



Abbey Theatre playbills and related materials 1907–1955, 1994

Abstract: The Abbey Theatre collection comprises playbills and a small number of additional items for productions of the Abbey Theatre, established during 1904 in Dublin as a venue for Irish playwrights.

Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 475
Creator: Abbey Theatre.
Title: Abbey Theatre playbills and related materials
Inclusive Dates: 1907–1955, 1994
Extent: 1 linear foot and 1 oversize folder (1 box)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 475, Abbey Theatre playbills and related materials, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS record center cartons; F109: Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (18 inches)

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/>

Source: Purchase, 2000.
Gift of Bernard McKenna, September 2007.

Processing: Processed by Theresa Hessey, December 2001. Encoded by Debra Johnson, 2007.

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Historical Note

The Abbey Theatre was established in Dublin in 1904 as a venue for Irish playwrights. It developed out of the Irish Literary Theatre, which had been founded by William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory in 1899. In 1902, that organization was taken over by the Irish National Dramatic Society and in 1903 became the Irish National Theatre Society. Yeats enlisted financial assistance for the Abbey from Edward Martyn in exchange for producing several of Martyn's plays. Yeats found further monetary patronage through Miss Annie E. F. Horniman, an English woman interested in the work of the Irish National Theatre Society. It was she who provided the funds to purchase the building in which the Abbey Theatre was established. The Theatre officially opened on December 27, 1904, with productions of *On Baile's Strand* by W. B. Yeats and *Spreading the News* by Lady Gregory. J. M. Synge joined the other two as co-director.

During the 1900s and 1910s, the Theatre was plagued with financial troubles, which were accentuated by World War I and the Irish Rebellion of 1916. Artistic disputes between Yeats and his backers also almost cut short the life of the theatre. However, the Theatre continued to produce and, in 1924, it became the first state-sponsored theatre in the world. As a result of their lifelong commitment to Irish theatre, the Abbey nurtured the careers of such influential playwrights as Lennox Robinson, Sean O'Casey, J. M. Synge, George Bernard Shaw, and Padraic Colum.

In 1928, a smaller theatre, the Peacock, was opened in a building adjacent to the Abbey. This theatre was to serve as a forum for experimental productions. In July 1951, fire destroyed the entire back stage area of the Abbey and all performances were transferred to the Queen's Theatre. The Abbey Theatre did not reopen until 1966. It was rebuilt on its original site with the Peacock Theatre installed on the basement level.

While Yeats preferred to maintain absolute control over Abbey productions, as he and Lady Gregory advanced in age, he employed a series of carefully selected managers to handle the day-to-day affairs of the Theatre. After the death of Lady Gregory in 1932 and Yeats in 1939, the Abbey Theatre continued to mainly produce the works of Irish writers.

Sources:

Kavanagh, Peter. *The Story of the Abbey Theatre*. New York: Devin Adair Co., 1950.

Welch, Robert. *The Abbey Theatre, 1899–1999: Form and Pressure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Scope and Content Note

The Abbey Theatre playbills and related materials comprise one hundred and six playbills for Abbey Theatre productions that took place between 1909 and 1955 and in 1994. The playbills document the works of important Irish writers, including Lady Augusta Gregory, W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Lennox Robinson, George Bernard Shaw, Padraic Colum, and Sean O'Casey. The specific plays produced were often important first-time productions. The collection includes playbills for productions of *The Rising of the Moon* (Gregory), *The Jackdaw* (Gregory), *Spreading the News* (Gregory), *The Gaol Gate* (Gregory), *Hyacinth Halvey* (Gregory), *The Hour Glass* (Yeats), *On Baile's Strand* (Yeats), *Kathleen Ni Houlihan* (Yeats), *A Pot of Broth* (Yeats), *Riders to the Sea* (Synge), and *In the Shadow of the Glen* (Synge). A small number of the playbills contain related newspaper clippings.

The collection includes other materials associated with Abbey Theatre productions. A program from 1907 lists plays performed during a visit of the company to Cambridge, England. One pamphlet collects the opinions of the London press regarding the Second Company of the Abbey Theatre. The collection also houses an original poster from the production of Frank O'Connor and Mary Manning's *The Saint and Mary Kate* and a playbill from a 1994 touring production of Jimmy Murphy's *Brothers of the Brush*.

Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Gregory, Lady, 1852-1932.

Yeats, W. B. (William Butler), 1865-1939.

Synge, J. M. (John Millington), 1871-1909.

Topical Terms

English drama--Irish authors--20th century--Sources.

Theater--Ireland--20th century--Sources.

Geographic Names

Dublin (Ireland)--History--20th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms

Playbills.

