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Guide to the

Ruth Mitchell papers

1887-1999 (bulk 1946-1999)

*T-Mss 2001-023

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, January 2012

Summary

Creator: Mitchell, Ruth, 1919-2000

Title: Ruth Mitchell papers, 1887-1999 (bulk 1946-1999)

Size: 15.19 linear feet (38 boxes)

Source: Donated by Florence Klotz, 2001

Abstract: Ruth Mitchell was a stage manager, director, producer and the assistant to the acclaimed director and producer Harold Prince, working on Broadway from the late 1940s through the late 1990s. This collection consists mainly of production files, most notably scripts with extensive technical cues, for the 50 odd shows that Mitchell stage managed, assistant directed or produced. Some personal files are also included.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Related collections

Harold Prince papers. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library

Creator history

Ruth Mitchell was a stage manager, director, producer and the assistant to the acclaimed director and producer Harold Prince, working on Broadway from the late 1940s through the late 1990s. Born Ruth Kornfeld in Newark, New Jersey in 1919, Mitchell grew up attending Broadway shows and began her career in the theatre as a performer. She appeared in the ensemble of the musicals *The Time, the Place and the Girl* (1942) and *Follow the Girls* (1944). On her third show, *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), though she appeared on stage, she found her true place backstage, as the assistant to the director, Joshua Logan. She went on to stage manage two plays directed by Logan *Happy Birthday* (1946) and *Mister Roberts* (1948). She also was stage manager on three important musicals, *The King and I* (1951), *Pipe Dream* (1955) and *Bells Are Ringing* (1956).

In 1957, Mitchell worked with Harold Prince for the first time when she stage managed *West Side Story*, which he and his partner Robert E. Griffith produced. After her next show, *Gypsy* (1959), Mitchell would work exclusively on Prince productions for the following 40 years until her retirement. During the 1960s she was the stage manager on such shows as *Fiorello* (1959), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *She Loves Me* (1963), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Cabaret* (1966) and *Zorba* (1968).

During the 1970s, Mitchell also took on assistant directing and producing, with such shows as *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *The Great God Brown* (1972), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Candide* (1974) and *Pacific Overtures* (1976). Mitchell was Prince's assistant for *On the Twentieth Century* (1978), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Play Memory* (1984), *End of the World* (1984), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1988), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1993) and *Show Boat* (1994). She was a producer on *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *A Doll's Life* (1982), *Grind* (1985) and *Roza* (1987). Mitchell was involved in the early stages of *Parade* (1999), but failing health prevented her from working on the Broadway production.

Mitchell's career was notable not only for being involved in many of the most acclaimed musicals of the second half of the twentieth century, but for her success, as one of the only women working in a male-dominated profession. Mitchell's partner, Florence Klotz, was a costume designer who worked on many shows with Mitchell. Ruth Mitchell died on November 3, 2000 in New York.

Scope and content note

This collection consists mainly of production files, most notably scripts with extensive technical cues, for the 50 odd shows that Mitchell stage managed, assistant directed or produced, the majority of which were directed and produced by Harold Prince. Some personal files are also included.

The bulk of this collection is production files, arranged alphabetically by title. For musicals, plays and operas Mitchell worked on from the 1940s through the 1990s, including such landmark musicals as *The King and I* (1951), *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Cabaret* (1966), *Company* (1970), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Evita* (1979) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1988). The most notable items in the production files series are Mitchell's scripts and cue books for these productions, many of which have stage directions, technical cues and notes regarding direction, which will be an increasingly valuable resource for researchers. Other production files include general items pertaining to the productions, such as photographs, programs, souvenir books, press coverage, background research, contact sheets, rehearsal schedules, sheet music, agreements, lists of investors and correspondence. In her frequent roles as stage manager, assistant director and assistant to the director, Mitchell kept many technical files, including stage manager's notes, costume designs, lighting plots, set designs and plots, prop lists and hair and costume bibles.

