

Michael Barker:

An Inventory of His Collection Relating to Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Barker, Michael
Title	Michael Barker Collection of Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop
Dates:	circa 1937-1975
Extent	15 boxes, 2 oversize folders
Abstract	The collection documents the activities of the Theatre group and Littlewood's activities from about 1937-1975. Barker worked as Littlewood's assistant during the 1960s and '70s. The Collection is primarily composed of about eighty scripts and screenplays dating from Barker's years with Littlewood. Some additional correspondence and a series of notebooks kept by Littlewood are also present.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-02512
Language:	English
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchase, 1980 (R8669)
Processed by	Bob Taylor, 1996
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Michael Barker, who assembled this collection of Joan Littlewood materials, worked with her in the 1960s and '70s as an assistant and was involved both in theatrical endeavors as well as the street theater ventures.

Joan Maud Littlewood was born into a working-class family in London's East End in October 1914. Early demonstrating an acute mind and an artistic bent she won scholarships to a Catholic school and then to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. Quickly realizing that RADA was neither philosophically nor socially congenial, she departed to study art. In 1934--still short of twenty years of age--she arrived in Manchester to work for the BBC. Littlewood soon met Jimmy Miller (Ewan MacColl) and collaborated with him in the Theatre of Action, a leftist drama group. In spite of her antipathy to traditional theater she was active in repertory theater in Birmingham during the late '30s and increasingly interested in the theories of Rudolf Laban on dance and movement as they applied to the stage.

The outbreak of World War Two ended the Theatre of Action, and, after a varied journalistic and theatrical career during the war, Littlewood, MacColl, Gerry Raffles (whom she married), and others founded the Theatre Workshop in 1945. The Theatre Workshop won considerable praise for its tours of Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Sweden during 1947 and '48, but at home led a vagabond existence, playing one-night stands all over Britain. In 1953 the group secured the use of the Theatre Royal at Stratford in east London, and at last began to make a name for themselves in their homeland.

Innovative stagings of traditional theater (*Volpone*, *Richard II*) and new non-traditional works (Behan's *The Hostage* and Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*) solidified the Theatre Workshop's reputation--and Joan Littlewood's--in the years down to the early 1960s. The culmination of Littlewood's Stratford period was perhaps 1963's *Oh What a Lovely War*, after which her attentions turned increasingly toward the Fun Palace Trust and similar attempts to establish interactive non-theatrical public entertainment. The ultimately unsuccessful "fun palace" ventures, together with a growing interest in African and Asian theatrical and film projects absorbed Littlewood's energies in the years after the mid-1960s.

Scope and Contents

The Michael Barker collection of Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop includes notebooks, correspondence, scripts and other materials documenting Joan Littlewood's professional life within and apart from the Theatre Workshop from about 1937 until 1975. The collection is divided into three series: Joan Littlewood (3 boxes), Collected Scripts (11 boxes), and Miscellany (1 box).

Michael Barker's Joan Littlewood materials arrived at the HRC via an antiquarian bookseller and after having survived--at least in part--a fire. No evidence of any original order employed by Littlewood was evident, nor was there any clear indication that much of the material was well-known to Barker, though he did apparently label a number of the notebooks. In organizing the collection the correspondence was arranged alphabetically and the extensive Littlewood-Raffles correspondence was placed in chronological order. The scripts have been arranged by playwright, and the remaining materials are grouped under appropriate rubrics.

The Joan Littlewood series embraces in the main a group of notebooks kept by Littlewood from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, a number of essays and scripts, as well as a portion of her correspondence. Completing this series are materials related to her activities in the Fun Palace Trust and a small group of photographs and theatrical sketches.

The Littlewood notebooks are essentially her workings-out of dramatic concepts, dialogue, and evaluations of actors but also contain political essays and commentary. The correspondence includes the letters between Littlewood and her husband Gerry Raffles during 1947 and '48, as well as a file of correspondence between Littlewood and actors and playwrights, such as Isla Cameron, David Mowat, and Celia Salkeld in the early 1960s.

The Collected Scripts series includes about eighty scripts and screenplays dating primarily from the 1950s and '60s. They are mostly mimeographed, with few manuscript additions, but several are revised and/or include laid-in correspondence. British--and a few American--playwrights, such as Lionel Bart, Shelagh Delaney, Ewan MacColl, and Wole Soyinka are represented in the series.

