

Inventory of the Vincent J. Donehue - Designs and Plans from the Collection, 1950-1963

*T-VIM 1967-002

Billy Rose Theatre Division



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

The Billy Rose Theatre Division. New York Public Library.
40 Lincoln Center Plaza
New York, NY 10023-7498
(212) 870-1639

theatrediv@nypl.org

<http://nypl.org/research/lpa/the/the.html>

Processed by: Elisabeth Elkind
Date Completed: November 2000
Encoded by: Mary Ellen Rogan

Encoding of the finding aid sponsored by grant funding from The Gladys Krieble Delmas
Foundation.

©2000 The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. All rights
reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: Vincent J. Donehue - Designs from the Collection, 1950-1963

Collection ID: *T-VIM 1967-002

Creator: Donehue, Vincent J., d. 1966

Extent: 4 boxes and 4 oversized folders

Repository: Billy Rose Theatre Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Abstract: Vincent J. Donehue was a director of stage, film and television. The collection contains set designs for plays and television programs.

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice required, stored off-site.

Preferred Citation: Vincent J. Donehue - Designs and Plans from the Collection, *T-VIM 1967-002, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Biographical Note

Director Vincent J. Donehue was born on September 22, 1915 in Whitehall, New York to Julian B. Donehue and Helen E. Vincent. His father was director of redevelopment in Albany, New York. Vincent Donehue was educated at Christian Brothers Academy and the State University of New York and studied for the stage with Tamara Daykarhanova and with Fanny Bradshaw at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon, England. He made his radio debut in 1937 and in the years prior to World War II was heard on over 1500 radio shows. He also acted on Broadway during this time appearing as Cinna, the poet in Orson Welles' production of *Julius Caesar*, and in Katharine Cornell's *Herod and Marianne*, Guthrie McClintic's *Christmas Eve*, the Theatre Guild's *Jeremiah*, by Stefan Zweig, John Golden's *The Old Foolishness* by Paul Vincent Carroll, and *My Fair Ladies* with Betty Furness and Celeste Holm.

Donehue enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1941 and served through 1945 attaining the rank of Major. While overseas he co-authored, produced and directed a play San Francisco which toured France and Germany. After the war he and playwright Horton Foote established Productions, Inc., an acting school and professional theater repertory company in Washington D.C., sharing the responsibilities of producer, director and manager together. This repertory company staged productions ranging from J. M. Synge's *Deidre of the Spirits* to William Saroyan's *My Heart's in the Highlands*.

In 1950 Donehue signed as a director for NBC-TV's *Chevrolet Theatre* with Fred Coe, who had been his summer stock roommate back in 1935. Subsequently Donehue was producer-director for the *Gabby Hayes Show* dramas, an alternate director for *Robert Montgomery Presents* (1952), director of *Philco-Goodyear Television Playhouse* (1952-1956), and *Producer's Showcase* (1957-1958). He staged many teleplays during TV's "golden age" including Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Robert E. Sherwood's *Reunion in Vienna*, Clare Booth Luce's *The Women*, Paddy Chayefsky's *The Big Deal*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Rudolf Besier's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* with Katharine Cornell, and the Mary Martin production of J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1960), one of the first television productions filmed on magnetic tape.

Donehue's career as a director on Broadway began with his staging of Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful* with Lillian Gish in 1953. This was followed by Foote's *Traveling Lady* (1954), Tennessee William's *Twenty-Seven Wagons Full of Cotton* (1955), Dore Schary's *Sunrise at Campobello* (1958), Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* (1959), Morris L. West's *Daughter of Silence* (1961), S. N. Behrman's *Lord Pengo* (1962), Arthur Schwartz's *Jennie* (1963), and Jack Weinstock and Willie Gilbert's *Catch Me If You Can* (1965). He also directed two films: *Lonelyhearts* (1959) and *Sunrise at Campobello* (1960), both produced by Dore Schary.

Vincent Donehue received a Tony Award and a Film Daily Award for his direction of *Sunrise at Campobello* and a Director's Guild Award for his television direction of *Peter Pan*. He died of Hodgkins disease on January 17, 1966 in New York City. He was fifty years old.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of drawings of floor plans and scenery for the following theatrical productions: *Daughter of Silence*, *Jennie*, *Traveling Lady*, *The Trip To Bountiful* and *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*, set designs for the weekly *Gabby Hayes Show* on NBC, 1951-1952, and designs for many of the other television shows directed by Donehue, mostly on NBC in the 1950s, including productions for *Goodyear Television Playhouse*, *Philco Television Playhouse*, *Playwrights 56*, *Producers' Showcase* and the *Robert Montgomery Johnson Wax Theatre*. Particularly detailed are the drawings for the teleplays *The Women*, *A Child Is Waiting* and *Letter to Edith*. Designers represented include George Jenkins, Tom Jewett, Otis Riggs, Oliver Smith, Sointu Syrjala and Rouben Ter-Arutunian.

