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Finding Aid for the

Turnabout Theater/Yale Puppeteers, 1910s-1990s

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Los Angeles, California

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Carol Baldwin (1997), Cate Thurston (2014), Cooper Byrnes (2017).

Descriptive Summary

Title

Turnabout Theater/Yale Puppeteers, 1910s-1990s

Collection Number

TT

Extent

115 boxes (46.6 linear ft.)

Repository

The Los Angeles Public Library. Photo Collection.
Los Angeles, California 90071

Abstract

The Turnabout Theater/Yale Puppeteers Collection, 1910s-1990s, consists of several thousand photographs and negatives, hundreds of items of ephemera, many journals and items of correspondence, and several puppets and stage props owned by the Yale Puppeteers; Harry Burnett, Forman Brown, and Richard "Roddy" Brandon. This collection is a unique look at Los Angeles theatre, puppetry, and the lives of gay men, through the 20th century. The collection's photographs are primarily b&w snapshots, but also include hundreds of 8x10, b&w portraits of Turnabout Theater players.

Physical Location

Housed in the "Cold Room" located on Lower Level 4 at Central Library.

Administrative Information

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<https://tessa.lapl.org/cdm/search/collection/turnabout>

Provenance/Source of Acquisition

Gift of Forman Brown/Michael Bridges, May 1996

Preferred Citation

[Item], Turnabout Theater/Yale Puppeteers Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Biography/History

The Yale Puppeteers were formed in 1928 by Harry Burnett, Forman Brown, and Richard “Roddy” Brandon, college friends who had met through a mutual love of puppet theater during their educations at University of Michigan and Yale University.

The group toured New England in 1928 before establishing themselves in Los Angeles, on Olvera Street, at the Teatro Torito in 1929. The Puppeteers stayed on at the Teatro Torito for two years before returning to the East Coast for a brief run on Broadway from 1931 to 1933. In 1933, the men returned to Hollywood to work as puppeteers on the films “I Am Suzanne,” and later “Whom the Gods Destroy.”

In 1941, Burnett, Brown, and Brandon opened the Turnabout Theater at 716 North La Cienega Boulevard with co-owner Dorothy Neumann, a stage and film actress who would become a mainstay in the Turnabout. The Turnabout Theater held two stages on opposite ends of the house, and hosted both marionette plays and live-actor performances on respective stages. Audience members were seated on decommissioned Pacific Electric Railway seats, which could “turn about” at intermission so that both stages could be seen over the course of the night.

The Turnabout Theater was the home of the Yale Puppeteers from 1941 until its closure in 1956, save for several limited national tours. During its run, the Turnabout became a fixture of the Los Angeles theater scene, and a local attraction of some popularity. The Yale Puppeteers’ performances and celebrity parodies attracted many celebrity patrons, who left their autographs on the inner walls of the theater, as well as on personalized headshots gifted to the company.

The Turnabout revue was created primarily for an adult audience, and included productions like “Gullible’s Travels,” “Caesar Julius,” and “Uncle Tom’s Hebbin,” as well as limited-engagement musical acts, and smaller-scale parodies using puppets and live actors. Notable performers in the Turnabout include Elsa Lanchester, Dorothy Neumann, Lotte Goslar, Leota Lane, and Frances Osborne.

Odetta, the folk-singer and civil rights activist, was another notable figure from the Turnabout. Odetta’s involvement with the theater began as a child, assisting her mother

Flora Feliz in her position as a maintenance worker. The family developed a friendship with the Yale Puppeteers, Harry Burnett arranging Odetta's early operatic vocal training several years later in the mid-1940s. Odetta performed ensemble roles in the theater, and went on to have a major role in the 1952 production "Tommy Turnabout Jr's Circus" shortly before embarking on her career as a folk-artist.

In 1956, Burnett, Brown, and Brandon relocated their operation to San Francisco, but returned to Hollywood in early 1957. The Yale Puppeteers spent the rest of their retirement in Hollywood, and staged occasional, scaled-down performances out of their home and workshop "The Turnabout House".

Harry Burnett constructed and operated the marionettes for the Yale Puppeteers, and performed live in many Turnabout Theater productions. Burnett was also a prolific photographer, and documented the personal lives and travels of the Yale Puppeteers in several thousand photographs, spanning from 1928 to the early 1990s.

