



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Victor Samrock professional files

1929-1986

*T-Mss 2002-008

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2014

Summary

Creator: Samrock, Victor

Title: Victor Samrock professional files

Date: 1929-1986

Size: 8.9 linear feet (16 boxes, 13 volumes)

Source: Donated by Victor Samrock in 1974 and 2002.

Abstract: Victor Samrock (1907-1995) was an American theatrical business manager, active in New York theatre from the mid-1930s to the mid-1980s. From 1938 to 1960 he was the general manager of the Playwrights' Company. The Victor Samrock professional files contain business files pertaining to productions managed by Samrock, the records of the Playwrights' Company, and a small amount of personal correspondence.

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, 2014

Related Materials:

Playwrights' Company records, 1938-1960. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Playwrights' Company records, 1938-1961. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Creator History

Victor Samrock was born in 1907 in Brooklyn, New York. He attended City College, graduating in 1929. Samrock's fifty year career as a theatrical business manager included more than 150 plays and musicals including *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1938), *Key Largo* (1939), *There Shall Be No Night* (1940), *Lost in the Stars* (1949), *Tea and Sympathy* (1953), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *The Pleasure of His Company* (1958), *The Gazebo* (1958), *Mary, Mary* (1961), *The Chinese Prime Minister* (1964), *Poor Richard* (1964), *Half a Sixpence* (1965), *The Homecoming* (1967), *Absurd Person Singular* (1974), *Golda* (1978), *Horowitz and Mrs. Washington* (1980), and *K2* (1983).

Samrock was the General Manager of the Playwrights' Company from its inception in 1938 to its dissolution in 1960. The Playwrights' Company was founded by five prominent playwrights, Maxwell Anderson, S.N. Behrman, Sidney Howard, Elmer Rice, and Robert E. Sherwood, who wanted to have more artistic control over the productions of their plays. As the Playwrights Company grew, other plays Samrock produced or managed all 72 productions of the Playwrights' Company.

Victor Samrock died on September 30, 1995 in New York, New York.

Scope and Content Note

The Victor Samrock professional files document the career of American theatrical manager Victor Samrock with Managerial Files and Playwrights' Company Records. Managerial files, arranged alphabetically by show title, contain contracts and agreements with actors, directors, authors, other creative team members, crew members, and theatres; clippings; and business correspondence relating to theatrical productions Samrock managed. The managerial files chronicle every aspect of financial production with budgets, lists of expenses, royalty statements, and investor reports. They occasionally include other production materials, such as programs and photographs from *The Birthday Party*; a stage manager's script for *Cyrano*; a stage manager's script and a program for *The Homecoming*; and photographs, a sound plot, a script, and program from *Waters of the Moon*. Box office receipts from shows produced by the Playwrights' Company may be found in the Playwrights Company Records. The Playwrights' Company Records document the founding, running, and dissolution of The Playwrights' Company from 1938 to 1963 with a series of twelve volumes and other loose documents. These volumes and documents consist of By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, Board of Directors meeting minutes, lists of stockholders, stock certificates, box office receipts from Playwrights' Company productions, financial statements, and a general ledger.

This collection contains one folder of notes, letters, and cards received by Samrock from friends and colleagues including Robert Anderson, Barbara Bel Geddes, Hume Cronyn, Howard Dietz, Alfred Drake, Lillian Hellman, Garson Kanin, Lynn Fontanne, Archibald MacLeish, Jessica Tandy, and Eli Wallach. The majority of Samrock's correspondence is incoming, but there are a few outgoing letters and a telegram. There is also a document certifying Samrock's 1929 naval service.