Clippings (information artifacts)

Posters.

Related Materials in this Repository

MSS 313, Proscenium Press records

Arrangement

The materials in the collection are arranged chronologically in each of two series: I. Playbills, 1909–1955, 1994 and II. Other materials, circa 1907–1994.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. Playbills , 1909–1955, 1994

Lady Gregory, *The Gaol Gate*

Lady Gregory, *The Miser*, 1909 January 21–23 [Box 1 F1]

Lady Gregory, *Kincora*

Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon*, 1909 February 11–13 [Box 1 F2]

R. J. Ray, *The White Feather*

Lady Gregory, *Spreading the News*, 1909 September 16–18 [Box 1 F3]

W. M. Letts, *The Challenge*

W. F. Casey, *The Suburban Groove*, 1909 October 14–16 [Box 1 F4]

Lady Gregory, *The Image*

Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon*, 1909 November 11–13 [Box 1 F5]

W. B. Yeats, *The Green Helmet*

S. L. Robinson, *Harvest*, 1910 May 19 and 21 [Box 1 F6]

S. L. Robinson, *The Casting-Out*

Lady Gregory, *The Workhouse Ward*, and October 1, 1910 September 29, 30 [Box 1 F7]

Padraic Colum, *Thomas Muskerry*

Lord Dunsany, *The Glittering Gate*, 1910 October 31 and November 1, 2 [Box 1 F8]

S. L. Robinson, *The Cross Roads*

Lady Gregory, *The Full Moon*, 1910 November 10–12 [Box 1 F9]

Bernard Shaw, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*

Lady Gregory, *Coats*

William Boyle, *The Building Fund*, 1910 December 1–3 [Box 1 F10]

Lady Gregory, *The Deliverer*

W. B. Yeats, *The Hour Glass*

Bernard Shaw, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*, 1911 January 14 [Box 1 F11]

Lord Dunsany, *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior*

W. F. Casey, *The Man Who Missed the Tide*, 1911 January 26–28 [Box 1 F12]

W. B. Yeats, *The Land of Heart's Desire*

T. C. Murray, *Birthright*

W. B. Yeats, *A Pot of Broth*, 1911 February 16–18 [Box 1 F13]

A. Patrick Wilson, *The Cobbler*

Edward McNulty, *The Lord Mayor*, 1911 April 13, 15 [Box 1 F14]

Lennox Robinson, *Patriots*

Lady Gregory, *Hyacinth Halvey*, 1912 April 11–13 [Box 1 F15]

Lady Gregory, *The Gaol Gate*

Joseph Campbell, *Judgement*

W. B. Yeats, *A Pot of Broth*, 1912 April 15–17 [Box 1 F16]

St. John G. Ervine, *The Magnanimous Lover*

William Boyle, *Family Failing*, 1912 October 17–19 [Box 1 F17]

W. B. Yeats, *The Hour Glass*

Lady Gregory, *Damer's Gold*

Lady Gregory, *The Gaol Gate*, 1912 November 21–23 [Box 1 F18]

Mrs. Bart Kennedy, *My Lord*

Lennox Robinson, *Patriots*, 1913 October 16–18 [Box 1 F19]

R. J. Ray, *The Gombeen Man*

Lady Gregory, *Spreading the News*, 1913 November 11–12 [Box 1 F20]

St. John G. Ervine, *The Critics*

St. John G. Ervine, *Mixed Marriage*, 1913 November 20–22 [Box 1 F21]

St. John G. Ervine, *The Critics*

Seamus O'Kelly, *The Bribe*, 1913 December 18–20 [Box 1 F22]

Lady Gregory, *The Gaol Gate*

Seamus O'Brien, *Duty*

William Boyle, *The Building Fund*, 1913 December 16–17 [Box 1 F23]

W. B. Yeats, *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*

Victor O'D. Power, *David Mahoney*

Lady Gregory, *The Jackdaw*, 1914 January 29–31 [Box 1 F24]

St. John G. Ervine, *The Orangeman*

Edward McNulty, *The Lord Mayor*, 1914 March 13–14 [Box 1 F25]

Lady Gregory, *Revival of Kincora*

Lady Gregory, *Spreading the News*, 1914 April 14–16, 18 [Box 1 F26]

Lennox Robinson, *The Dreamers*, 1916 February 22–26 [Box 1 F27]

St. John Ervine, *Mixed Marriage*

W. B. Yeats, *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*, 1916 March 7, 9–11 [Box 1 F28]

Bernard Duffy, *The Coiner*

George Fitzmaurice, *The Country Dressmaker*, 1916 March 14 [Box 1 F29]

Bernard Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island*, 1917 April 9 [Box 1 F30]

