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Guide to the

Elaine Stritch papers

1925-2012 [bulk 1943-2011]
*T-Mss 2014-172

Summary

Creator: Stritch, Elaine

Title: Elaine Stritch papers

Date: 1925-2012 [bulk 1943-2011]

Size: 4.61 linear feet (10 boxes)

Source: Donated by Elaine Stritch Bay Trust, 2015.

Abstract: Elaine Stritch was an actress and singer in film, television, and the theatre whose show business career spanned nearly seventy years. The Elaine Stritch papers date from 1925 to 2012 (bulk dates 1943-2011), and contain correspondence, photographs, and promotional materials that chronicle her personal life and performance career.

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Creator History

Marion Elaine Stritch (1925-2014) was born in Detroit, Michigan and raised in Birmingham, Michigan, where she attended Convent of the Sacred Heart School, and developed an interest in acting at a young age. Stritch moved to New York City in 1944 to pursue a career in show business. She enrolled in a drama program at The New School, where she studied with Erwin

Piscator.
Stritch made her Broadway debut in the Jed Harris comedy, *Loco*, in 1946, followed by the musical revue, *Angels in the Wings*, in 1947. After appearing in the comedy, *Yes M'Lord* (1949), she was cast as Ethel Merman's understudy in 1950's *Call Me Madam*, playing the lead in the subsequent touring production. This was followed by a revival of *Pal Joey* (1952), *On Your Toes* (1954), and the 1955 drama, *Bus Stop* (1955), which earned Stritch a Tony nomination.
In 1958, Stritch landed her first starring role on Broadway with the musical comedy, *Goldilocks*. She was cast as the lead again in *Sail Away* (1961), a performance that garnered Stritch her second Tony nomination, and which was followed by her debut on the stage in London with the show's British production. In 1963, Stritch was cast in Edward Albee's, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, replacing actress Uta Hagen in the role of Martha.
Between 1964 and 1969, Stritch spent much of her time on the road touring with productions of *I Married an Angel* (1964), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1965), *The King and I* (1965), *Any Wednesday* (1967), and *Mame* (1968-1969). This was followed by her third Tony-nominated performance in Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (1970). In 1972, Stritch moved to London, England to perform in the West End production of *Company*. She would remain in London for the next decade, where she appeared on the stage in *Small Craft Warnings* (1973), and subsequently met the American actor John Bay during rehearsals for the play. The couple married that same year, and Stritch continued her theatre career, while also launching a successful British television career. Her most well-known British television performance was with *Two's Company*, which ran for four seasons from 1975 to 1979. In the program, Stritch played the lead opposite Donald Sinden, and in 1979 they were both nominated for a British Academy Television Award.
In addition to her early successes on the stage and in television, Stritch made a number of film appearances, beginning in 1956 with *The Scarlet Hour* and *Three Violent People*. The following year, she was cast opposite Rock Hudson and Jennifer Jones in *A Farewell to Arms*, and then 1958's *The Perfect Furlough*, in which she played a starring role alongside Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. Her other early films include *Who Killed Teddy Bear?* (1965), *The Spiral Staircase* (1975), and *Providence* (1977).
Stitch and her husband moved back to the United States shortly before his death in 1982. She landed her next major film role in Woody Allen's *September* (1987). Her critically acclaimed performance in this film led to a series of subsequent film roles including *Cocoon: The Return* (1988), *Cadillac Man* (1990), *Out to Sea* (1997), *Autumn in New York* (2000), *Small Time Crooks* (2000), *Screwed* (2000), and *Monster-in-Law* (2005).
Upon her return to the United States, Stritch was also cast in a number of television roles including *The Ellen Burstyn Show* (1986), *The Cosby Show* (1989–1990), *Head of the Class* (1990), and a recurring role on *Law & Order* (1992-1996), which earned her an Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series. She was honored with another Emmy for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series in 2007, for her recurring role on *30 Rock*, where she portrayed Colleen, the mother of Alec Baldwin's character, Jack Donaghy.
In the midst of her film and television roles, Stritch returned to the stage in a series of revival performances beginning in 1993 with a one-night performance of *Company*. This was followed by *Show Boat* in 1994, and *A Delicate Balance*, which earned Stritch her fourth Tony nomination in 1996. Then, in 2001, she premiered her one woman show, *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* at the Public Theatre, which moved to the Neil Simon Theatre on Broadway in 2002. The show was broadcast on HBO in 2004, a performance for which Stritch received an Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Performance in a Variety Program.
In 2005, Stritch took up residence at The Carlyle Hotel, and from 2010 to 2011 performed in a cabaret act at the Café Carlyle called *At Home at the Carlyle: Elaine Stritch Singin' Sondheim...One Song at a Time*. In what would be her final Broadway role, Stritch performed in the revival of Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, succeeding Angela Lansbury in the role of

Madame Armfeldt from 2010 to 2011. Stritch gave her final performance at the Carlyle in 2013 with, *Elaine Stritch at the Carlyle: Movin' Over and Out*, and then returned to her hometown of Birmingham, Michigan, where she died in 2014.