Arrangement: The Victor Samrock professional files are divided into the following groups: Managerial Files, Playwrights' Company Records, and Correspondence and Other Personal Documents

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Business records
Clippings (information artifacts)
Financial records
Ledgers
Photographs
Programs (documents)
Scrapbooks

Subjects

Theater -- Finance
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Theater -- Production and direction
Theater -- United States -- History -- 20th century

Occupations

Theatrical managers
Theatrical producers and directors

Names

Playwrights' Company

Container List

- Managerial Files 1940-1980
- b. 1 f. 1-2 *Alfie* 1963-1964
Beekman Place
 - b. 1 f. 3-4 1964
 - b. 2 f. 1 1964
The Best Man 1960-1963
 - b. 2 f. 2 *The Birthday Party* 1967
 - b. 2 f. 3 *Blood, Sweat, and Stanley Poole* 1961
A Case of Libel
 - b. 2 f. 4-5 1963-1964
 - b. 3 f. 1-2 1963-1964
The Chinese Prime Minister
 - b. 3 f. 3-4 1961
 - b. 4 f. 1 1961
 - b. 4 f. 2 *A Clearing in the Woods* 1956
 - b. 4 f. 3 *Cyrano* 1973
 - b. 4 f. 4-5 *Dames at Sea* 1969
 - b. 4 f. 6 *Duel of the Angels* 1956-1960
Alternate title *Pour Lucrece*.
 - b. 5 f. 1 *The Far Country* 1968-1969
 - b. 5 f. 2-3 *Five Finger Exercise* 1969-1966
 - b. 5 f. 4 *Futz!* 1968
 - b. 5 f. 5-6 *The Gazebo* 1957-1964
 - b. 6 f. 1-2 *Generation* 1965-1967
 - b. 6 f. 3 *Hair!* 1968-1969
Half a Sixpence
 - b. 6 f. 4 1964-1967
 - b. 7 f. 1 1964-1967
 - b. 7 f. 2 *The Homecoming* 1966
 - b. 7 f. 3 *Journey to Jerusalem* 1940
 - b. 7 f. 4 *The Last Analysis* 1965
 - b. 7 f. 5 *Look After Lulu* 1958
 - b. 7 f. 6 *Madly in Love* 1963-1964
1960-1969
1960-1969
Mary, Mary
 - b. 7 f. 7-8 1960-1966
 - b. 8 f. 1-4 1962-1969
 - b. 9 f. 1 *The Milky Way* 1961
 - b. 9 f. 2-3 *Mrs. Dally* 1965

Managerial Files (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 4 *Oh, Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad* 1961-1968
- b. 9 f. 5 *The Physicists* 1946-1965
- b. 10 f. 1-2 *The Pleasure of His Company* 1958-1959
- b. 10 f. 3-4 *Poor Richard* 1964-1966
Pour Lucrece
See *Duel of Angels*
- b. 11 f. 1-5 *The Private Ear/ The Public Eye* 1964-1967
- b. 12 f. 1-4 *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground* 1963-1966
- b. 13 f. 1-2 *Staircase* 1967-1968
- b. 13 f. 3 *Swanlee* 1960-1966
- b. 13 f. 4 *Too Late the Phalarope* 1956
- b. 13 f. 5 *Under the Yum Yum Tree* 1960-1966
- b. 14 f. 1 *Upper Depths* 1964-1965
- b. 14 f. 2 *Venus Is* 1965-1966
- b. 14 f. 3-4 *Waters of the Moon* 1962-1979
- b. 14 f. 5 *The Wayward Stork* 1965-1966
- b. 14 f. 6 *The Winner* 1965
- b. 15 f. 1 Other Productions 1962-1980

Playwrights Company Records 1938-1963

Files

- b. 15 f. 2-5 1938-1959
- b. 16 f. 1-6 1956-1963

Volumes

- v. 1 1938
- v. 2 1938-1940
- v. 3 1940-1942
- v. 4 1942-1943
- v. 5 1945-1948
- v. 6 1948-1950
- v. 7 1950-1952
- v. 8 1952-1954
- v. 9 1954-1955
- v. 10 1955-1956
- v. 11 1956
- v. 12 1958-1961
- v. 13 General Ledger 1939
- b. 16 f. 7 Correspondence and Other Personal Documents 1929-1986