There is a small series of personal files, arranged alphabetically by subject, including personal material and professional activities not associated with particular productions. Personal Files consist of address books, appointment books, awards and biographies of Mitchell and frequent collaborators Harold Prince and Stephen Sondheim. There are also items from Mitchell's childhood and youth, such as school projects, poems and scrapbooks. Personal photographs include a family collection dating back to 1887. Later photos have casual snapshots of Mitchell as an adult with various friends and head-shots of Mitchell, her partner, Florence Klotz and other friends and colleagues. Also here are Mitchell's correspondence with former New York Mayor John V. Lindsay, and materials pertaining to his campaigns. Other items include general theatre industry files, which pertain mostly to the New York theatrical unions.

This collection has a substantial audio/visual component. There are over 100 items in a variety of formats such as VHS and Betamax videocassettes, audiocassettes, reel to reels and long-playing records. These are recordings of live performances, readings and demos of new works, documentaries, award shows and press reel footage. Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access. Inquiries regarding audio materials in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at rha@nypl.org.

Arrangement

The Ruth Mitchell papers are organized into the following series:

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999

Series II: Personal Files, 1887-1997

Key terms

Subjects

Musical theater -- United States -- 20th century
Theater -- Production and direction -- United States -- 20th century
Theater -- Stage management -- United States -- 20th century

Occupations

Theatrical producers and directors -- United States -- 20th Century
Theatrical stage managers -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Bennet, Michael
Bock, Jerry
Ebb, Fred
Grossman, Larry
Harnick, Sheldon
Kander, John
Klotz, Florence
Lloyd Webber, Andrew, 1948-
Logan, Joshua
Mitchell, Ruth, 1919-2000
Prince, Harold, 1928-
Sondheim, Stephen

Special formats

Photographs
Programs
Scrapbooks
Scripts
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Container list

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999

- b.33 f.1 *Annie Get Your Gun*-Sheet Music Cover, undated
- b.1 f.1 *Baker Street*-Master Script, 1965 April
- b.1 f.2 *Bye Bye Broadway*-Script, undated (By Terrence McNally)
- b.1 f.3 *Boris Gudonov*-Program and Libretto, 1980 (Lyric Opera of Chicago)
Cabaret, 1966-1988, undated
- b.1 f.4 Agreements, 1966
- b.1 f.5 Costume, Hair and Prop Photographs, undated
- b.1 f.6 Production Information, 1967
Includes correspondence, clippings, cast lists and schedules.
- b.35 Scrapbook-Broadway, 1967
- b.38 Scrapbook-London, 1966-1969
Also includes material on Broadway production as well as *It's a Bird, It's a Plane...It's Superman* and *Zorba*
- b.2 f.1-4 Scripts, with Blocking Cues, 1966, 1988, undated
- b.9 f.6 Script with Cues
- b.10 f.1 Programs, 1967, 1970 (Tony Awards and Vienna production)
- b.2 f.5 *California Suite*-Script, 1977 November
- b.10 f.2 *A Call on Kuprin*-Program, 1961
Candide, 1973-1974, 1998
- b.10 f.3 Photographs, 1973
- b.3 f.6 Production Information, 1974
- b.3 f.5 Programs, 1973, 1998
- b.3 f.1-4 Scripts, 1974 (Includes scripts with and without cues)
Company, 1970, 1993, undated
- b.4 f.1 Investor List, undated
- b.4 f.2 Program, 1993 (The Original Cast in Concert)
- b.36 f.1 Scrapbook, 1970
- b.4 f.3-5 Scripts, with Technical Cues, 1970, undated
Folder 3 includes photograph of set model, folder 5 includes set design
- b.33 f.2 Sheet Music, "Marry Me a Little", undated
- b.32 f.6 Slides, undated
A Doll's Life, 1981-1983, undated
- b.37 Bound Score, 1983
- b.4 f.6 Costume Bible, undated
- b.4 f.7 Script with Costume Sketches, 1982
- b.5 f.1-3 Scripts, 1981, 1982
Scripts include various production files such as schedules and contact sheets
The End of the World, 1984
- b.5 f.4 Script with Contact Sheets and Photographs of Set
- b.6 f.1-3 Scripts
- b.6 f.4 Contact Sheets
Evita, 1978-1987

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999 (cont.)