The concluding Miscellany series contains portions of Michael Barker's correspondence with Lionel Bart and Tom Driberg, together with Sean Kenny's correspondence on staging Bart's *Gulliver's Travels*.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Joan Littlewood, 1937-1975 (3 boxes)

The Littlewood series is divided into five subseries. The first of these comprises eleven notebooks kept by the producer-director from the late '30s to the early 1950s. Desultory use of a given notebook over a period of time results in a complex of ideas difficult to characterize, but it may be said that Littlewood's notebooks emphasize eurhythmics, dramatic theory, and evaluations of actors, as well as considerable amounts of dramatic dialogue (*A Christmas Carol*, for example). Political theory and commentary, as well as notes on British history, also figure significantly.

The second subseries, Essays and Scripts, contains essays on the Theatre Royal at Stratford E.15 and on the artist Maqbul Fida Husain, as well as scripts for six episodes of an apparent proposed TV series "Max in India".

Subseries C (Correspondence) contains a major portion of the correspondence between Littlewood and Gerry Raffles during the Theatre Workshop tours of 1947 and '48, revealing much of the workings and personalities of the ensemble and the state of the theater in immediate postwar Europe. Other correspondents represented in the subseries include Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Robert Rietty, and Ray Stark.

Material in the Fun Palace Trust subseries dates from the 1960s and concerns Littlewood's interest in this entity and related projects to promote "fun fairs" and other popular entertainment projects. Virtually all of the work represented here was undertaken by Michael Barker as Littlewood's assistant.

Subseries E (Joan Littlewood in Print) contains two periodical issues with Littlewood-related material and *Bubble City*, a pamphlet containing her views on public entertainment and social welfare.

The Photos and Artwork subseries is the smallest and contains a few photographs of Joan Littlewood, together with a number of sketches of costumes and set designs.

Series II. Collected Scripts, circa 1957-1972 (11 boxes)

The 80-odd scripts, teleplays, and screenplays which form this series date primarily from the later 1950s and the 1960s. These are generally mimeographed, though two or three are published editions and several are in typescript with manuscript revisions. British and a few American playwrights are represented, and a few pieces of correspondence relating to the plays are laid in. Playwrights of interest include Lionel Bart, Brendan Behan, Shelagh Delaney, Sean Kenny, Ewan MacColl, and Wole Soyinka.

Series III. Miscellany, undated (1 box)

The third and final series comprises a medley of materials relating to Michael Barker, Lionel Bart, and the postwar British theater. Correspondence from Bart to Barker and notes on Bart's work in the musical theater are present, as is a folder of Sean Kenny's correspondence relating to the production of Bart's *Gulliver's Travels*.

Also present in this series and bearing little apparent connection to it are groups of letters from Tom Driberg to Barker and from various public figures to Philip Laski. Completing this series are a number of autographs, programs of the Theatre Royal, Stratford, and a few assorted pieces of printed matter.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Barker, Michael.

Bart, Lionel.

Driberg, Tom, 1905-1976.

Kenny, Sean.

Littlewood, Joan.

Raffles, Gerry.

Subjects

Street entertaining--Great Britain.

Street theatre--Great Britain.

Theatre--Great Britain--20th century.

Document Types

Broadsides.

Caricatures.

Drawings.

Notebooks.

Photographs.

Postcards.

Scripts.

Theatre programs.

Series I. Joan Littlewood, 1937-1975

Subseries A. Notebooks

- Dramatization of *A Christmas Carol*; set design for *Treasure Island*; 10 leaves of dialog for *A Christmas Carol* laid in **box 1 folder 1**
- "Drill & voice produc. [and] Production classes"
- Production notes on *Rogue's Gallery* and *Don Perlimplin*; visit to Czechoslovakia; notes on Labour Party meeting, 10 Apr. 1948 **box 1 folder 2**
- "Report on acting in T.W." (11 leaves of ms. notes, with evaluations of actors) **folder 3**
- "The canary who wanted an adventure" and other notes; typescript essays ("Theatre and communism: some ideas inspired by a recent visit to Czechoslovakia" and "Katherine Dunham, her dancers and musicians") laid in
- Notes on politics, the theater, Henry VIII; 2 leaves of ms. dialog laid in **box 1 folder 4**
- "Training classes" **folder 5**
- Political science notebook, with evaluations of actors laid in
- "Stanislavsky notes" **box 1 folder 6**
- Dramatic dialogue, British history and economics notes
- Rehearsal notes
- Rehearsal notes; 4 detached notebook leaves

