

Guide to of the Joseph Buloff Papers, 1925-1993

**\*T-Mss 1992-006**

**Billy Rose Theatre Division**

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts  
New York, New York**

*Contact Information*

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts  
Billy Rose Theatre Division  
40 Lincoln Center Plaza  
New York, New York 10023-7498  
Phone: 212/870-1639  
Fax: 212/870-1868  
Email: [theatrediv@nypl.org](mailto:theatrediv@nypl.org)  
Web address: <http://www.nypl.org/research/lpa/the/the.html>

Processed by: Liavon Yurevich  
Date Completed: February 2007

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Joseph Buloff Papers</b>
<b>Collection ID:</b>	<b>*T-Mss 1992-006</b>
<b>Creator:</b>	<b>Buloff, Joseph</b>
<b>Extent:</b>	<b>2.75 linear feet ( 6 boxes)</b>
<b>Repository:</b>	<b>Billy Rose Theatre Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts</b>

**Abstract:** Joseph Buloff was a stage actor. His collection consists of works by Yiddish and Russian writers, his adaptations of works in English, correspondence, photographs, reviews, publicity and notes.

## Administrative Information

### Access

Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice may be required.

### Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

### Preferred Citation

Joseph Buloff Papers, \*T-Mss 1992-006, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

### Source

The Joseph Buloff Papers were donated to the Billy Rose Theatre Division in 1992 by Mrs. Luba Kadison Buloff.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

## Biographical Note

Joseph Buloff was born in 1899. The careers of Buloff, leading actor of Vilnia Troupe, and his wife, Luba Kadison, leading actress and the daughter of the founder of the Vilnia Troupe in Poland, Leib Kadison, are among the most extensive in the history of Yiddish theater.

Actor Joseph Buloff left his native Eastern Europe in 1926 and came to the U.S. when he was invited to join Maurice Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theater, and by the mid 1930s he was performing in English as well. He appeared in over 225 Yiddish plays before 1936 when he made his Broadway debut. He created the character of Ali Hakim, the Persian peddler, in the original Broadway production of *Oklahoma* and directed *Mr. McThing* on Broadway. Buloff was particularly famous for his interpretation of Chekhov's *Di Mahashefah* (*The Witch*), which he even performed in Johannesburg in 1950. He made his film debut in 1940 in *Let's Make Music*.

Luba Kadison (December 13, 1906 - May 4, 2006) was born in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania (at that time part of the Russian empire). She toured with Vilnia Theatre Kovno, Bialystock and Grodno. The troupe eventually moved to Warsaw where Luba, as a young girl, was cast in boys' roles.

In 1949, Luba and Joseph obtained the Yiddish rights for Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and toured it to Buenos Aires, where there was a vibrant Yiddish-speaking community. The Peronist government banned money exchanges, and the Buloffs returned to New York having lost money on the venture. However, the New York Yiddish version was an artistic and financial success. George Gross, in the magazine *Commentary*, wrote that "the Yiddish play is really the original and the Broadway production was merely Miller's translation into English!" After the war, the New York Yiddish theater declined. Yiddish actors were either absorbed into American theater or retired. Luba, who felt limited by her accent, worked very little. When Joseph Buloff died in 1985, Luba donated his archive to the Harvard College library. She also worked on getting his book, *From the Old Marketplace*, published, and regretted that Joe did not see this happen during his lifetime. Her memoirs, *On Stage, Off Stage*, written in collaboration with Buloff, won the 1994 National Book Award.

## Scope and Content Note

The Joseph Buloff papers contain scripts, photographs, programs, flyers, reviews, contracts and notes. The scripts include many of the popular plays in which Buloff performed, as well as English adaptations of the Yiddish classics of Scholem Aleichem's *The Crabby Crawler*, *Eternal Life*, *Tevye and His Seven Daughters*; *God Wiil Provide*, *The Mad Batlan*, *Temptation* by I. Peretz, *Chains* by H. Levick, *The Singer of His Sorrow* by O. Dymov, *The Kibitzer* by J. Swerling. The scripts include a number of adapted and translated works from world literature, by authors such as Chekhov and Gogol. The collection includes manuscripts and drafts of Buloff's work, *Beggar in Paradise*, based on *Lame Fishke* by Mendele Mohker Sforim. There is also *My Conception of the Part of Linda in Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman"* by Luba Kadison and her *Autobiography*.