Evita, 1978-1987 (cont.)

- b.6 f.5-6 Production Information and Stage Manager's Notes
 - b.7 f.1-2 Programs
 - b.7 f.3 Publicity Materials
 - b.7 f.4-6 Scripts
 - Most scripts include technical cues and production/stage management notes. Box 9 folders 3 and 4 are Spanish translations.
 - b.8 f.1-5 Scripts
 - b.9 f.1-4 Scripts
 - b.9 f.5 Souvenir Book, *The Legend of Eva Peron*
 - b.10 f.4 *La Fanciulla del West*-Program, 1978
- Fiddler on the Roof*, 1962-1987
- b.28 f.5 Activity Sheets, 1966
 - b.10 f.5 Photographs, undated
 - One photograph of the Broadway opening night party and an extensive selection of color and black and white production shots from the London production, starring Topol.
 - b.10 f.6 Programs, 1972, 1981, undated (Various productions)
 - b.33 f.3 Program-London, 1987
 - b.10 f.7 Prop and Song Lists, 1964
 - b.10 f.8-11 Scripts with Cues, 1962, 1964, undated
 - Box 10, Folder 8 contains 90 minute "Tab Version"
 - b.11 f.1-2 Scripts with Cues, 1964, undated
- Fiorello*, 1959-1961, undated
- b.11 f.3 Agreements , 1960
 - b.11 f.4 Cue Book, undated
 - b.11 f.5 Plots and Prop Lists, undated
 - b.11 f.6 Programs, 1959-1961
 - b.11 f.7 Scripts
- Follies*, 1970-1972, undated
- b.12 f.1 Agreements, Investor Lists, 1970
 - b.12 f.2 Background Research, 1970 November 6 (Ziegfeld Club Anniversary Ball program)
 - b.12 f.3 Costumes Sketches, undated
 - b.12 f.4 Photographs, undated
 - b.12 f.5 Press, 1972
 - b.12 f.6 Script, 1971 April 4
- A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 1962, undated
- b.12 f.7 Cue Book, undated
 - b.28 f.6 Focus Charts and Cue Sheets, 1962
 - b.12 f.8 Photographs and Press, undated (Broadway and London)
 - b.12 f.9 Programs, 1962 (Broadway and London)
 - b.12 f.10 Script, 1962 May 8

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999 (cont.)

- b.12 f.11-12 *Great God Brown*-Scripts, undated
Grind, 1985, undated
- b.12 f.13 Costumes Sketches, undated
- b.13 f.1-2 Scripts with Stage Manager's Notes and Production Information, 1983
- b.13 f.3 *Gypsy*-Script, undated
- b.13 f.4 *Haggar the Horrible*-Script with Blocking Cues, 1986 May 28 (This script is from a staged reading)
- b.13 f.5 *Happy Birthday*-Program and Script with Cues, undated
- b.13 f.6 *Harold and Maude*-Production Information and Costume Sketches, 1979
It's a Bird, It's a Plane...It's Superman, 1966
- b.14 f.1 Agreements
- b.14 f.2 Blocking Script
- b.36 f.2 Scrapbook
The King and I, undated
- b.14 f.3-5 Photographs
- b.14 f.6 Programs
Kiss of the Spiderwoman, 1990-1995
- b.14 f.7 Photographs of Sets, undated
- b.14 f.8 Programs, 1992-1995
Broadway, London, Tampa and SUNY Purchase
- b.14 f.9 Script, 1990
Rehearsal script from an early version on the show including many songs cut or replaced before the Broadway production
A Little Night Music, 1972-1977
- b.15 f.1 Photographs, 1973-1977
- b.15 f.2 Program, 1973
- b.15 f.9 Production Information, 1974
- b.15 f.3-6 Scripts, 1972-1977
Broadway, London and National Tour and one page from movie script
- b.15 f.7 *Love for Love*-Script with Set Plots, undated
- b.15 f.8 *Madame Butterfly*-Photograph, 1982
Merrily We Roll Along, 1981
- b.16 f.1 Contact Sheets
- b.16 f.2 Photographs of Set Models
- b.16 f.3 Script with Cues
- b.16 f.4 *Mr. Roberts*-Photographs, undated
On the Twentieth Century, 1977-1980, undated
- b.16 f.5 Photographs, undated
- b.16 f.6 Programs, 1978-1980
- b.16 f.7-8 Scripts, 1977, undated