Forman Brown wrote the Yale Puppeteers' plays, including all music and lyrics, from the troupe's formation in 1928 until their retirement. Brown produced two books on the Yale Puppeteers' careers, "Punch's Progress" and "Turnabout." Forman Brown was also the author of the 1933 novel "Better Angel," which explored gay sexuality without condemnation or a tragic ending—making the novel unique for this period of gay literature.

Roddy Brandon served as a producer, business manager, and puppeteer for the Turnabout Theater. Brandon was Forman Brown's romantic partner from 1928 until Brandon's death in 1985, and their correspondence is included in the collection.

The Turnabout Theater/Yale Puppeteers Collection documents the history of a prominent midcentury puppet theater. In doing so, it also provides a unique look into the early years of Los Angeles theatre, and the lives of traveling performers and gay men in 20th century America.

Scope and Content

The Turnabout Theater/Yale Puppeteers Collection, 1910s-1990s, consists of several thousand photographs and negatives, hundreds of items of ephemera, many journals and items of correspondence, and several puppets and stage props owned by Harry Burnett, Forman Brown, and Richard "Roddy" Brandon.

Several thousand black & white snapshots comprise the majority of the collection, spanning 1928-1960s. These photos, taken by Harry Burnett, document the Yale Puppeteers' personal lives, professional tours, and general travels. The collection also includes hundreds of 8x10, b&w prints documenting Yale Puppeteers productions, puppets, and live performers spanning 1931-1956. Portraits of live performers feature primarily Elsa Lanchester, and include Harry Burnett, Forman Brown, Dorothy

Neumann, Lotte Goslar, Frances Osborne, Odetta, and others. Also featured are several albums of color snapshots documenting the post-Turnabout careers, and retirement, of the Yale Puppeteers spanning 1960-1992. The entire collection includes several thousand negatives (including a small number of Kodachrome slides) corresponding to these 8x10, 4x5, and snapshot photos.

The collection includes 17 puppets created by Burnett and used in Turnabout Theater productions from 1933-1956, or in his post-Turnabout work in the 1960s-1970s. Other boxes contain small stage props used in the Turnabout, and two costumes worn by Burnett.

Several albums and folders in the collection contain the Puppeteers' correspondence, notably the correspondence between Forman Brown and Roddy Brandon, spanning 1933-1978. Also included are Harry Burnett's personal journals, spanning 1947-1986.

The collection also has over 100 signed headshots of celebrity guest performers and/or patrons to the Turnabout, including by Marlene Dietrich, Anna May Wong, the Duncan Sisters, Beulah Bondi, Colleen Moore, Francis Lederer, Leota Lane, and Marie Dressler. The Turnabout Theater's "autograph wall" for celebrity patrons has been recorded in oversize photographs.

Organization and Arrangement

The collection has been arranged primarily by type of material, with like types grouped together when possible, (ie scrapbooks, photographs, letters.) Initial processing and placement of the collection seems to have been in some part dictated by the available storage space, as boxes of ephemera are scattered throughout the collection.

Related Materials

The Los Angeles Public Library contains the following supplemental materials, which are available for research, and in some cases, may be checked out.

Turnabout the story of the Yale Puppeteers / [videorecording]. 1997. Call number: VID 793.18092 H18Tu.

Better angel / Meeker, Richard (pseudonym for Forman Brown). 1990 edition. Call number: Fiction M.

A gamut of girls : memoir / Lanchester, Elsa. 1988. Call number: 822.092 L248-1

Small wonder : the story of the Yale Puppeteers and the Turnabout Theatre /Brown, Forman George. 1980. Call number 793.18 B877-2

Punch's progress/ Brown, Forman George. 1936. 793.18 B877

The pie-eyed piper and other impertinent plays for puppets/ Brown, Forman George. 1933. Call number: 793.18 B877-1

Olvera Street and the Avila Adobe/ Brown, Forman George. 1930. Call number: 979.41 L881Br

Container List

Box 001—Scrap books; two scrap books of Yale Puppeteers press clippings dated 1938-1986 (TT scrapbooks 56-57).