Lady Gregory, *The White Cockade*, 1917 October 2 [Box 1 F31]

Seamus O'Kelly, *The Parnellite*, 1917 October 23 [Box 1 F32]

George Bernard Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island*, 1919 March 25 [Box 1 F33]

Lady Gregory, *The Dragon*

Lord Dunsany, *A Night at an Inn*, 1919 Aug 25, 27, and 29 [Box 1 F34]

Lennox Robinson, *The Whiteheaded Boy*, 1921 April 12 [Box 1 F35]

St. John G. Ervine, *Mixed Marriage*, 1921 April 21 [Box 1 F36]

Lennox Robinson, *Patriots*

Lady Gregory, *Hyacinth Halvey*, 1923 February 6 [Box 1 F37]

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, 1923 March 22–24 [Box 1 F38]

George Bernard Shaw, *Arms and the Man*

Bernard Duffy, *The Coiner*, 1923 October 8 [Box 1 F39]

J. M. Synge, *The Shadow of the Glen*

George Fitzmaurice, *The Country Dressmaker*, 1923 November 19 [Box 1 F40]

George Bernard Shaw, *Fanny's First Play*

Lennox Robinson, *Crabbed Youth and Age*, 1926 April 19 [Box 1 F41]

G. Martinez Sierra, *The Two Shepards*

Fand O'Grady, *Apartments*, 1926 September 27 [Box 1 F42]

Dorothy Macardle, *Ann Kavanagh*

William Boyle, *The Eloquent Dempsey*, 1931 April 14 [Box 1 F43]

G. Bernard Shaw, *You Can Never Tell*, 1934 January 1 [Box 1 F44]

E. W. Tocher, *The Moon in the Yellow River*, 1934 January 22 [Box 1 F45]

Lady Gregory, *The Workhouse Ward*

Lennox Robinson, *The White Blackbird*, 1934 February 19 [Box 1 F46]

Eugene O'Neill, *Days Without End*, 1934 April 16 [Box 1 F47]

Includes two newspaper clippings.

W. R. Fearon, *Parnell of Avondale*, 1934 October 1 [Box 1 F48]

Includes "Announcement" of upcoming productions.

G. B. Shaw, *Jitta's Atonement*, 1935 January 28–February 2 [Box 1 F49]

Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon*

J. M. Synge, *Deidre of the Sorrows*, 1935 May 13 [Box 1 F50]

T. C. Murray, *Maurice Harte*

F. R. Higgins, *A Deuce O' Jacks*, 1935 September 16 [Box 1 F51]

José María Pemán, *A Saint in a Hurry*, 1935 December 2 [Box 1 F52]

Translated by Hugh De Blacam. Includes one newspaper clipping.

Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon*

W. B. Yeats, *The Land of Heart's Desire*

Seamus O'Kelly, *Meadowsweet*, 1935 December 29 [Box 1 F53]

"Complimentary Performance to Dr. J. F. Larchet"

William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 1936 January 13 [Box 1 F54]

Includes one newspaper clipping.

Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, 1936 February 17 [Box 1 F55]

St. John G. Ervine, *Boyd's Shop*, 1936 February 24 [Box 1 F56]

Teresa Deevy, *Katie Roche*, 1936 March 16 [Box 1 F57]

Denis Johnston, *The Moon in the Yellow River*, 1936 May 11 [Box 1 F58]

Ernst Toller and Denis Johnston, *Blind Man's Bluff*, 1936 December 26 [Box 1 F59]

Ernst Toller and Denis Johnston, *Blind Man's Bluff*, 1937 January 4 [Box 1 F60]

Cormac O'Daly, *The Silver Jubilee*

Sean O'Casey, *The End of the Beginning*, 1937 February 8 [Box 1 F61]

Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor, *The Invincibles*, 1938 January 31 [Box 1 F62]

Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, 1938 August 29 [Box 1 F63]

Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon*

W. B. Yeats, *Purgatory*

Lady Gregory, *Damer's Gold*, 1938 August 10 [Box 1 F64]

T. C. Murray, *Maurice Harte*

Lennox Robinson, *Church Street*, 1938 August 12 [Box 1 F65]

Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, 1938 August 16 [Box 1 F66]

Paul Vincent Carroll, *Shadow and Substance*, 1938 August 20 [Box 1 F67]

Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock*, 1938 October 31 [Box 1 F68]

Elizabeth Connor, *Mount Prospect*, 1940 April 22 [Box 1 F69]

Brinsley MacNamara, *The Glorious Uncertainty*, 1940 May 6 [Box 1 F70]