Scope and Content Note

The Elaine Stritch papers date from 1925 to 2012 (bulk dates 1943-2011) and detail her personal life and performance career in film, television, and theatre. The collection is comprised of correspondence; documents and photographs from Stritch's personal life; and files of photographs, promotional items, and scripts from her show business career.

The correspondence includes both incoming and outgoing letters, and consists of a variety of personal notes and professional communications, nearly all of which address Stritch's performance career. However, there is a small group of letters between Stritch and various friends while she was still living in Michigan and they were attending schools in other cities. Of special interest are letters written by Stritch to her parents while she was living in Italy for the filming of *A Farewell to Arms* in 1957. Also included are fan letters; business agreements regarding contracts and performances; and correspondence from actors, producers, and directors. Those who wrote to Stritch include Woody Allen, Kirk Douglas, Tina Fey, Ben Gazzara, Nathan Lane, Angela Lansbury, John McMartin, Mary Tyler Moore, Elaine Paige, Harold Prince, Scott Sanders, and Stephen Sondheim.

While most of the collection addresses Stritch's performance career, there is a selection of items from Stritch's personal life, which includes biographical information, official documents, and photographs. The biographical information consists of various accounts of Stritch's biography, which features short drafts composed by Stritch, as well as her hand-written notes. The official documents held in the collection are Stritch's birth certificate, first communion card, Convent of the Sacred Heart school records, her passport, and her marriage certificate. The personal photographs encompass most of Stritch's life, and depict her family, friends, and her husband, John Bay.

Items from Stritch's show business career comprise the largest portion of the collection and include files of awards; benefits, galas, and special events; film, television, and theatre performances; and professional photographs. The awards held in these files include the envelope from the 2004 Emmy Awards where Stritch won for the HBO broadcast of *Elaine Stritch: At Liberty*; the Elliot Norton Awards Guest of Honor (2005); and a 1954 award from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Stritch attended and performed at many benefits, galas, and special events, and retained programs and press clippings from an assortment of these occasions. Among the events are the Oscar Hammerstian II Festival (1962); the 1996 and 2003 Kennedy Center Honors Gala; a 1997 tribute to Stephan Sondheim at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; a 1998 tribute to Ethel Merman to benefit the Gay Men's Health Crisis; a memorial celebration of Kim Stanley (2001); a 2008 benefit for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Community Center titled, "Front & Center with Elaine Stritch;" and correspondence and drafts of Stritch's remarks from her appearance as a presenter at the 2005 Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards. Also present are clippings and correspondence from cabaret performances between 2003 and 2005.

The film, television, and theatre files contain press clippings and reviews; photographs; programs; scripts; and audio and video recordings from many of her performances. Among her film career, only the files for *A Farewell to Arms* hold a script. The rest of the files contain press clippings, production and promotional photographs, and reviews. There is also a production schedule and call sheet held in the file for *Screwed*.

While there are no full scripts present in the television materials, the *30 Rock* file does include an

excerpt from the shooting draft of a 2012 script, as well as Stritch's 2010 contract with NBC studios. The rest of the television files contain press clippings and photographs, many of which are not labeled with program titles.
Stritch's stage career comprises the bulk of the show business files, which features early acting jobs from when she was a college student; performances on Broadway; touring productions; and her later solo performances at Café Carlyle. These files hold photographs, press clippings, programs, scripts, and audio and video recordings of interviews, performances, and media appearances.
Productions such as *Company* and *Pal Joey* contain items from the original and revival performances. While nearly all the files include press clippings and programs, scripts are present only for *The Gingerbread Lady*, *Love Letters*, and *Elaine Stritch: At Liberty*. The majority of files hold photographs as well, but there is also an additional group of images spanning Stritch's entire career which are unlabeled and were filed separately. These include undated headshots and professionally staged photographs. Of special interest is a necklace worn by Stritch in the role of Madame Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music* between 2010 and 2011.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged alphabetically by title.

Key Terms

Occupations
Actresses

Geographic Names
Birmingham (Mich.)
Broadway (New York, N.Y.)
London (England)
Manhattan (New York, N.Y.)

Genre/Physical Characteristic
Clippings
Correspondence
Photographs
Scripts
Sound recordings
Theater programs
Video recordings

Subjects
Motion picture actors and actresses
Musical theater -- New York (State) -- New York
Musicals
Television actors and actresses