Box 002— Scrap books; two books of Yale Puppeteers press clippings dated 1939 and 1940. One book of Turnabout Theater press clippings from their National Tour dated 1953-1954. The National Tour album includes some 1953 correspondence between Harry Burnett and Roddy Brandon, and two fan letters to Burnett written in the early 1930s by “Mr. Moldey Plumbs”.

Box 003— Scrap books; one scrap book of Turnabout Theater press clippings dated 1965-70, saved by Grace Herman.

One envelope of TT press clippings/correspondence dated 1980-1993, saved by Dave and Lacey Crandall. Includes letters written by Harry Burnett and Forman Brown to the Crandalls in the mid-1980s; general life/health updates, and seasonal greetings. Also includes Forman Brown’s eulogy of Roddy Brandon, published in a puppetry journal in 1985.

One book of press clippings, playbills, and correspondence dated through the 1950s, saved by Dorothy Neumann. Album includes letters written by Roddy Brandon to the Turnabout company at the ‘end of tour’, possibly in 1954. Album also includes unrelated letters from Harry and Ella Griffin to Dorothy Neumann.

Box 004—Scrap books; two books of Turnabout Theater press clippings dated 1950-1967.

Box 005— Scrap books; two books of press clippings and correspondence dated from 1940 through the 1950s. Roddy Brandon and Harry Burnett’s letters detail the last year of the Turnabout, their later struggles in their San Francisco venue in 1957, and hopes to reopen the Theater in other potential locations.

Album 69; one book of press clippings and correspondence dated from 1940-1957, includes 17 of Richard Brandon’s letters to friends Vernon and Marion Orr before and after the Turnabout’s closure.

Album 70 contains primarily correspondence through the 1956-1958, after the Turnabout’s closure. Album contains 16 of Harry Burnett’s letters and 21 of Roddy Brandon’s letters to Vernon and Marion Orr.

Box 006— Scrap book; one book of press clippings on Turnabout Theater. Album also contains 3 letters written by Roddy Brandon, and 7 short notes written by Harry Burnett, to Marion and Vernon Orr in 1951. Subjects of the correspondence are both personal and professional.

Box 007—One book of press bulletins for the Turnabout Theater dated 1946. One book of theater programs, dated 1946-47. One book of press clippings for the Yale Puppeteers and Forman Brown's *A Small Wonder*, dated mid-1980s.

Box 008—Scrap books; two scrap books of press clippings collected by Marion and Vernon Orr, dated 1953-1954. One book of press clippings dated 1955. One book of press clippings and photos, collected by fans, dated 1946-1948.

Box 009—Oversize scrap books; two books of press clippings for Turnabout Theater, 1941-1956. One book of press clippings for the Hollywood Centre Theater, dated 1957.

Box 010—Model of the Turnabout Theater, created by Charles Taylor in the late 1950s/early 1960s for Master's Degree in Theater Architecture.

Box 011—35mm negatives, color and b&w, Accession Number TT001-216 through TT001-568.

4x5 b&w negatives, Accession Number TT000-001 through TT002-016.

Box 012—35mm b&w negatives, corresponding to snapshots in Burnett's photo albums. Some negatives labeled by subject.

Box 013—35mm color negatives, corresponding to snapshots in Burnett's photo albums. Some negatives labeled by subject.

Box 014—5x7 and 35mm b&w negatives, corresponding to snapshots in Burnett's photo albums. Box slightly damaged.

Box 015—5x7 and 8x10 b&w large format negatives, Accession Numbers TT000-003 through TT002-018.

Box 016—5x7 and 8x10 b&w large format negatives, corresponding to snapshots in Burnett's photo albums.

Box 017—5x7 and 8x10 b&w large format negatives, corresponding to snapshots in Burnett's photo albums.

Box 018—4x5 b&w large format negatives, corresponding to snapshots in Burnett's photo albums.

Box 019—Empty photo envelopes numbered 1 through 290, some marked with descriptions of previous contents.

Box 020—Marionette handle (controller) signed by Harry Burnett, Forman Brown, and Roddy Brandon. Stage prop 194.

Box 021—Model/3-D advertisement of Turnabout Theater puppets constructed by Charles Taylor for Long Beach State College.

Box 022—Original artwork related to the Turnabout Theater (outside artist tributes). Signs 191, Cartoons 190.

