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Guide to the Living Theatre Records

YCAL MSS 1038



by Leigh Golden and Jennifer Meehan

2008

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1038

CREATOR: Living Theatre (New York, N.Y.)

TITLE: Living Theatre records

DATES: 1815-2012

BULK DATES: 1947-2012

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 55 linear feet (44 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of general files, correspondence, subject files, publicity files, scripts, journals, writings, personal papers, photographs, audiovisual material, and born digital materials relating to The Living Theatre, its founders, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, and its co-director, Hanon Reznikov. The collection documents the administration of the theater, its stage productions, and its relationship to other avant-garde and radical cultural and political movements in the United States and Europe during the time period from the 1960s to the present. Also included are extensive diaries and journals of Judith Malina and Julian Beck, as well as their personal papers and writings. The photographs and audio-visual material largely document specific productions.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.livingtheatre>

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Morgan & Rosenthal on the Alfred Z. Baker, Jr. Fund and Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2008, and from Boo-Hooray on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund and the Adele Gutman Nathan Theatrical Collection Fund, 2013.

Conditions Governing Access

In-process material. This collection is closed to researchers until processing is completed. For further information, consult Access Services.

Series I. Personal and Family Papers; Subseries. Judith Malina's diaries, notebooks and calendars are open for research. As additional series and subseries are processed, they will be opened to researchers.

Conditions Governing Use

The Living Theatre Records is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Living Theatre Records. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

The Living Theatre

The Living Theatre was founded in 1947 by Julian Beck and Judith Malina in New York City. The company performed politically charged plays commenting on war, Wall Street, and income inequality even being arrested during some of their public performances. The group produced experimental and little-known plays by writers including Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, and John Ashbery. In 1961, the company toured Europe with one of its biggest successes, "The Connection" and other plays including *Paradise Now* and *The Legacy of Cain*. The Living Theatre left New York in 1964 after failing to pay \$23,000 in back taxes. Malina and Beck represented themselves in the trial. The theatre company focused on avant garde productions including *The Connection* and *The Brig*. Theatre productions often broke the fourth wall and included audience participation. Theatre company members were also arrested for various acts of civil disobedience. The theatre company performed all over the world in public and unique spaces. The theatre returned to New York City in the 1980s. After Julian Beck's death in 1985, Hanon Reznikov was named codirector. Reznikov died in 2008 and Malina in 2015. The Living Theatre continues with artistic director Brad Burgess to conduct workshops and perform in the United States and abroad.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of general files, correspondence, subject files, publicity files, scripts, journals, writings, personal papers, photographs, audiovisual material, and born digital materials relating to The Living Theatre, its founders, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, and its co-director, Hanon Reznikov. The collection documents the administration of the theater, its stage productions, and its relationship to other avant-garde and radical cultural and political movements in the United States and Europe during the time period from the 1960s to the present. Also included are extensive diaries and journals of Judith Malina and Julian Beck, as well as their personal papers and writings. The photographs and audio-visual material largely document specific productions.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Experimental theater -- United States -- 20th Century
Experimental theater -- United States -- 21st century
Theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Theater -- United States -- 20th Century
Theater -- United States -- 21st century

Genres / Formats

Audiovisual materials
Born digital

Names

Beck, Julian, 1925-1985
Malina, Judith, 1926-2015
Reznikov, Hanon

Corporate Body

Living Theatre (New York, N.Y.)

Contributors

Living Theatre (New York, N.Y.)
Beck, Julian, 1925-1985
Malina, Judith, 1926-2015
Reznikov, Hanon