

INTRODUCTION

Provenance

The papers were donated to the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum on May 6, 1998 by Margrit Roma and Clarence Ricklefs.

Restrictions

None

Publications Rights

Consult the Librarian

Collection Number

998.097

Size

7 linear ft.

Processed by

Paul Padgette

BIOGRAPHY

Margrit Roma was born in Zurich, November 27, 1907. Her maiden name was Baer. At an early age she ran away from home to Berlin to pursue a life in the active theatre life in that city. She met Max Reinhardt and was a student and actress in his famed school. Early on she was under the influence of the works of Bertolt Brecht and performed in his adaptation of Gorki's The Mother. By the mid 1930s, she fled to France when Hitler's dictatorship was persecuting Jews. In Paris she appeared in several films before moving on to America and eventually to Hollywood. In Hollywood, she worked for the studios with no real success, but in 1946, she met Clarence Ricklefs, a contractor, born in Iowa, and they married. Together they created and managed a series of "little" theaters in the area for twenty years. Artistically successful, the financial returns were meager. In 1966, they moved to the San Francisco peninsula and became involved in theater productions that, in 1969, evolved into the New Shakespeare Company in San Francisco.

From the beginning, the Shakespeare Company centered on young actors, as well as young audiences. Touring the entire USA, they traveled to as many as fifty cities, including thirty-six college campuses, in the next two decades. Money was always a problem and the papers in the collection spell out the difficulties in continuing productions of not only Shakespeare but also Brecht and adapting children's classics for the stage. From performances in Golden Gate Park to Lake Tahoe and all over the country, the team of Roma and Ricklefs brought theater to the country for two and a half decades.

This Collection describes the history of life in the theater in America when success is too often measured by financial rewards and not on artistic merit.

SCOPE

This collection covers the period of 1907 to 1995 in the life of Margrit Roma, actress and director, with the early papers and correspondence mostly in German. It also includes the life of Clarence Ricklefs after 1946. The collection contains information on the couple's professional careers in the theater; Ms. Roma's career in Hollywood and the New Shakespeare Company in San Francisco.

CONTAINER / FOLDER LISTING

SERIES I. BIOGRAPHICAL
Early family documents, marriage and divorce papers, theater materials and papers from the 1920s, through family correspondence (mostly in German); Ms. Roma's writings and lectures during her associations in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 1	1	family documents, resumes, New Shakespeare Co. history
	2	Margrit Roma European documents, divorce papers, life in Zurich, Berlin and Paris (much in German)
	3	112 photos, mainly 8x10, and smaller, including early publicity photos, family photos with Ricklefs and misc. photos
	4	8 original drawings by Margrit Roma
	5	55 letters (general correspondence 1965 to 1995)
	6	38 letters from Hans Baer, c. 1950s (mostly in German)
	7	9 letters from "Barbara", 1950s (in German)
	8	7 letters from "Christine", 1950s (in German)
	9	46 letters from Dorli (sister) and Dani-Witzig-Baer, 1950s-1982 (mostly in German)
	10	12 letters between Roma/Ricklefs and Marion Michelle Guyard (in France) 1989-1995
	11	32 letters, correspondence concerning inheritance from Margrit Roma's mother, 1955-1957 (mostly in German)
	12	46 letters, correspondence between Roma/Ricklefs and various people concerning the publication of Roma's book, <u>Acting in Our Times</u> , 1963-1966
	13	autobiographical fragments and early drafts of Margrit Roma's autobiography
	14	autobiography - "Stories" transcript

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- 15 fragments, notes, plays, misc. papers
- 16 short articles in manuscript and typescript
- 17 35 page typescript, A Writ of Habeas Corpus, by Margrit Roma
- 18 91 page typescript, Acting in Our Time, by Margrit Roma (1965), including letter from Wm. W. Melnitz, UCLA, concerning the manuscript
- 19 27 page typescript, Cross-Currents (At the Union Station), by Margrit Roma
- 20 typescript, various versions, Dynamics of Acting, by Margrit Roma
- 21 Secretary Margrit Roma escript, Information Rtypeferral Speaking ..., by (3 copies)
- 22 96 page typescript, Millie Stoner, Housewife, by Margrit Roma, 1954 (this is copy No. 11)
- 23 76 page typescript, No More, by Margrit Roma and Clarence Ricklefs, 1991, copy #1
- 24 same as above, copy #2
- 25 “working script” typescript, No More, by Margrit Roma and Clarence Ricklefs, 1991 (includes performance instructions)
- 26 typescript and manuscript versions, Once Upon a Time – America the Beautiful, by Margrit Roma
- 27 typescript, The Promised Land, by Margrit Roma, 1981 (2 copies)
- 28 typescript, Retreat From Berlin, by Margrit Roma (2 copies); same matetrial with changes, now titled Life Was Such a Dream (2 copies)
- 29 34 page typescript, Return, by Margrit Roma