Container List

b. 1 f. 1-13 Correspondence 1940-2008
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b. 1 f. 14-16 Biographical Information and Notes 1945-2011
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b. 2 f. 1-6 Photographs 1925-2011
Show Business Career
Awards
b. 10 f. 1 Elliot Norton Awards Guest of Honor 2005
b. 2 f. 7 Emmy Awards 2004
b. 10 f. 2 Key to My Old Kentucky Home 1954
Benefits, Galas, and Special Events
b. 2 f. 8-10 1961-2006
b. 3 f. 1-4 1995-2008
b. 10 f. 5 Tuxedo Ball Flyer 1946
Film
b. 3 f. 5-6 *A Farewell to Arms* 1957
b. 3 f. 7 *Autumn in New York* 1999
b. 3 f. 8 *Broadway: The Golden Age* 2003
b. 3 f. 9 *Comanche!* 1956
b. 3 f. 10 *Monster in Law* 2005
b. 3 f. 11 *Out to Sea* 1997
b. 3 f. 12 *Paradise* 2003
b. 3 f. 13 *The Perfect Furlough* 1957
b. 3 f. 14 *Providence* 1977
b. 3 f. 15 *River of Fundament* 2012
b. 3 f. 16 *Romance and Cigarettes* 2005
b. 3 f. 17 *The Scarlet Hour* 1955
b. 3 f. 18 *Screwed* 2000
b. 3 f. 19 *September* 1987
b. 3 f. 20 *Three Violent People* 1956
Television
b. 3 f. 21 *30 Rock* 2008
b. 3 f. 22 *My Sister Eileen* 1960
b. 3 f. 23 *Nobody's Perfect* 1980
b. 3 f. 24 *Paradise* 2003
b. 3 f. 25 *The Red Mill* 1958
b. 3 f. 26 *Sensibility and Sense* 1990
b. 3 f. 27 *Two's Company* 1975-1977
b. 3 f. 28 *Washington Square* 1956

Show Business Career (cont.)
Television (cont.)

b. 3 f. 29 Photographs and Clippings 1958-2008

Theatre

b. 3 f. 30 *Accent of Youth* 1949

b. 10 f. 3 *An Elephant in My Pajamas* 1973-1979

b. 3 f. 31 *Ancestral Voices* 2009

b. 4 f. 1 *Angel in the Wings* 1947-1948

b. 4 f. 2 *Annie Get Your Gun* 1965

b. 4 f. 3 *Any Wednesday* 1967

b. 4 f. 4 *Born Yesterday* 1950

b. 4 f. 5 *Bus Stop* 1955

b. 4 f. 6 Café Carlyle 2006

b. 4 f. 7-8 *Cakewalk* 1993-2000

b. 4 f. 9 *Call Me Madame* 1951-1953

b. 4 f. 10 *Carnegie Hall Celebrate Betty Comden and Adolph Green* 1999

b. 4 f. 11 *A Celebration of Music of Judy Garland* 1998

b. 4 f. 12-17 *Company* 1970-1993

b. 4 f. 18 *Dancing in the End Zone* 1984

A Delicate Balance

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b. 5 f. 1-2 Rehearsal Scripts 1995-1996

b. 5 f. 3 Dramatic Workshop Players 1943-1945

Elaine Stritch: At Liberty

b. 5 f. 4-14 2001-2008

b. 10 f. 4 Flyer 2001

b. 5 f. 15 *Elaine Stritch Singin' Sondheim Again* 2011

b. 5 f. 16 *Elsa Edgar* 1998

b. 5 f. 17 *Endgame* 2008

b. 5 f. 18 *Follies* 1985

b. 5 f. 19 *The Full Monty* 2009

b. 6 f. 1-2 *The Gingerbread Lady* 1970-1975

b. 6 f. 3 *Goldilocks* 1958

b. 6 f. 4 *I Married and Angel* 1964

b. 6 f. 5 *Kiss the Boys Good-Bye!* 1951

b. 6 f. 6 *The King and I* 1965

A Little Night Music

b. 9 Necklace 2010-2011
Necklace worn by Stritch in the role of Madame Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music*.

b. 6 f. 7 Program 2010

b. 6 f. 8 *Loco* 1946

b. 6 f. 9-10 *Love Letters* 1990-1997

Show Business Career (cont.)
Theatre (cont.)

b. 6 f. 11 *Mame* 1968-1969
b. 6 f. 12 *A Month in the Country* 1969
b. 6 f. 13 *My Favorite Broadway: The Leading Ladies* 1966
b. 6 f. 14 *On Your Toes* 1954
b. 6 f. 15 *Once Married, Twice Shy* 1953
b. 6 f. 16 *Pajama Tops* 1954
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b. 7 f. 10 *The Shape of Things* 1947
b. 7 f. 11-12 *Showboat* 1991-1995
b. 7 f. 13 *The Sin of Pat Muldoon* 1957
b. 7 f. 14 *Small Craft Warnings* 1973
b. 7 f. 15 *Suite in Two Keys* 1983
b. 7 f. 16 *Texas Li'l Darling* 1949-1950
b. 7 f. 17 *The Time of the Barracudas* 1963-1964
b. 7 f. 18 *To Be Continued* 1999
b. 7 f. 19 *A Valentine for Leonard Bernstein* 1961
b. 7 f. 20 *What Every Woman Knows* 1946
b. 7 f. 21 *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe* 1963
b. 7 f. 22 *Woman Bites Dog* 1946
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b. 8 f. 2 *Yes M'Lord* 1949-1950

Photographs

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