Box 023—Framed and loose artwork owned by Harry Burnett, not related to the Theater.

Box 024—Typed program records for the Turnabout Theater, dated 1943-1955.

Box 025—Forman Brown's scripts for Tommy Turnabout's Circus, dated 1953. Scripts 195.

Box 026- Typed scripts for Tommy Turnabout's Circus, dated 1952.

Box 027—Ringling Brothers mini wooden treasure chest. Fragile.

Box 028 (Oversized) —Costume; embroidered yellow/green satin coat. Box includes brown velvet hat, and white slippers. Fragile.

Box 029—Magazines with coverage on the Turnabout Theater, dated through 1958.

Box 030—Posters for the Turnabout Theater, related TT ephemera.

Box 031—Yale Puppeteers posters and ephemera, oversize photos of Turnabout Theater 'signature wall'.

Box 032—Manuscripts of 'Turnabout' written by Elsa Lanchester and Forman Brown.

Box 033—Several of Forman Brown's manuscripts, including drafts of Turnabout, *Small Wonder*, and *Punch's Progress*. Manuscripts 80-84.

Box 034—Manuscript and carbon copy of Forman Brown's *Small Wonder*.

Box 035—Harry Burnett's journals, dating 1947-1954. Box contains journals in seven envelopes.

Box 036—Harry Burnett's journals, dating 1954-1963. Box contains journals in seven envelopes (journals 8-14).

Box 037—Harry Burnett's journals, dating 1963-1978. Box contains journals in 13 envelopes (journals 15-26).

Box 038—Harry Burnett's journals, dating 1980-1986. Box contains journals in 6 envelopes (journals 15-20), and two party invitations/RSVP lists.

Box 039—Cassette tapes of "Turnabout Revue" and "Elsa Lanchester/Songs of Forman Brown", two tapes.

Box 040—5 VHS tapes documenting Gina Caruso’s performances of Forman Brown’s songs. Box also includes letter from Gina Caruso to LAPL City Librarian Susan Kent. Not part of the original donation.

Box 041— Two folk songbooks owned by Dorothy Neumann, and Elsa Lanchester’s memoirs *A Gamut of Girls* (Capra Press, 1988) and *Elsa Lanchester Herself* (St. Martin's Press, 1983).

Box 042—Copies of Forman Brown’s *Small Wonder* (Scarecrow Press, 1980) and *Better Angel* (Alyson Publications, Inc., 1987) as originally donated. Copies of *Torment* (Universal Publishing and Distributing Corp, 1952), a pulp version of *Better Angel*, and *Punches Progress* (Macmillan, 1936), purchased and donated by Photo Friends for inclusion in the 2021 exhibition “Life on a String: The Yale Puppeteers and the Turnabout Theatre,” mounted in the Getty Gallery at Central Library.

Box 043—Vinyl records. Includes Turnabout recordings, as well as unrelated recordings by Odetta, Elsa Lanchester, and various artists. Fragile.

Box 044—Vinyl records, unrelated to Turnabout Theater. Fragile, some broken.

Box 045 (Oversized)—Stage prop of a miniature wooden piano used with Haydn Trio.

Box 046—Recognitions/awards won by Harry Burnett, Forman Brown, or the Yale Puppeteers. Numerous awards given by the City of Los Angeles, various puppeteer organizations, and community centers. Box also includes Forman Brown’s college degrees, and French passport.

Box 047—Three photo albums; black & white snapshots, some photos digitized. One album on the Yale Puppeteer’s traveling Turnabout tour, Accession Numbers TT001-138 through TT001-154.

One album of mostly personal Yale Puppeteers photos, Accession Numbers TT001-131 through TT001-137.

One album of Forman Brown’s childhood photos, dated from 1910 to 1918. Accession Numbers TT001-128 through TT001-130.

Box 048—Four photo albums, dated between the 1920s and the 1940s, black & white snapshots. Subjects are both personal and Turnabout Theater-related.

“Snapshots: Large Camera #1”, spans the 1940s, Accession Number TT001-171 through TT001-180.

“Snapshots: Large Camera #2”, spans 1920-1940s, Accession Number TT001-155 through TT001-168.

