



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Erik Rhodes papers**

1923-1979 [bulk 1950-1960s]

\*T-Mss 2014-147

Compiled by Joyce Joseph, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Rhodes, Erik, 1906-1990

**Title:** Erik Rhodes papers

**Date:** 1923-1979 [bulk 1950-1960s]

**Size:** 1.2 linear feet (3 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

**Source:** Unknown

**Abstract:** Erik Rhodes (1906-1990) was an American theatrical actor and singer. The Erik Rhodes papers date from 1923 to 1979 and contain programs, correspondence, clippings, school records, certificates, notes, and souvenirs.

**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 Joyce Joseph, 2015

## Creator History

Erik Rhodes (1906-1990) was an American theatrical actor and singer. Born Ernest Rhodes Sharpe, he attended Central High School in Oklahoma City, and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma. *A Most Immoral Lad* (1928) was his first performance on Broadway. He legally changed his name to Erik Rhodes during the 1932 production of *Gay Divorce*. From 1947 to 1964, Rhodes performed in many theatrical productions, such as *Can-Can* (1953), *Jamaica* (1957), and *A*

*Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962).

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Erik Rhodes papers date from 1923 to 1979 (bulk dates 1950-1960s) and contain programs, correspondence, clippings, school records, certificates, notes, and souvenirs. The bulk of the collection consists of programs from theatrical productions throughout Rhodes' career, including *Gay Divorce* (1932), *Can-Can* (1953), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1960), and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962). There is also a program from his high school senior production of *If I Were King* (1923). Other performance-related materials include congratulatory correspondence, clippings of reviews, an interview transcription, and a written chronology of plays through the 1960s. Additionally, there are student records such as a 1923 Central High School yearbook, and his transcript from the University of Oklahoma.

Materials in this collection were assigned catalog numbers before final processing, and those numbers are retained under notes in the container list.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by file type.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Certificates  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Correspondence  
notes  
Programs (documents)  
School records  
Souvenirs

### **Occupations**

Male actors

### **Subjects**

Musical theater  
Theater -- United States

## Container List

- o. 1 Certificates 1937-1956
- b. 1 f. 1-2 Clippings 1934-1976  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 341
- b. 1 f. 3-4 Correspondence 1926-1977
- b. 1 f. 5-6 Notes 1945-1960s  
Interview transcription and a chronology of plays through the 1960s.
- o. 1 Poster 1950s
- Programs
- b. 1 f. 7-8 1923-1979  
Folder 7 contains programs for *If I Were King* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 347. One program from this catalog sequence is in oversize folder 1.
- b. 1 f. 9 1933, 1972  
Contains program for *Gay Divorce*.
- b. 1 f. 10-11 1933-1962  
Folder 10 contains program for *Can-Can*.  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 343
- b. 2 f. 1-2 1942-1971  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 345
- b. 2 f. 3-4 1947-1979  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 344
- b. 2 f. 5-6 1950-1969  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 349
- b. 2 f. 7-8 1951-1976  
Folder 7 contains program for *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 348. One program from this catalog sequence is in oversize folder 1.
- b. 3 f. 1-2 1956-1974  
MWEZ + N.C. 25, 346
- b. 3 f. 3 School Records 1923, 1964  
Yearbook contains MWEZ + N.C. 25, 344 catalog number.
- b. 3 f. 4 Souvenirs 1930s-1940s