 f. 4-7 Scripts 1983-1986
 - b. 23 f. 1 Script 1987
She Loves Me 1963, 1964, undated
 - b. 28 f. 7 Activity Sheets undated
 - b. 23 f. 2 Cue Book undated
 - b. 23 f. 3 Programs 1963, 1964
Broadway and London
 - b. 23 f. 4 Prop Lists 1964, undated
 - b. 23 f. 5 Script undated
Show Boat 1993, 1994, undated
 - b. 23 f. 6 Photographs undated
 - b. 34 Poster undated
 - b. 23 f. 7 Production Information 1993, undated
 - b. 23 f. 8 Programs 1994
 - b. 23 f. 9 Script 1994 June 26
 - b. 24 f. 1 *Side by Side by Sondheim-Script and Program* 1977, 1978
 - b. 24 f. 2 *Silverlake-Script and Program* 1979 September 18, 1980
 - b. 24 f. 3 *Some of My Best Friends-Program* 1977
Sweeney Todd 1979-1999, undated
 - b. 24 f. 4 Note from Joshua Logan 1979 April 5
 - b. 41 f. 9 Photograph 1979
 - b. 24 f. 5 Press 1979, 1999
 - b. 24 f. 6 Program 1980
London Production
 - b. 24 f. 7-10 Scripts 1980, undated
Broadway and London
 - b. 25 f. 1 *Take Her, She's Mine-Script and Plot* 1961
Tenderloin 1960, undated
 - b. 33 f. 6 Costume and Stage Plots 1960
 - b. 25 f. 4 Cue Book undated

Series I: Productions (cont.)

Tenderloin (cont.)

- b. 25 f. 2 Production Information undated
- b. 25 f. 3 Program 1960 October 17
- b. 25 f. 5-6 Scripts 1960 December 17
- b. 26 f. 1 *They're Playing Our Song-Program* undated
Mexican production
- b. 26 f. 3 *La Traviata* undated
- b. 26 f. 2 *The Visit-Script and Program* undated
West Side Story 1956-1980, undated
- b. 26 f. 4 Award 1979-1980
Tony Award Nomination for Best Revival
- b. 26 f. 5 Cue Book undated
- b. 26 f. 6 Lighting Plots undated
- b. 26 f. 7 Notes undated
- b. 26 f. 8 Photographs undated
- b. 26 f. 9 Programs 1957-1994
- b. 27 f. 1-2 Scripts 1956-1958, 1985
- b. 27 f. 3 Set Models 1957

Whistle Down the Wind 1995-1996, undated

- b. 27 f. 4 Program 1996
- b. 27 f. 5-7 Scripts 1995-1996, undated
- b. 28 f. 1 *Willie Stark-Program* 1981 April
Zorba 1968, undated
- b. 28 f. 2 Activity Sheets undated
- b. 28 f. 3 Investors undated
- b. 28 f. 4 Script and Clipping 1968 December 12
National Company

Various/Unidentified Productions

- b. 28 f. 8 Notes undated
 - o. 1 Opening Night Card undated
- b. 29 f. 6 Photographs undated
 - b. 40 Posters undated
- b. 28 f. 9-10 Programs 1930s-1990s
- b. 29 f. 1-2 Programs 1930s-1990s

Series II: Personal Files 1887-1997

- b. 29 f. 3 Address Books undated
- b. 29 f. 4-5 Appointment Books 1960-1967
- b. 30 f. 1-2 Appointment Books 1968-1970

Awards

- b. 30 f. 3 Actors' Fund of America, Life Membership Certificate 1951 December 27
- b. 30 f. 4 Stage Managers' Association, Del Hughes Award for Lifetime Achievement
1990 March 29

Biographies and Interviews

Series II: Personal Files (cont.)
Biographies and Interviews (cont.)

- b. 30 f. 5 Mitchell, Ruth 1957, undated
 - b. 30 f. 6 Harold Prince, Michael Bennet and Stephen Sondheim 1970-1985
 - b. 31 f. 1 Childhood School Project undated
 - b. 33 f. 7 Childhood Scrapbook-Programs, Photographs and Clippings Relating to New York Theatre 1930s
 - b. 31 f. 2 Correspondence 1968-1989
 - b. 31 f. 3 Lindsay, John V 1976-1980
Correspondence from Mayor Lindsay, clippings, campaign song sheet music and record
 - b. 31 f. 4 Miscellaneous undated
Artwork, brochures, etc.
- Photographs
- b. 31 f. 5 Family 1887-1950s
 - b. 31 f. 6 Headshots and Portraits of Mitchell and Others 1940s-1990s
 - b. 33 f. 8 Juvenile Theatrical Productions undated
 - b. 31 f. 7 Klotz, Florence 1982, undated
Mitchell's partner
 - b. 31 f. 8 Parties and Events (Professional) 1950s-1990s
 - b. 33 f. 9 Parties and Events undated
 - b. 32 f. 5 Publicity Photograph 1957
 - b. 32 f. 1 Vacations, Houses, Pets, Friends 1940s-1970s
 - b. 39 f. 1-2 Vacations, Houses, Pets, Friends-Slides undated
 - b. 32 f. 2 Taylor, Elizabeth 1987, 1997
Programs, Publicity on Taylor and her perfumes
 - b. 32 f. 3 Theatre Industry 1957-1988
Includes information on Actors' Equity Association
 - b. 32 f. 4 Wills 1982