“Snapshots: Odds and Ends #2”, spans 1929-1940s, Accession Number TT001-184 through TT001-193.

“Snapshots: Odds and Ends #3”, Accession Number TT001-194 through TT001-199.

Box 049—Two photo albums, dated between the 1920s and 1940s, black & white snapshots. Subjects are the personal life and travels of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon.

“1939-1941”, Accession Number TT001-200 through TT001-209.

“Odds and Ends #1”, Accession Number TT001-181 through TT001-183. TT001-193?

Box 050—Four photo albums documenting the early run of the Turnabout Theater, and personal lives of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon. black & white snapshots.

album 11, Accession Number TT001-210 through TT001-220.

“Idyllwild”, album 12, Accession Number TT001-265 through TT001-272.

“1942-3”, album 13, Accession Number TT001-227 through TT001-241.

“1944”, album 14, Accession Number TT001-273 through TT001-285.

Box 051—Three photo albums spanning 1945-1947, black & white snapshots. Subjects are the Turnabout Theater and personal lives of its owners.

“Snapshots 1945”, Accession Number TT001-287 through TT001-298.

“Snapshots 1946”, Accession Number TT001-299 through TT001-341.

“Snapshots 1947”, Accession Number TT001-342 through TT001-364.

Box 052—Two photo albums spanning 1948-1949, black & white snapshots. Subjects are both the Turnabout Theater and the personal lives of its owners.

“Snapshots 1948”, Accession Number TT001-365 through TT001-377.

“Snapshots 1949”, Accession Number TT001-386 through TT001-402.

Box 053—Three photo albums spanning 1950-1952, black & white snapshots. Subjects are both the Turnabout Theater and the personal lives of its owners.

“Snapshots 1950”, Accession Number TT001-399 through TT001-424.

“Snapshots 1951”, Accession Number TT001-440 through TT001-458.

“Snapshots 1952”, Accession Number TT001-459 through TT001-494.

Box 054—Four photo albums, spanning 1953-1957, and the 1970s. Subjects are the Turnabout Theater and the personal travels of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon.

“Snapshots 1953”, black & white, Accession Number TT001-495 through TT001-512.

“Snapshots 1954-1955”, black & white, Accession Number TT001-513 through TT001-529.

“Snapshots 1956-1957”, black & white, Accession Number TT001-530 through TT001-569.

album 24, color photos spanning the 1970s, Accession Number TT001-427 through TT001-439.

Box 055—Three photo albums spanning from 1959 to the early 1970s. Subjects are the post-Turnabout Theater lives and careers of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon.

“Snapshots 1958”, black & white, Accession Number TT001-582 through TT001-591.

“Color #2”, color photos, Accession Number TT001-592.

“Idyllwild 1969”, color photos, Accession Number TT001-570 through TT001-581.

Box 056—Four photo albums spanning 1956-1976, subjects are the post-Turnabout Theater lives and careers of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon.

“Color #1”, color photos, Accession Number TT001-593 through TT001-601.

“Oakshire Dr Home”, color photos, Accession Number TT001-603 through TT001-615.
“1958”, Accession Number TT001-607 through TT001-630.
“1976”, Accession Number TT001-616 through TT001-619.

Box 057—Two photo albums, and two loose collages, spanning the 1970s. The subjects of these photos are Burnett, Brown, and Brandon’s activities in retirement.

“Canyon Drive Era/Claremont”, color photos, Accession Number TT001-644 through TTT001-679.

“Photos- Miss Laney”, color photos, includes some b&w photos from 1950s. Accession Number TT001-638 through TT001-643.

Box 058—Three photo albums, spanning 1967-1977. The subjects of these photos are Burnett, Brown, and Brandon’s activities in retirement. These photos mostly display home life and social events.

“Miss Laney 1976-1977”, color prints, Accession Number TT001-632 through TT001-637.

album 37, color photos, Accession Number TT001-680.

album 38, color photos, Accession Number TT001-701 through TT001-701.

Box 059—Four photo albums, spanning 1977-1978. The subjects of these photos are Burnett, Brown, and Brandon’s activities in retirement.

album 39, color photos, Accession Number TT001-684 through TT001-687.

album 40, color photos, Accession Number TT001-698 through TT001-701.

album 41, color photos, Accession Number TT001-688 through TT001-692.

album 42, color photos, Accession Number TT001-683.

