



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Gustav Blum papers**

1912-1988 [bulk 1915-1953]

\*T-Mss 1996-047

## Summary

**Creator:** Blum, Gustav

**Title:** Gustav Blum papers

**Date:** 1912-1988 [bulk 1915-1953]

**Abstract:** Gustav Blum (d. 1963) was an American theater director, producer, actor, and teacher. In 1916, he founded the East-West Players, a group that performed one-act plays, including English translations of Yiddish plays. The East-West Players won the Belasco Cup at the first Little Theater Tournament in 1923. Blum also produced and staged Broadway plays and worked as a drama teacher in high schools from 1909 until his retirement in 1958. The Gustav Blum papers (1912-1988, bulk 1915-1953) contain a scrapbook, contracts, scripts, photographs, clippings, correspondence, and other papers documenting Blum's career. The scrapbook dates from 1916 to 1923 and contains clippings and programs of the East-West Players. There are scripts for four plays that Blum produced: *The Shame Woman* (1923), *Gertie* (1926), *My Son* (1924), and *Walk Hard* (1946). The script for *Walk Hard* is a heavily annotated prompt copy; the other scripts have minimal or no annotation. There are also three scripts written or co-written by Blum: *Against the Current*, *Eden*, and *A Sleepless Night*. Contracts date from 1927 to 1946. The collection includes a statement of receipts and disbursements for *Walk Hard* and an estimated budget for *Laughter in the Courtyard*. Photographs consist of images of Blum, an unidentified production photograph, and signed photographs of Bertha Kalich and David Belasco. The collection also contains biographical information, clippings, and copyright records related to Blum's career, dating from 1912 to 1988.

**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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**Language of the Material:** English

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Contracts  
Correspondence  
Photographic prints  
Scrapbooks  
Scripts

### **Subjects**

Little theater movement  
Theater, Yiddish  
Theatre -- New York (State) -- New York  
Theatrical producers and directors

### **Names**

Belasco, David, 1853-1931  
Blum, Gustav  
Bussiere, Tadema  
Hill, Abram, 1910-1986  
Kalich, Bertha, 1874-1939  
Stanley, Martha, 1879-  
Vollmer, Lula  
East-West Players (New York, N.Y.)  
White Studio (New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

### Papers and Photographs

- b. 1 f. 1 Amard, Inc. and San Carlo Grand Opera Co., Inc. contracts 1928
- b. 1 f. 2 Bertha Kalich autograph portrait photograph circa 1921
- b. 1 f. 3 Clippings 1985, 1988, undated
- b. 1 f. 4 Copyright registration cards 1912-1919
- b. 1 f. 5 David Belasco autograph portrait photograph 1915
- b. 1 f. 6 East-West Players scrapbook 1916-1923
- b. 1 f. 7 *Gertie contract* 1927
- b. 1 f. 8 Gustav Blum biographical information 1930, 1944, undated
- b. 1 f. 9 Gustav Blum portrait photographs circa 1930s-1940s
- b. 1 f. 10 *Her First Affaire rights correspondence* 1931
- b. 1 f. 11 *Laughter in the Courtyard estimated budget* undated
- b. 1 f. 12 Production photograph for unidentified show taken by White Studio undated
- b. 1 f. 13 Productions chronology circa 1936
- b. 1 f. 14 *Roger VI contract* 1946
- b. 1 f. 15 *Oktobertag contract* 1928
- b. 1 f. 16 *That Ferguson Family contracts* 1928
- b. 1 f. 17 *Walk Hard condensed statement of receipts and disbursements* 1946
- b. 1 f. 18 *Walk Hard contracts* 1946

### Scripts

- b. 1 f. 19 *Against the Current script by Gustav Blum and L. Hess* undated
- b. 1 f. 20 *Eden script by Gustav Blum* circa 1917
- b. 2 f. 1 *Gertie script by Tadema Bussiere* 1926
- b. 2 f. 2-3 *My Son script by Martha Stanley* 1924  
2 copies
- b. 2 f. 4 *The Shame Woman script by Lulu Vollmer* 1923
- b. 2 f. 5 *A Sleepless Night script by Jack Larrio and Gustav Blum* 1919
- b. 2 f. 6 *Walk Hard script by Abram Hill* 1946  
Extensive manuscript annotations.