W. D. Hepenstall, *To-Day and Yesterday*, 1940 July 22 [Box 1 F71]

George Shiels, *The Rugged Path*, 1940 September 2 [Box 1 F72]

George Shiels, *The Rugged Path*, 1940 October 14 [Box 1 F73]

Frank Carney, *Peeping Tom*, 1940 November 25 [Box 1 F74]

Francis Stuart, *Strange Guest*, 1940 December 16 [Box 1 F75]

Roger McHugh, *Trial at Green Street Courthouse*, 1941 January 20 [Box 1 F76]

George Shiels, *The Summit*, 1941 February 10 [Box 1 F77]

Louis D'Alton, *The Money Doesn't Matter*, 1941 March 10 [Box 1 F78]

Mervyn Wall, *The Lady in the Twilight*, 1941 May 19 [Box 1 F79]

Rutherford Mayne, *Peter*, 1941 July 21 [Box 1 F80]

Elizabeth Connor, *Swans and Geese*, 1941 September 22 [Box 1 F81]

Paul V. Carroll, *Shadow and Substance*, 1941 November 17 [Box 1 F82]

Brinsley MacNamara, *The Three Thimbles*, 1941 November 24 [Box 1 F83]

Lennox Robinson, *The Clancy Name*

Lennox Robinson, *Church Street*, 1942 December 6 [Box 1 F84]

Walter Macken, *Mungo's Mansion*, 1946 February 11 [Box 1 F85]

George Shiels, *The Jailbird*, 1949 November 3 [Box 1 F86]

Bernard Shaw, *Village Wooing*

Sean O'Casey, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, 1950 July 17 [Box 1 F87]

Lennox Robinson, *The Whiteheaded Boy*, 1950 November 20 [Box 1 F88]

George Shiels, *Professor Tim*, 1950 November 27 [Box 1 F89]

T. C. Murray, *Maurice Harte*

Bernard Shaw, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*, 1951 March 24 [Box 1 F90]

Bernard Shaw, *Village Wooing*

Sean O'Casey, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, 1951 November 5 [Box 1 F91]

Brinsley Macnamara, *Look at the Heffernans*, 1952 March 10 [Box 1 F92]

Michael J. Molloy, *The King of Friday's Men*, 1952 July 14 [Box 1 F93]

Walter Macken, *Home is the Hero*, 1952 August 15 [Box 1 F94]

Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, 1955 May 9 [Box 1 F95]

Frank McGuinness, *The Bird Sanctuary*, 1994 February 15 [Box 1 F96]

Tom MacIntyre, *Sheep's Milk on the Boil*, 1994 February 17 [Box 1 F97]

Teresa Deevy, *Katie Roche*, 1994 April 13 [Box 1 F98]

Frank O'Connor and Hugh Hunt, *Moses Rock*, 1994 April 20 [Box 1 F99]

John Banville, *The Broken Jug*, 1994 June 1 [Box 1 F100]

Bernard Shaw, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, 1994 July 20 [Box 1 F101]

Series I.

Donal O'Kelly, *Asylum! Asylum!*, 1994 July 27 [Box 1 F102]

Hugh Leonard, *Chamber Music*, 1994 August 23 [Box 1 F103]

Marina Carr, *The Mai*, 1994 October 5 [Box 1 F104]

Frank McGuinness, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, 1994 October 13 [Box 1 F105]

J. M. Synge, *The Well of the Saints*, 1994 December 27 [Box 1 F106]

Series II. Other materials, circa 1907–1994

Programme, 1907 May 20–24 [Box 1 F107]

Irish plays presented at the Victoria Assembly Rooms in Cambridge, May 20–24, 1907. Plays performed by the National Theatre Society Ltd. of the Abbey Theatre included performances of *The Rising of the Moon* by Lady Gregory; *The Hour Glass* by W. B. Yeats; *Riders to the Sea* by J. M. Synge; *The Jackdaw* by Lady Gregory; *On Baile's Strand* by W. B. Yeats; *Kathleen Ni Houlihan* by W. B. Yeats; *Spreading the News* by Lady Gregory; *The Gaol Gate* by Lady Gregory; *A Pot of Broth* by W. B. Yeats; *In the Shadow of the Glen* by J. M. Synge; and *Hyacinth Halvey* by Lady Gregory.

London press opinions of the acting of the Second Company, [1910s?] [Box 1 F108]

Printed pamphlet

Frank O'Connor and Mary Manning, *The Saint and Mary Kate* poster, [1968?] [Box 1 F109] (Removed to: SPEC MSS oversize boxes (18 inches))

Jimmy Murphy, *Brothers of the Brush*, [1994] [Box 1 F110]

Playbill for touring Abbey Theatre production.
