Miles White Costume Designs
Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2018

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2014572571

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu018006

Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress
Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Music Division, 2018
Collection Summary

Title: Miles White Costume Designs
Span Dates: 1942-1977
Call No.: ML31.W5
Creator: White, Miles, 1914-2000
Extent: approximately 150 items
Extent: 8 containers
Extent: 7.0 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2014572571

Summary: Miles White was an American scenic and costume designer best known for his work on Oklahoma! (1943), Carousel (1945), Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1949), Bye Bye Birdie (1960), and other Broadway musicals and stage productions. The collection consists mostly of finished designs and sketches, some of which include fabric samples and other related materials.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
White, Miles, 1914-2000.
White, Miles, 1914-2000.

Subjects
Costume design.
Costume designers--United States.
Musical theater--United States.
Theater--United States.

Form/Genre
Business correspondence.
Drawings.
Greeting cards.
Personal correspondence.
Photographs.
Programs (Publications)
Renderings (Drawings)
Sketches.
Swatches.

Provenance
Gift, Tobias van Rossum Daum, 2017.

Accruals
No further accruals are expected.
Processing History

The Miles White Costume Designs were processed by Alexandra Ley and Abigail Werner in 2018. Christopher Hartten coded the finding aid for EAD format in 2018.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Miles White Costume Designs are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Miles White Costume Designs are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Miles White Costume Designs, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914, July 27</td>
<td>Born, Oakland, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>Studied at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco and the California School of Arts and Crafts in Oakland before attending the University of California, Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938, Jan. 5</td>
<td>Opening of Right This Way at the 46th Street Theater, the first Broadway production to feature White's costume designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943, Mar. 31</td>
<td>Opening of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma! at the St. James Theatre, with costumes by White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943, Apr. 1</td>
<td>Opening of the Ziegfeld Follies of 1943 at the Winter Garden Theatre, starring Milton Berle and with costumes by White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Began designing for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum &amp; Bailey Circus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945, Apr. 19</td>
<td>Opening of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel at the Majestic Theatre, with costumes by White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Collaborated with Ballet Theatre and choreographer Agnes de Mille on Fall River Legend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949, Dec. 8</td>
<td>Opening of Gentlemen Prefer Blondes at the Ziegfeld Theatre, with choreography by Agnes de Mille and costumes by White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Won Tony Award for Best Costume Design for Bless You All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Earned first Academy Award nomination for Best Costume Design for The Greatest Show on Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Won Tony Award for Best Costume Design for Hazel Flagg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Earned Academy Award nomination for Best Costume Design for There's No Business Like Show Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Earned Academy Award nomination for Best Costume Design for Around the World in 80 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-1973</td>
<td>Nominated six times for Tony Award for Best Costume Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960, Apr. 14</td>
<td>Opening of Bye Bye Birdie at the Martin Beck Theatre, with choreography by Gower Champion and costumes by White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960, Nov. 3</td>
<td>Opening of The Unsinkable Molly Brown at the Winter Garden Theatre, with costumes by White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1964 Designed the Electric Power and Light Pavilion exhibition space for the New York City World's Fair. White also assisted with the design of Borden's animatronic show at the event, All About Elsie, in the Better Living Center

1977 Designed costumes for Toller Cranston's "The Ice Show"

2000, Feb. 17 Died, Manhattan

Scope and Content Note

The Miles White Costume Designs consist chiefly of finished designs and sketches, some of which are accompanied by fabric samples, notes, measurement cards, photographs, and other documents related to productions for which White served as principal designer. These include original Broadway and Broadway-bound musicals, New York City dance company performances, regional musical theater and light opera productions, circus performances, films, and an animatronic show. With the exception of Toller Cranston's "The Ice Show" (1977), for which there is a large quantity of material, the majority of titles in the collection are represented by only a handful of designs. Among the more notable productions included are Carousel (1945), Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1949), Fall River Legend (1948), and The Unsinkable Molly Brown (1960).

White's versatility and flair for extravagance are on full display throughout the collection. As a close friend of John Ringling, White became a visionary for circus design and costumed traveling shows, specialty parades, and even the 1952 film, The Greatest Show on Earth, directed by Cecil B. DeMille. He also designed the flashy 1977 production of Toller Cranston's "The Ice Show" at the Palace Theater, the first ice skating event to grace Broadway. Throughout his six decade career as a designer, White collaborated with many of the biggest names in theater and dance, including Martha Graham, Tennessee Williams, Agnes de Mille, and Richard Rodgers. The collection features costumes for many notable performers as well, such as Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Betty Hutton, and John Raitt. Designs are arranged alphabetically by title of production.