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- 30 The Savage Shows Through, by Margrit Roma , 49 page typescript,also copies oows Thr f earlier drafts
 - 31 10 page typescript, Why We Should Build an American “Young Vic”, by Margrit Roma

SERIES II. THEATER RECORDS

The Los Angeles period, including the subject’s involvement as director, management of several theaters in Southern California; the New Shakespeare period (1966-1995) is documented by correspondence, tour information and periods of teaching children’s theater appreciation

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Box 2	1	Los Angeles papers, including 62 letters movie people, 6 informal photos, membership papers, pay receipts from Paramount, etc
	2	Los Angeles, theater writing at UCLA, 1953
	3	Los Angeles, programs, reviews, photos from Alley Theater, Los Angeles, of plays directed by Margrit Roma, produced by Clarence Ricklefs, 195901960
	4	Los Angeles, program and promotional pamphlet for Circus Theater, directed by Margrit Roma
	5	Los Angeles, typescript of <u>American Scenes</u> , by Margrit Roma, and <u>The Private Life of the Master Race</u> , by Brecht, 1953; program from first West Coast production
	6	several typescripts on Brecht and Shakespeare; these are workshop notes by Margrit Roma in Los Angeles
	7	Los Angeles, Children’s Theater programs, photos, lab promotional information
	8	series of lecture typescripts (1 thru 10) (partial – many pages missing)
	9	notes for lectures on acting and “stage truths”
	10	course notes on “Improvisation” in theater

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- 11 student resumes
 - 12 contracts
 - 13 membership lists; actors, technicians
 - 14 misc. (and missing pages), typescripts to lectures (sorted when possible)
 - 15 correspondence with mayor's office and Board of Supervisors, 1983-1986; 9 letters
 - 16 correspondence to and from Dwight Chapin (SF Examiner), 1979-1985; 9 letters and 3 articles by Chapin
 - 17 promotional flyers and announcements for New Shakespeare Company
 - 18 press release
 - 19 "Thank You" letters, 1968-1979
 - 20 "Thank You" letters, 1980-1992
 - 21 Galileo student letters (1984) for As You Like It
 - 22 Shakespeare in Schools, promotional material (1985, 1987, 1992)
 - 23 letters about Children's Theater, 1988
 - 24 letters for fundraising for Tenderloin Shakespeare Festival, 1989
 - 25 National Fall Tour papers, Sept. 5- Oct. 31, 1981
 - 26 1981 tour company number resumes
 - 27 season of 1985: promotional material
 - 28 company policies, services and agreement forms, 1986
 - 29 correspondence on Spring 1987, 1988 tours (local schools)

	30	“Return letters”, tour of 1992
	31	fundraising letters and materials
	32	financial reports and related correspondence
	33	financial fundraising and related letters
<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Oversize Box A	1	tour schedules
	2	scrapbook, part one 1970-74
	3	scrapbook, part two 1970-74
Oversize Box B		seven rolled posters for New Shakespeare Company
SERIES III	THE PLAYS	Individual Shakespeare plays as well as other theater productions of <u>Alice in Wonderland</u> and <u>Wizard of Oz</u> , documented by programs, reviews, photos and scripts
CONTAINER	FOLDER	CONTENTS
Box 3	1	<u>A Midsummer Nights Dream</u> promotional material, 2 photos, program
	2	script
	3	<u>As You Like It</u> , promotional material, programs
	4	photos: 37 (8x10) & 48 (smaller size)
	5	script
	6	working script
	7	<u>Hamlet</u> , promotional material and programs
	8	<u>Photos</u> : 9 (8x10)

9	working script #1
10	working script #2
11	<u>Macbeth</u> , promotional material and programs
12	photos: 8 (8x10)
13	<u>The Merchant of Venice</u> , promotional material and programs
14	photos: 11 (8x10)
15	working script
16	<u>Romeo and Juliet</u> , promotional material and programs
17	photos: 1 (8x10) and 33 (smaller size)
18	working script
19	<u>The Tempest</u> , promotional material and programs
20	photos: 13 (8x10) and 1(3x5)
21	working script
22	<u>Twelfth Night</u> , promotional material and programs
23	photos: 26 (8x10) and 2 (4x6)
24	<u>Alice in Wonderland</u> , promotional material and programs
25	Photos: 27 (8x10)
26	script (adapted by Margrit Roma)
27	<u>Beauty and the Beast</u> script
28	<u>The Good Woman of Setzuan</u> , promotional material and programs

29	working script, including notations and music by Dan Becker and John Geist
30	typescript of <u>Good Woman</u>
31	<u>Rumpelstiltskin</u> , promotional material
32	<u>The Three Penny Opera</u> , promotional material and programs; 7 (8x10) photos)
33	<u>The Wizard of Oz</u> , promotional material and programs; 2 (8x10) photos
34	script (adapted by Margrit Roma)