Subseries B. Essays and Scripts

- "Lall, you are a clown" by Littlewood and Santi Chowdhury (mimeo, loose leaves) **box 1 folder 7**
- "Lall, you are a clown" (bound mimeo) **box 2 folder 1**
- "Max in India" scripts **folder 2**

"Rufus" series scripts by Littlewood and Michael Barker **folder 3**

"Use of Theatre Royal, Stratford E.15" (4 leaves); draft article on Maqbul Fida Husain (loose leaves) **folder 4**

Subseries C. Correspondence

Incoming

Gerry Raffles to Littlewood, 1947-48 **box 2 folder 5**

Actors and playwrights

A-J **box 2 folder 6**

K-W **folder 7**

Various correspondents **folder 8**

Outgoing

Littlewood to Gerry Raffles, 1947 and later **box 2 folder 9**

Littlewood to Michael Barker, 1975 **box 3 folder 1**

Notes and memos **folder 2**

Miscellaneous notes and memos **folder 3**

Subseries D. Fun Palace Trust

Barker, Michael

Correspondence on loan of hut, 1968 **box 3 folder 4**

Correspondence and printed matter on fun fair, Woburn Abbey, 1968 **folder 5**

Notes on street fairs **folder 6**

Notes and printed matter on street fairs **folder 7**

Material on airhouse **folder 8**

Mimeo and ms. material on Fun Palace project **folder 9**

Press releases for City of London Festival summer fair, 1968 **folder 10**

Pask, Gordon. *Proposals for a Cybernetic Theatre* **folder 11**

Subseries E. Joan Littlewood in Print

Periodical issues; *Bubble City* (pamphlet); Margaret Croyden interview (mimeo) **box 3**
folder 12

Subseries F. Photographs and Artwork

Photographs of Littlewood; sketches for set designs and costumes **box 3**
folder 13

Series II. Collected Scripts, circa 1957-1972

Ackroyd, S. Fred. "Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp"	box 4 folder 1
Aspler, Tony. "The Marrying Kind"	folder 2
Barker, Michael. "In and Out"	folder 3
Bart, Lionel.	
"Gulliver's Travels," 1970	box 4 folder 4
"Isn't This Where We Came In?" 1968	folder 5
"Lady in Waiting," 1959	folder 6
"Maggie May," 1965	folder 7
"Oliver," 1967	folder 8
"Quasimodo"	box 5 folder 1
"Twang"	folder 2
Behan, Brendan.	
"The Hostage," 1958 (2 versions)	box 5 folder 3-4
The Hostage, 1968 (with JL's ms. revisions)	folder 5
Behm, Marc. "Left Bank"	folder 6
Bickford, A. "The Meeting," 1970	folder 7
Bogner, Norman. "Privilege"	box 6 folder 1
Bowen, John. "After the Rain"	folder 2
Brahms, Caryl. "Mister Tooley"	folder 3
Coda, Frank. "All in a Days Work"	folder 4
Curry, Neil. <i>Euripides: The Trojan Women</i> , 1964	folder 5

Delaney, Shelagh. "A Taste of Honey" (2 versions)	folder 6-7
Dunlavy, James.	
"Halios"	box 6 folder 8
"Sursum Corda"	folder 9
Feld, Michael. "The Men from the Boys"	folder 10
Freeman, Dave. "The Inward Eye"	box 7 folder 1
Fried, Gerald. "Les the Least,"1964	folder 2
Garson, Barbara. <i>Macbird!</i> 1966	folder 3
Gates, Tudor. "The Optimists of Nine Elms,"1965	folder 4
Goulder, Stanley. "The Golden Head"	folder 5
Heaps, Leo J. "Machiavelli"	folder 6
Hirst, Robert. "Ivan the Terrible, King of the Via Veneto"	folder 7
Hopkins, John.	
"See the People Die," 1972	box 8 folder 1
"Something Like the Truth," 1972	folder 2
Ingrams, Richard. "Mrs. Wilson's Diary" (2 copies)	folder 3-4
James, Richard. "There Once Was a Shepherd"	folder 5
Johnson, Larry H. "Lord Love a Duck,"1965	folder 6
Junkin, John. "Queenie's Castle (episode 2),"1972	folder 7
Kenny, Sean. "A Dragon's Life"	