Box 060—Two photo albums, spanning 1978-1979. Subjects are Burnett, Brown, and Brandon’s activities in retirement.

album 43, color photos, Accession Number TT001-681 to TT001-682.

album 44, color photos, Accession Number TT001-623 to TT001-626.

Box 061—Four photo albums, spanning the 1980s. The subject of these albums are Burnett and Brown’s lives in retirement, and their vacations to Europe.

album 45, color photos, Accession Number TT001-620 to TT001-622.

album 46, color photos, Accession Number TT001-709 to TT001-724.

album 47, color photos, Accession Number TT001-728 to TT001-729.

album 48, color photos, Accession Number TT001-725 to TT001-727.

Box 062—Embroidered seat covers used in the Turnabout Theater. Box contains 16 seat covers.

Box 063—Embroidered seat covers used in the Turnabout Theater. Box contains 14 seat covers.

Box 064—Embroidered seat covers used in the Turnabout Theater. Box contains 14 seat covers.

Box 065—Embroidered seat covers used in the Turnabout Theater. Box contains 17 seat covers, as well as TT souvenir seating chart displaying a full list of seat names.

Box 066—8x10, black & white prints, spanning from the 1930s to the 1960s. Folders include photos of Turnabout productions and cast members, promotional photos from the Yale Puppeteer's work on the film "I am Suzanne", pop culture figures at the Theater, and the post-Turnabout lives of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon. Accession Numbers TT000-200 through TT000-376.

Box 067—8x10 black & white prints, spanning 1940s-1950s. Folders contain portraits of Turnabout performers, primarily Elsa Lanchester.

Folders also include roughly 20 signed headshots of notable visitors and guest performers at the Turnabout, such as the Duncan Sisters, John Carter, Aline McMahon, Corrina Mura, conductor Alfred Hertz, Leota Lane, Virginia Sale, David Manners, Queenie Leonard, Ed Prendel, Trudi Schoop, Charles Weidman, Beulah Bondi, Polly Moran, Martha Graham, and Toto the clown.

Accession Number TT000-001 through TT000-099.

Box 068—8x10 black & white prints, spanning from the late 1940s-1970s. Subjects include Turnabout performers and puppets, and the post-Turnabout work of Harry Burnett. Accession Number TT000-337 through TT000-556.

Box 069—8x10 black & white prints, spanning the 1920s-1950s. Folders include photos of the pre-Turnabout Yale Puppeteers, the Theater's performers and puppets, and pop culture figures' visits to the Turnabout Theater. Many photos of Burnett's puppets. Accession Number TT000-557 through TT000-736.

Box 070—8x10 black & white prints, spanning the 1940s-1950s. Photos mostly document the Tommy Turnabout's Circus production. Accession Numbers TT000-737 through TTT000-899.

Box 071—8x10 black & white prints, spanning the 1940s-1980s. Folders contain stills of Turnabout performers and puppets, and pop culture figures visiting the Theater. Accession Numbers TT000-900 through TT001-778.

Box 072—8x10 black & white prints, spanning 1940s-1950s. Folders contain stills of Turnabout performers and puppets, venue, and the Tommy Turnabout's Circus production. Accession Number TT001-802 through TT002-018.

Box 073—Two binders of Kodachrome slides dated in 1955, some digitized. The slides contain some TT content, but mostly document the personal lives and travels of Burnett, Brown, and Brandon. Accession Number TT001-017 through TT001-021.

Box 074—Turnabout Theater bulletins, songbooks, programs, and attendance ledgers.

Box 075— Assorted clippings and ephemera

Folder 1: Press clippings and publicity materials for Yale Puppeteers shows in Michigan, correspondence at Yale.

Folder 2: Yale Puppeteers publicity materials and newspaper clippings for shows in New York City.