Organization of the Miles White Costume Designs

The Collection is organized in one series:

• Costume Designs, 1942-1977
### Description of Series

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 1-8 MAPCASE 3</td>
<td><strong>Costume Designs, 1942-1977</strong></td>
</tr>
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Chiefly finished costume designs and pencil sketches, some of which are accompanied by fabric samples, measurement cards, photographs, programs, or other items. Arranged alphabetically by title of production.
## Container List

<table>
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  - **Costume Designs, 1942-1977**
    - Chiefly finished costume designs and pencil sketches, some of which are accompanied by fabric samples, measurement cards, photographs, programs, or other items.
    - Arranged alphabetically by title of production.

- **BOX-FOLDER 8/1**
  - 1491 [musical], 1969
    - Costume design

- **BOX-FOLDER 3/1, 4/1**
  - All about Elsie [World's Fair animatronic exhibit], 1964
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 6/1**
  - All about Elsie [World's Fair animatronic exhibit], 1964
    - Costume design

- **BOX-FOLDER 8/2**
  - All about Elsie [World's Fair animatronic exhibit], 1964
    - Set renderings

- **BOX-FOLDER 4/2**
  - Ankles aweigh, 1955
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 2/1**
  - Bless you all, 1950
    - Costume designs and article

- **BOX-FOLDER 4/3, 6/2**
  - Bloomer girl, 1944
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 4/4**
  - The carefree heart, 1957
    - Costume design

- **BOX-FOLDER 4/5-6**
  - Carousel, 1945
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 2/2**
  - Cheri, 1959
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 2/3**
  - The day before spring, 1945
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 6/3-4**
  - Dream with music, 1944
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 4/7**
  - The Duchess of Malfi, 1946
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 6/5**
  - Eugenia, 1957
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 2/4**
  - Fall river legend, 1948
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 6/6, 8/3**
  - Gentlemen prefer blondes, 1949
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 3/2**
  - The girl in the pink tights, 1954
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 1/1, 6/7**
  - The greatest show on earth [film], 1952
    - Costume designs

- **BOX-FOLDER 4/8**
  - The greatest show on earth [film], 1952
    - Costume designs/set renderings
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| BOX-FOLDER 4/9 | Hazel Flagg, 1953  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/2 | Jamaica, 1957  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 5/1 | The judgment of Paris, 1955?  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/3 | Milk and honey, 1961  
Costume design  
Miscellany, undated |
| MAPCASE-DRAWER 3/5 | "Anita Loos"  
Painting |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/4 | "Blue prize ribbon vegetables"  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 5/2 | Miscellany  
Costume designs |
| BOX-FOLDER 3/3 | "Tropic holiday"  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 8/4 | "The unsinkable Tammy Grimes"  
Portrait |
| BOX-FOLDER 6/8-9 | Oh Captain!, 1958  
Costume designs |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/5 | Pal Joey, 1952  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 6/10 | The pirate, 1942  
Costume designs |
| BOX-FOLDER 8/5 | Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, 1947  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 5/3-6 | Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, 1952 and undated  
Costume designs |
| BOX-FOLDER 4/10-11 | Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, 1957 and undated  
Costume designs |
| BOX-FOLDER 7/1 | Song of Norway, 1944  
Costume designs and fabric samples |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/6 | Strip for action, 1942  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/5 | Take me along, 1959  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 5/7 | That's the ticket, 1948  
Costume designs and fabric samples |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/7 | Three wishes for Jamie, 1952  
Costume designs |
| BOX-FOLDER 8/6 | Time remembered, 1957  
Costume design |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/6-30 | Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977  
Costume designs, photographs, notes, clippings, and miscellany |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/8-9 | Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977  
Costume designs, fabric samples, and clippings |
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<td>Fabric sample charts</td>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 7/2</td>
<td>Two's company: Charles Sherman's musical revue, 1952</td>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 5/10</td>
<td>Up and down, undated</td>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 8/7-9</td>
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