1st manuscript draft	box 8 folder 8
1st mimeo draft	box 9 folder 1
Sequence breakdown, 1970	folder 2
Notes	folder 3
Revised 1st draft	folder 4
Kirwan, Patrick. "Hotel Sahara,"1950	folder 5
La Frenais, Ian. "The Touchables"	folder 6
Lester Wilfred.	
"The Hat Trick"	box 10 folder 1
"The Trip" (2 copies)	folder 2-3
Lewis, Stephen. "Sparrers Can't Sing,"1972	folder 4
MacColl, Ewan.	
"The Other Animals"	box 10 folder 5
"The Overcoat"	folder 6
"So Long at the Fair"	folder 7
"Treasure Island"	folder 8
"The Gallery Boy"	folder 9
Maibaum, Richard. "From Russia with Love,"1963	box 11 folder 1
Martyne, Ken. "Man Drowning"	folder 2
Moliere. "L'Ecole des Femmes" (Tunisian screenplay), 1966	folder 3
Nash, N. Richard. "Kings and Oranges,"1965	folder 4
Naughton, Bill. "Day of Rest"	folder 5

Nolan, Liam. "Johnny and the Slaughtermen"	folder 6
Norman, Frank. "Fings ain't wot..."	folder 7
O'Neil, Russell. "A Brave New World"	folder 8
Paton, Robert. "A Brothel 80 Stories High..."	folder 9
Patrick, John. "Mrs. `Arris Goes to Paris," 1964 (2 copies)	box 12 folder 1-2
Pennington-Richards, C. M. "Double bunk"	folder 3
Plater, Alan. "A Smashing Day"	folder 4
Pratt, Michael. "The Perfect Ad"	folder 5
Roberts, Meade. "People Who Make No Noise..."	folder 6
Scott, Allan. "The Murder League"	folder 7
Selby, Jack Louis. "A Virgin Minus One"	box 13 folder 1
Shaffer, Anthony. "Forbush and the Penguins"	folder 2
Shaper, Hal. "Jane," 1966	folder 3
Soyinka, Wole. "Jero's Metamorphosis"	box 13 folder 4
<i>A Shuttle in the Crypt</i> (uncorrected proof), 1971	folder 5
Stewart, Bruce. "Hallelujah Boy" (production budget only)	folder 6
Subotsky, Milton. "Slan"	folder 7
Sweeney, Terence. "Reap as You Sow"	folder 8

Tabori, Paul. "Music from Heaven" (synopsis), 1966	folder 9
Theatre Workshop. <i>Oh What a Lovely War</i> (proof), 1965	folder 10
Thompson, David. <i>Moliere: George Dandin</i> , 1965	folder 11
Underwood, Terry. "Gretna Green"	folder 12
Anonymous plays	
"Calling All Cabs"	box 14 folder 1
"Carolina of Rijeka," 1960	folder 2
"Earoles"	folder 3
"National Velvet"	folder 4
"Touch It Light"	folder 5
[untitled play for children] 1963	folder 6
[untitled play, with characters Henry Cash, Doris Thring]	folder 7

