

The New York Public Library
The Billy Rose Theatre Division

Motley Costume Designs
1936-1965
*T-VIM 2012-003

Summary

- Main entry:** Wilmot, Elizabeth
- Title:** Motley costume designs, 1936-1965
- Size:** 3.5 linear feet (2 boxes)
- Abstract:** Original color designs on paper, tracing paper, or board, possibly created by Elizabeth Montgomery Wilmot, one of the three women who designed under the pseudonym Motley. Designs in this collection date from 1936 to 1965, most of them made for Broadway productions.
- Preferred citation:** Motley costume designs, The Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Biographical note

Motley is the corporate name of sisters Margaret Harris (1904-2000) and Sophie Harris (1900-1966), and Elizabeth Montgomery Wilmot (1902-1993), who designed sets and costumes for theatre, opera, ballet and motion pictures from 1932 to 1976 in England and the United States. Their first designs, for London productions by John Gielgud and Michel Saint-Denis, were very successful, and in 1936 Saint-Denis founded The London Theatre Studio (1936–1939), a radical new theatre school which incorporated courses in theatre design taught by the Motleys. In 1940, Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery went to New York and remained there until the end of World War II, designing for numerous productions on Broadway. In 1946, Margaret Harris returned to London, while Elizabeth stayed, married the writer and journalist Patrick Wilmot (1904-1960), and continued to design for plays, musicals, operas, and ballets in New York until 1966.

Scope and content note

Original color designs on paper, tracing paper, or board, possibly created by Elizabeth Montgomery Wilmot, one of the three women who designed under the pseudonym Motley. Includes drawings for *Miss Liberty* (1949); *Paint Your Wagon* (1951); *The Tempest* (1945); and *Tovarich* (1963), as well as designs for Laurence Olivier (Henry II) in *Becket* (1961); Richard Burton (Philip the Bastard) in *King John* (1953); and Michael Redgrave (Warbeck) in *The Witch of Edmonton* (1936). Most designs in this collection are for Broadway productions. Several designs are mounted on board, and many include swatches, or notes with costume details on design recto, or stapled on verso.

Container list

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	<i>Baker Street</i> , 1964
	2	<i>Becket</i> , 1960 3 drawings of costumes for Laurence Olivier (Henry II). Gift of Mrs. Donald Holden.
	3	<i>A Bell for Adano</i> , 1944
	4-5	<i>Can-Can</i> , 1953 Folder 4: 3 drawings, gift of Ralph and Judy Linn. Folder 4: 2 drawings, gift of Erik Rhodes.
2	1	<i>King John</i> , 1953 1 drawing of costume for Richard Burton (Philip the Bastard).
1	6	<i>Macbeth</i> , 1961
	7	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , 1967
2	2	<i>Miss Liberty</i> , 1949 Gift of Ralph and Judy Linn.
1	8	<i>Paint your Wagon</i> , 1951 Gift of Ralph and Judy Linn.
	9-10	<i>The Tempest</i> , 1945
	11	<i>The Three Sisters</i> , 1942
2	3-4	<i>Tovarich</i> , 1963 Gift of Ralph and Judy Linn.
	5	<i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> , 1936 1 drawing of costume for Michael Redgrave (Warbeck).
	6	<i>The Young and the Beautiful</i> , 1955 Gift of Ralph and Judy Linn.
	7	Unidentified Shakespearean designs, undated Label on original folder: Stratford-on-Avon.