## Organization

The collection is organized into three series. They are:

- Series I: Writings, 1924-1984, undated
- Series II: Professional Papers, 1925-1993
- Series III: Oversized Material, 1967

## Series Descriptions

Series I: **Writings, 1924-1984, undated** 4 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This Series consists of drafts and notes for Buloff's book *Beggar in Paradise*, English adaptations and works of the Yiddish classics of Scholem Aleichem, Peretz, Levick, and Dymov; a number of adapted and translated from world literature, by authors such as Chekhov and Gogol.

Series II: **Professional papers, 1925-1993** 1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This Series includes correspondence, photographs, programs, publicity material and review articles. There is also *My Conception of the Part of Linda in Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman"* by Luba Kadison and her *Autobiography*.

Series III: **Oversized Material, 1967** 1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This Series includes one theatrical poster (in Yiddish)

Box	Fol	
		Series I: Writings, 1929-1984, undated
1		Buloff, Joseph
	1	<i>Beards</i> , undated
		<i>Beggar in Paradise</i>
	2-4	Drafts, undated
	5	Work copy, undated
	6	Typed copy, 1976
2	1	<i>The Chekov Sketchbook</i> With Luba Kadison
	2	Drafts and notes
	3	<i>From the Old Market Place</i> , undated
	4	<i>The Golem</i> , undated Adapted from H.Leivich
	5	<i>On Stage, Off Stage</i> , undated With Luba Kadison and Irving Genn
		<i>Rainbow</i>
	6	Drafts, undated
	7	Typed copy, undated
3	1	<i>Saturday After Midday</i> , undated Adapted from <i>One Sunday Afternoon</i> by A.Hagen. In Yiddish
	2	<i>Under the Bridge</i> , undated Adapted from <i>A View From the Bridge</i> . In Yiddish.
	3	Dymow, Osip. <i>The Singer of His Sorrow</i> , 1984
	4	Gogol, Nikolai. <i>The Inspector General</i> , 1960
	5	Gven, Irving. <i>Letter</i> , undated
	6	Levick, H. <i>Chains</i> , undated
	7	Mohker Sforim, Mendele. <i>Lame Fishke (Shtetel)</i> , undated
	8	Moll, Elick. <i>Seidman and Son</i> , 1963
	9	Nadir, M. <i>The Man Who Slept Through the End of the World</i> , undated Peretz, I.L.
	10	<i>God Will Provide</i> , undated
	11	<i>The Mad Batlan</i> , undated
	12	<i>The Messenger</i> , undated First draft
	13	<i>Temptation</i> , 1980s
	14	Pinski, David. <i>Temptation</i> , undated
4	1	<i>Readings From Classic Yiddish Literature</i> , undated
	2	Schnee, Thelma. <i>The Whole World Over</i> , 1947 Sholom Aleichem
	3	<i>The Crabby Crawler</i> , undated
	4	<i>Eternal Life</i> , undated
	5	<i>The Search</i> , undated
	6	<i>Teveye and His Seven Daughters</i> , undated Swerling, Jo. <i>The Kibitzer</i>

	7	First draft, 1929
	8	Typed copy, 1929
	9	Unidentified. <i>Shabtai Tsevi</i> , undated
		Series II: Professional Papers, 1925-1993
Box	Fol	Actors' Equity Association Card, 1930s
5	1	
	2	Contracts, 1976-1989
	3	Copyright, 1984-1986
	4	Correspondence, 1925-1991
		Kadison, Luba.
	5	Biography, undated
	6	<i>My Conception of the Part of Linda Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman</i> , undated
	7	Photographs, 1930-1973, undated
		Programs
	8	<i>The Brothers Askenazi</i> , 1966-1971
	9	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> , undated
	10	Dramatic readings, undated
	11	<i>The Kibitzer</i> , 1967
	12	<i>The Singer of His Sorrow</i> , 1961
	13	<i>Tevye and His Seven Daughters</i> , 1961
	14	<i>The Vagabond</i> , undated
	15	<i>Yousmke Musikant</i> , 1972-1973
	16	Publicity Material, 1929-1980
	17	Reviews, 1930-1993
	18	Sam Levenson Memorial Award, 1982
		Series III: Oversized Material, 1967
Box	Fol	Poster in Yiddish, 1967
6	1	