Series III. Miscellany, undated

Bart, Lionel

Letters to Michael Barker and others; notes

**box 15
folder 1**

Notes to Michael Barker; memoranda

folder 2

Kenny, Sean. Correspondence on Bart's "Gulliver's Travels"

folder 3

Correspondence of Tom Driberg, Philip Laski, and others

folder 4

Theatrical programs (Theatre Royal, Stratford E.15, and others)

folder 5

Miscellaneous printed matter, including Theatre Workshop's "scheme for the formation of an experimental theatre workshop," 10 Jan. 1948 (posters removed to oversize file)

folder 6

Michael Barker Collection--Index of Correspondents

- Acrow (Engineers) Ltd. (H. M. Ratcliffe)--3.4
- Adza Vincent Ltd. see Vincent, Adza
- Agopian, Marguerite--2.6
- Air-Tech Industries, Inc. (Bertram Julien)--3.5
- Alexander, Tony--2.6
- Allen, Barry--2.6
- Alt, Donald D.--2.6
- Archer, Barbara--2.6
- *Art and Artists* (Colin Naylor)--3.6
- Arts & Community Centre Nottingham (Carlyle Reedy)--3.4
- Arts Council of Great Britain (G. White)--3.5
- Atkins, Robert see Fun Palace Trust
- BXL Industrial Products Group Ltd. (J. L. Brown)--3.6
- Baker, Norman--2.6
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- Barker, Michael--3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 15.4
- Barlow, A. J. see John Edgington & Co. Ltd.
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- Bedford, Nicole Russell, Duchess of--15.4
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- Blanck-Sichel, Carmen--2.6
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- Bourke, Margaret see Science Information Service
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- Brown, J. L. see BXL Industrial Products Group Ltd.
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- Callil, Carmen (Carmen Callil Ltd.)--2.6
- Cameo Players, the Anglo-Jewish Theatre Group see Pearlman, Isobel
- Cameron, Isla--2.6
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- Cornell, Steve--2.6
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- Crowther, David (L. & H. Nathan Ltd.)--15.3
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- Delaney, Shelagh, 1939- --15.4

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- Driberg, Tom, 1905-1976--15.4
- Duggan, Patrick--15.3
- Dyson, Anne--2.6
- Enterprise Metal Company (Hall & Riggs Ltd.) (Barry V. Hall)--15.3
- Epstein, Kathleen, Lady--15.4
- Feld, Michael, 1938- --6.10
- Fisher, E. G. see Robert Barrow Ltd.
- Frazier, Charles--3.5
- Fuerst, Tamara--2.6
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- Galway, Jim--2.6
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- Gluck, Edward L. see Century Lighting, Inc.
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- Greater London Council--3.5
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- Guthrie, Tyrone, Sir, 1900-1971--2.8 (see also Stratford upon Avon Parish Church Restoration Fund)
- Hall, Barry V. see Enterprise Metal Company (Hall & Riggs Ltd.)
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- Harvey, Laurence--15.4
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- John Smith & Co. (London) Ltd. (D. H. Williams)--3.7
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- Kook, Edward F.--15.3
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- Lumley Cazalet Ltd. see Cazalet, Camilla
- McCallum, B. see Richard Gainsborough Periodicals Limited
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- Maltby, Richard, 1937- --15.3
- Marcus, Stanley, 1905- --15.4
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- Max Eisen (firm) see Merrick, Jeanne
- Maxwell, Robert, 1923- --15.4
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- Monro, Colin--2.7
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- Pearlman, Isobel (the Cameo Players, the Anglo-Jewish Theatre Group)--2.7
- Plaimer, Rudolf--2.7
- Plymouth, Other Robert Ivor Windsor-Clive, Earl of, 1923- --15.4
- Ponch, Marty--2.7
- Poulengeris, C.--2.7
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- Primo de Rivera, Miguel, marques de Estella, 1905-1964 (Spanish Embassy, London)--15.4
- Projection Art Services Limited--3.9
- Puttnam, David (Goodtimes Enterprises Ltd.)--2.7
- Radic, Leonard, 1935- --2.7
- Raffles, Eric--3.1
- Raffles, Gerry--2.5, 3.2
- Ratcliffe, H. M. see Acrow (Engineers) Ltd.
- Rattigan, Terence--2.7
- Reedy, Carlyle see Arts & Community Centre Nottinghill
- Richard Gainsborough Periodicals Limited (B. McCallum)--3.6
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- Riddle, M. A.--15.3
- Rietty, Robert--2.7
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- Rodney, Jan--2.7
- Rolf Kruger Management Ltd. see Kruger, Rolf
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- Wavell, Archibald Percival Wavell, Earl of, 1883-1950--15.4
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