Folder 3: Yale Puppeteers coast-to-coast tour dates and addresses in the 1930s

Folder 4: Olvera Street Teatro Torito programs, publicity materials and press clippings

Folder 5: Turnabout Theater, La Cienega, souvenir programs

Folder 6: Turnabout Theater, La Cienega, leaflets, handbills, newsletters, brochures

Box 076— Clippings, correspondence, ephemera

Folder 1: Turnabout, Jr. souvenir programs, publicity materials; Turnabout San Francisco souvenir programs

Folder 2: “The Puppet Show” newsletters 1931-1934

Folder 3: Turnabout members, other productions

Folder 4: Correspondence between Forman Brown and Richard “Roddy” Brandon

Folder 5: Correspondence from/to Harry Bennett and Forman Brown, Turnabout Theatre 25th Anniversary scrapbook containing congratulatory letters and telegrams

Folder 6: *Better Angel* and *Small Wonder* related

Folder 7: Forman’s *Better Angel* scrapbook of reviews, fan letters and clippings

Folder 8: Drawings, clippings, articles, flyers for other productions

Folder 9: Articles by and about Forman Brown, poems, lyrics and compositions by Forman Brown

Box 077—Los Angeles Drama Critics award given to Harry Burnett and Forman Brown for “Distinguished Achievement”.

Box 078—Turnabout Theaters bulletins, photocopied lyric sheets, programs, ephemera, and press clippings from the 1970s-1980s. Box also contains unrelated scripts for the “Family Lines” television show.

Box 079—Press clippings spanning the 1980s-1990s. Box also contains Turnabout sheet music and ephemera, and the headshots/casting materials of Dorothy Neumann.

Box 080— Oversize black & white prints dated from the 1930s-1970s; portraits of Turnabout productions, actors, and notable guests. Several oversize portraits of Richard Brandon dated in the 1930s.

Box includes signed headshots from Marlene Dietrich, Anna May Wong, Lotte Goslar, Sid Grauman, Marie Dressler, Irene Rich, Francis Lederer, Gilda Grey, Jetta Goudal, Leatrice Joy, Beulah Bondi, Colleen Moore, Una Merkel, and Elizabeth Talbot-Martin.

Accession Number TT000-504 through TT000-982.

Box 081— Oversize black & white prints dated from the 1910s-1960s; portraits of Turnabout productions, actors, and notable guests. Box includes signed headshots of guests Anita Page and Marie Dressler as they pose with Turnabout puppets. Accession Number TT000-504 through TT000-982.

Box 082— Oversize black & white prints dated from the 1940s-1970s; portraits of Turnabout productions, actors, and notable guests. Box includes several signed headshots from Anita Page and Virginia O'Reilly. Some colorized prints of Elsa Lanchester. Accession Number TT001-000 through TT001-985.

Box 083—Two albums of color snapshots, dated in the from the 1940s-1990s, documenting the personal lives and retirement of Harry Burnett and Forman Brown. album 49, spanning the 1970s, Accession Number TT001-730 through TT001-738. album 50, Accession Number TT001-739 through TT001-742.

Box 084—Five photo albums; four albums spanning the 1970s, documenting Burnett and Brown's vacations in retirement. One album of Forman Brown's family photos, spanning 1910-1930. Accession Number TT001-122 through TT001-127.

Box 085—Embroidered seat covers used in the Turnabout Theater. Box contains 16 seat covers.

Box 086— Postcards written or received by Harry Burnett, Roddy Brandon, and Forman Brown during their 1960s-1970s travels to Europe. Box contains roughly 500 postcards exchanged between the Yale Puppeteers, Priscilla Rhodehamel (Brandon's sister), Mary Burnett (Burnett's sister), and various friends.

Box 087—Postcards acquired by Harry Burnett during his European travels through the 1960s-1970s, majority are blank. Box also contains small travel/tourism booklets.

Box 088—Some blank postcards and travel booklets owned by Harry Burnett, and some organizational dividers.

Box 089—Stage prop, painted wooden horse head. Oversize.

Box 090 (Oversized)—Puppet; oversize horse-headed puppet attached to a stick and sign, used in the Turnabout production "Mary Mary Quite Contrary Please Remove Your Millinery". Fragile.

Box 091—Three puppets; one leopard and one hound created by Burnett, and one “Dick Powell” puppet created by another artist (potentially Sue Hastings). Box also contains small graduation gown and cap for the male puppet.

Box 092—Opera Singer used by the Yale Puppeteers in their 1952 traveling tour. (Goes with Pianist puppet in Box 096 and piano in Box 110.)