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999 (cont.)

- b.16 f.9 *Othello*-Programs, 1981
James Earl Jones, Christopher Plummer and Kelsey Grammer
Pacific Overtures, 1975-1976, undated
- b.17 f.1 Background Research, 1975
- b.17 f.2 Prop List, 1975
- b.17 f.3-9 Scripts, 1975-1976, undated (Broadway and London)
- b.18 f.1 Sketch and Slide, undated
- b.18 f.2 *Parade*-Script, 1997
Reading starring Matthew Broderick and Carolee Carmello. Many songs have different lyrics in this script from those later performed on Broadway
The Petrified Prince, 1994, 1995
- b.18 f.3 Program, 1995
- b.18 f.4 Script, 1994
The Phantom of the Opera, 1986-1992, undated
- b.33 f.4 Libretto, 1987
- b.18 f.5 Production Information, 1989-1992
- b.18 f.6 Programs, 1986-1988 (London, New York, Toronto, Vienna)
- b.18 f.7 Press, undated
- b.19 f.1-2 Scores, 1987, 1989
Scripts, 1986-1989, undated
- b.19 f.3-6 London, 1986
- b.20 f.1-3 New York, 1987, 1989, undated
- b.20 f.4 Japanese Translation, 1988
- b.18 f.8 Sets, undated (Plots and photographs of models)
- b.20 f.5-6 Stage Management Monthly Binders, 1989
Pipe Dream, undated (Opened on Broadway in 1955)
- b.21 f.1 Photographs
- b.33 f.5 Photograph
- b.21 f.2 Script
- b.21 f.3-6 *Play Memory*-Scripts, 1983-1984 (Folder 6 includes technical plots)
- b.21 f.7 *Ragtime Blues*-Script, 1975
- b.22 f.1 *The Recital*-Scripts, undated
- b.22 f.2 *Remember the Day*-Program, 1935
Roza, 1983-1987, undated
- b.22 f.3 Costume Sketches, undated
- b.22 f.4-7 Scripts, 1983-1986
- b.23 f.1 Script, 1987
She Loves Me, 1963, 1964, undated
- b.28 f.7 Activity Sheets, undated

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999 (cont.)

She Loves Me, 1963, 1964, undated (cont.)

- b.23 f.2 Cue Book, undated
- b.23 f.3 Programs, 1963, 1964 (Broadway and London)
- b.23 f.4 Prop Lists, 1964, undated
- b.23 f.5 Script, undated

Show Boat, 1993, 1994, undated

- b.23 f.6 Photographs, undated
- b.34 Poster, undated
- b.23 f.7 Production Information, 1993, undated
- b.23 f.8 Programs, 1994
- b.23 f.9 Script, 1994 June 26

b.24 f.1 *Side by Side by Sondheim*-Script and Program, 1977, 1978

b.24 f.2 *Silverlake*-Script and Program, 1979 September 18, 1980

b.24 f.3 *Some of My Best Friends*-Program, 1977

Sweeney Todd, 1979-1999, undated

- b.24 f.4 Note from Joshua Logan, 1979 April 5
- b.24 f.5 Press, 1979, 1999
- b.24 f.6 Program, 1980 (London Production)
- b.24 f.7-10 Scripts, 1980, undated (Broadway and London)