Container Listing

- b. 1 f. 1 *Daughter of silence* / Morris L. West
1 folder
Set designs by Oliver Smith are for the play *Daughter of Silence* directed by Vincent J. Donehue.
- b. 1 f. 2 *Traveling lady* / Horton Foote
1 folder
Set designs by Ben Edwards are for the play *Traveling Lady* directed by Vincent J. Donehue.
- b. 1 f. 3 *The trip to Bountiful* / Horton Foote
1 folder
Set designs by Otis Riggs are for play *The Trip to Bountiful* directed by Vincent J. Donehue.
- b. 1 f. 4 *27 wagons full of cotton* / Tennessee Williams
1 folder
Set designs are for the play *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* directed by Vincent J. Donehue, designer unknown.
- b. 2 f. 1-5 *Gabby Hayes show* (Television program), October 1, 1950-February 25, 1951
5 folders
Set designs for the *Gabby Hayes Show* directed by Vincent J. Donehue are signed by designer Senie.
- b. 3 f. 1-9 *Gabby Hayes show* (Television program), March 4 - December 23, 1951
9 folders
Set designs for the *Gabby Hayes Show* directed by Vincent J. Donehue are signed by designer Senie.
- b. 4 f. 1 *A child is waiting* / Abby Mann, March 11, 1957
1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized, for the television production of *A Child is Waiting* directed by Vincent J. Donehue on *Studio One* were designed by Larry Eggleton.

- b. 4 f. 2 *The immigrant* (Television program) / Edward DeBlasio
1 folder
Set design drawings, oversized, for the television production of *The Immigrant* directed by Vincent J. Donehue on the CBS program *The Defenders* [n.d.] were designed by Edgar Lansbury.
- b. 4 f. 3 *Letter to Edith* (Television program) / Faith Baldwin, May 29, 1950
1 folder
Set design drawings, oversized, designed by Gundlach, and lighting and property plots are for the television production of *Letter to Edith* directed by Vincent J. Donehue on NBC's Chevrolet program.
- b. 4 f. 4 *The male animal* (Television program) / Don M. Mankiewicz
1 folder
Set design drawing, oversized, is for CBS's *Playhouse 90* production of *The Male Animal* directed by Vincent J. Donehue, with art direction by Walter Herndon.
- b. 4 f. 5 *Reunion in Vienna* (Television program), April 4, 1955
1 folder
Set design drawing, oversized, for NBC's *Producers' Showcase* production of *Reunion in Vienna* directed by Vincent J. Donehue was designed by Rouben Ter-Arutunian.
- b. 4 f. 6 *Skin of our teeth* (Television program), September 11, 1955
1 folder
Set design drawing, oversized, for NBC's *Producers' Showcase* production of *The Skin of our Teeth* directed by Vincent J. Donehue was designed by J. Russell.
- b. 4 f. 7 *Spring reunion* (Television program)
1 folder
Set design drawing, oversized, for a television production of *Spring Reunion* directed by Vincent J. Donehue on NBC was designed by Otis Riggs.
- b. 4 f. 8 *Statute of limitations* / A. J. Russell
1 folder
Set design drawing, oversized, for a television production of *Statute of Limitations* directed by Vincent J. Donehue was designed by Tamby.
- b. 4 f. 9 *The women* (Television program), February 7, 1955
1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized, for the television production of *The Women* on NBC's *Producer's Showcase* directed by Vincent J. Donehue were designed by Paul Barnes.

b. 4 f. 10 *Goodyear television playhouse* (Television program), June 22, 1952 - August 17, 1953

1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized, for productions of NBC's *Goodyear show*, directed by Vincent J. Donehue, were designed by Tom Jewett and Otis Riggs.

b. 4 f. 11 *Philco television playhouse* (Television program), September 21, 1952 - June 21, 1952

1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized, for productions of NBC's *Philco show*, directed by Vincent J. Donehue, were designed by Tom Jewett, Otis Riggs and Russell.

b. 4 f. 12 *Playwrights '56* (Television program), 1956

1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized, for *Playwrights 56* productions of *The Day the Trains Stopped Running* [January 3, 1956], *Flight* [February 28, 1956] and *Honor* [June 19, 1956], all directed by Vincent J. Donehue, were designed by Otis Riggs, Scott, and R. Wightman, respectively.

b. 4 f. 13 *United States Steel hour* (Television program), 1955

1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized, for ABC's U.S. Steel productions of *Roads to Home* [April 26, 1955] and *The Thief* [January 4, 1955], directed by Vincent J. Donehue. Drawings for *The Thief* were by Haman.

b. 4 f. 14 Set designs for unidentified productions

1 folder

Set design drawings, oversized and unsigned, for unidentified productions directed by Vincent J. Donehue.

Jennie (Musical) / Arthur Schwartz, 1963

1 folder

Set design drawings, very oversized, are for the play *Jennie* [1963] directed by Vincent J. Donehue and designed by George Jenkins.

Robert Montgomery Johnson Wax Theatre (Television program), February 4 - June 9, 1952

1 folder

Set design drawings, very oversized, for NBC's *Robert Montgomery*

Johnson Wax Theatre, directed by Vincent J. Donehue, were drawn by Sointu Syrjala.

Music with Mary Martin, February 19 - March 6, 1959

1 folder

Set design drawings, very oversized, for the NBC television production of *Music with Mary Martin*, directed by Vincent J. Donehue, were designed by George Jenkins.

Philco television playhouse (Television program), July 13, 1952 - July 27, 1954

1 folder

Set design drawings, very oversized, for NBC's *Philco show*, directed by Vincent J. Donehue, were drawn by Otis Riggs.

Separated Materials

Vincent J. Donehue Papers - *T-Mss 1967-002