Box 093—A tandem chorus line of three mice ballerinas, used in the production of “The Pie-Eyed Piper” at the Turnabout Theater.(Goes with prima ballerina in box 100)

Box 094—Three puppets; one Indonesian Wayang theatre puppet purchased by Burnett from Pier One Imports in the late 1950s/early 1960s, one Japanese *oni* purchased by Burnett from Pier One Imports in the late 1950s/early 1960s and one wealthy Arab character created by another artist (potentially Sue Hastings). Box also contains one stage prop miniature record-player.

Box 095—One puppet; a clown hand-puppet, on a stick. This clown was made by Burnett in the 1980s for resale.

Box 096—One pianist used by the Yale Puppeteers in their 1952 touring show (goes with Opera Singer in Box 092 and piano in Box 110).

Box 097—Two members of the Haydn trio. Burnett originally constructed the Haydn trio as part of a puppet orchestra for the film “I Am Suzanne”, and they became mainstays of the Turnabout Theater. (Goes with piano in Box 045)

Box 098—Several costumes and stage props; one Viking helm with attached yarn braids, one prop pillar, and one sign reading “Harry’s Happy Hats—Free”.

Box 099—Two puppets; Burnett’s 1970s reproduction of Mr. Weather, a character from an early Forman Brown play in the 1920s. Box also includes Simon Legree, from the Turnabout production of “Uncle Tom’s Hebbin.”

Box 100—Rat prima ballerina used in the “Pie-Eyed Piper.” (Goes with rat ballerina trio in Box 093)

Box 101—Large goat puppet wearing overalls, made by Burnett in the 1970s for a children’s production of “Billy Goat Gruff”. These were made during the course of Burnett’s post-Turnabout work as an educator in Claremont. (Goes with puppets in boxes 102 & 103)

Box 102—Medium goat puppet wearing overalls, made by Burnett in the 1970s for a children’s production of “Billy Goat Gruff”. These were made during the course of Burnett’s post-Turnabout work as an educator in Claremont. (Goes with puppets in boxes 101 & 103)

Box 103—Two puppets; one green troll, and one small goat wearing overalls, all made by Burnett in the 1970s for a children’s production of “Billy Goat Gruff”. These were made during the course of Burnett’s post-Turnabout work as an educator in Claremont. (Goes with puppets in boxes 102 & 103)

Box 104—Marionettes of Forman Brown and Roddy Brandon. Not part of the original collection. Marionettes were commissioned by Photo Friends for the 2021 exhibition “Life on a String: the Yale Puppeteers and the Turnabout Theatre.” They were made by the company Marionettes BG in Bulgaria with wood portions carved by Georgi Georgiev.

Box 105— Marionette of Harry Burnett. Not part of the original collection. Marionette was commissioned by Photo Friends for the 2021 exhibition “Life on a String: the Yale Puppeteers and the Turnabout Theatre.” They were made by the company Marionettes BG in Bulgaria with wood portions carved by Georgi Georgiev.

Box 106—Miniature stage props (including a bench, cymbals), small personal puppet in a box, wooden ticket stamps for Turnabout seating assignments (nails sticking out of bottom), roughly 25 knitted hats (for puppets).

Box 107—Attendance logs from the Turnabout Theatre and original tribute art.

Box 108—Self-portrait Harry Burnett clown puppet, made by Burnett. Not part of original donation. Was donated in 2020 by the Denver Puppet Theater which was permanently closed the year of donation.

Box 109 (Oversized)—Costume; blue satin coat with plaid cuffs/lapels, red satin vest. Potentially worn for Tommy Turnabout’s Circus.

Box 110 (Oversized)—Stage prop; one miniature wooden piano. (Goes with puppets in boxes 92 & 96).

Box 111—Collapsible top hat, used for collection donations at the Turnabout Theatre. (Goes with cherub in box 112)

Box 112—Plaster cherub. (Goes with top hat in box 111)

Box 113—Stage prop; one miniature tree (“coat hanger”-like structure), base made from a stick and a coffee can.

Box 114—Faded photo of autograph wall, oversize. Photo is 6 feet tall.

Box 115—Flat puppet mounted on a wooden board, and oversize photos of Turnabout autograph wall.