b.25 f.1 *Take Her, She's Mine*-Script and Plot, 1961

Tenderloin, 1960, undated

- b.33 f.6 Costume and Stage Plots, 1960
- b.25 f.4 Cue Book, undated
- b.25 f.2 Production Information, undated
- b.25 f.3 Program, 1960 October 17
- b.25 f.5-6 Scripts, 1960 December 17

b.26 f.1 *They're Playing Our Song*-Program, undated (Mexican production)

b.26 f.3 *La Traviata*, undated

b.26 f.2 *The Visit*-Script and Program, undated

West Side Story, 1956-1980, undated

- b.26 f.4 Award, 1979-1980 (Tony Award Nomination for Best Revival)
- b.26 f.5 Cue Book, undated
- b.26 f.6 Lighting Plots, undated
- b.26 f.7 Notes, undated
- b.26 f.8 Photographs, undated
- b.26 f.9 Programs, 1957-1994
- b.27 f.1-2 Scripts, 1956-1958, 1985
- b.27 f.3 Set Models, 1957

Whistle Down the Wind, 1995-1996, undated

- b.27 f.4 Program, 1996

Series I: Productions, 1935-1999 (cont.)

Whistle Down the Wind, 1995-1996, undate... (cont.)

- b.27 f.5-7 Scripts, 1995-1996, undated
- b.28 f.1 *Willie Stark*-Program, 1981 April
- Zorba*, 1968, undated
- b.28 f.2 Activity Sheets, undated
- b.28 f.3 Investors, undated
- b.28 f.4 Script and Clipping, 1968 December 12 (National Company)
- Various/Unidentified Productions
- b.28 f.8 Notes, undated
- b.29 f.6 Photographs, undated
- b.28 f.9-10 Programs, 1930s-1990s
- b.29 f.1-2 Programs, 1930s-1990s

Series II: Personal Files, 1887-1997

- b.29 f.3 Address Books, undated
- b.29 f.4-5 Appointment Books, 1960-1967
- b.30 f.1-2 Appointment Books, 1968-1970
- Awards
- b.30 f.3 Actors' Fund of America, Life Membership Certificate, 1951 December 27
- b.30 f.4 Stage Managers' Association, Del Hughes Award for Lifetime Achievement, 1990 March 29
- Biographies and Interviews
- b.30 f.5 Mitchell, Ruth, 1957, undated
- b.30 f.6 Harold Prince, Michael Bennet and Stephen Sondheim, 1970-1985
- b.31 f.1 Childhood School Project, undated
- b.33 f.7 Childhood Scrapbook-Programs, Photographs and Clippings Relating to New York Theatre, 1930s
- b.31 f.2 Correspondence, 1968-1989
- b.31 f.3 Lindsay, John V., 1976-1980
Correspondence from Mayor Lindsay, clippings, campaign song sheet music and record
- b.31 f.4 Miscellaneous, undated (Artwork, brochures, etc.)
- Photographs
- b.31 f.5 Family, 1887-1950s
- b.31 f.6 Headshots and Portraits of Mitchell and Others, 1940s-1990s
- b.33 f.8 Juvenile Theatrical Productions, undated
- b.31 f.7 Klotz, Florence, 1982, undated (Mitchell's partner)
- b.31 f.8 Parties and Events (Professional), 1950s-1990s
- b.33 f.9 Parties and Events, undated
- b.32 f.5 Publicity Photograph, 1957
- b.32 f.1 Vacations, Houses, Pets, Friends, 1940s-1970s
- b.39 f.1-2 Vacations, Houses, Pets, Friends-Slides, undated

Series II: Personal Files, 1887-1997 (cont.)

- b.32 f.2 Taylor, Elizabeth, 1987, 1997
Programs, Publicity on Taylor and her perfumes
- b.32 f.3 Theatre Industry, 1957-1988
Includes information on Actors' Equity Association
- b.32 f.4 Wills, 1982