

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

Date	Event
1914, July 27	Born, Oakland, California
1930s	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
1938, Jan. 5	Opening of <i>Right This Way</i> at the 46th Street Theater, the first Broadway production to feature White's costume designs
1943, Mar. 31	Opening of Rodgers and Hammerstein's <i>Oklahoma!</i> at the St. James Theatre, with costumes by White
1943, Apr. 1	Opening of the <i>Ziegfeld Follies of 1943</i> at the Winter Garden Theatre, starring Milton Berle and with costumes by White
1944	Began designing for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus
1945, Apr. 19	Opening of Rodgers and Hammerstein's <i>Carousel</i> at the Majestic Theatre, with costumes by White
1948	Collaborated with Ballet Theatre and choreographer Agnes de Mille on <i>Fall River Legend</i>
1949, Dec. 8	Opening of <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> at the Ziegfeld Theatre, with choreography by Agnes de Mille and costumes by White
1951	Won Tony Award for Best Costume Design for <i>Bless You All</i>
1952	Earned first Academy Award nomination for Best Costume Design for <i>The Greatest Show on Earth</i>
1953	Won Tony Award for Best Costume Design for <i>Hazel Flagg</i>
1955	Earned Academy Award nomination for Best Costume Design for <i>There's No Business Like Show Business</i>
1957	Earned Academy Award nomination for Best Costume Design for <i>Around the World in 80 Days</i>
1958-1973	Nominated six times for Tony Award for Best Costume Design
1960, Apr. 14	Opening of <i>Bye Bye Birdie</i> at the Martin Beck Theatre, with choreography by Gower Champion and costumes by White
1960, Nov. 3	Opening of <i>The Unsinkable Molly Brown</i> at the Winter Garden Theatre, with costumes by White

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, <i>All About Elsie</i> , in the Better Living Center
1977	Designed costumes for <i>Toller Cranston's "The Ice Show"</i>
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

Container

BOX 1-8 MAPCASE 3

Series

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.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-8 MAPCASE 3	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

Costume Designs, 1942-1977

Container	Contents
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

Costume Designs, 1942-1977

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 3/4-8	Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977 Costume designs, fabric samples, and cast photographs
BOX-FOLDER 4/12-16	Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977 Costume designs
BOX-FOLDER 5/8-9	Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977 Costume designs and cast photographs
BOX-FOLDER 6/10	Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977 Costume design and poster
MAPCASE-DRAWER 3/5	Toller Cranston's "The ice show," 1977 Fabric sample charts
BOX-FOLDER 7/2	Two's company: Charles Sherman's musical revue, 1952 Costume designs
BOX-FOLDER 2/10	The unsinkable Molly Brown, 1960 Costume designs
BOX-FOLDER 5/10	Up and down, undated Costume design
BOX-FOLDER 7/3-4	Ziegfeld follies of 1943 Costume designs
BOX-FOLDER 1/31-32, 7/5-6	Unidentified, undated Costume designs, fabric samples, and measurements
BOX-FOLDER 8/7-9	Unidentified, undated Costume design, set design samples, and miscellany