

Guide to Black and white photograph of prominent members of the original "West Side Story" production team by Friedman-Abeles photography firm C0466

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September 29, 1959.



Title Statement

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Subtitle: Black and white photograph of prominent members of the original "West Side Story" production team by Friedman-Abeles photography firm

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Publication Statement

Publisher: George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Fenwick Library, MS2FL
4400 University Dr.
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Business Number: 703-993-2220
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January 7, 2020

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-06-17 07:01:30 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0466

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/534

Unit Date

September 29, 1959.

box

1 (folder)

Language

English

Abstract

Black and white photograph of prominent members of the original "West Side Story" production team by Friedman-Abeles photography firm, printed September 29, 1959.

Creator

Friedman-Abeles (Firm)

Extent

.01 Linear Feet 1 photograph

Physical Location

R 72, C 3, S 5

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

The copyright and related rights status of this collection have not been evaluated. (See <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/CNE/1.0/>)

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased by Steve Gerber in July 2018.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Amanda Brent in January 2021. EAD markup completed by Amanda Brent in January 2021. This item was formerly part of the Performing Arts Manuscript Materials collection, C0215.

Preferred Citation

Black and white photograph of prominent members of the original "West Side Story" production team by Friedman-Abeles photography firm, C0466, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

Historical Information

"West Side Story" is a musical that premiered on Broadway on September 26, 1957, with music composed by Leonard Bernstein and book and lyrics by Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim, respectively. It was conceived of, directed, and choreographed by Jerome Robbins. It was also produced by Harold Prince and Robert E. Griffith. The musical, set on the West Side of New York City, was inspired by Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Two rival gangs - the white Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks - battle for neighborhood dominance while star-crossed lovers from each side, Tony and Maria, fall in love. The musical was a critical and commercial success, and was subsequently adapted into two separate films. "West Side Story" endures as a musical classic and has been revived multiple times on Broadway since its inception.

Friedman-Abeles was a large photography firm in New York City, NY. Founded on the partnership of Leo and Sy Friedman and Joseph Ables, the firm was regularly tasked with photographing Broadway productions and was most successful from the 1950s - 1970s. Friedman-Ables photographed the behind-the-scenes process, as well as official photos, of the original "West Side Story" production.

Scope and Content

Black and white photograph of prominent members of the original "West Side Story" production team by the

Friedman-Abeles photography firm, printed September 29, 1959, the year of the musical's first U.S. Tour. The photo was originally taken in 1957, during the musical's production. From left to right are: Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Laurents, Harold Prince, Robert E. Griffith (seated), Leonard Bernstein, and Jerome Robbins. All men had successful careers in the performing arts field. Taped to the verso is an October 4, 1959 news clipping with information about the Chicago premiere of "West Side Story" and the names of the photograph's subjects. It is also stamped with the photography firm's information and pertinent dates.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other collections containing items related to "West Side Story," and musical theatre in general, including the [Broadway souvenir theatre programs collection](#), the [Virginia Nelson playbills collection](#), and the [Charles Rodrigues playbill collection](#).

The New York Public Library's Billy Rose Theatre Division holds a copy of this photograph, as well as others in the same series, which can be viewed [here](#).

Keywords

Musical Theater

Photography

Theater

Bernstein, Leonard, 1918-1990

Griffith, Robert E.

Laurents, Arthur

Prince, Harold, 1928-2019

Robbins, Jerome

Sondheim, Stephen

Bibliography

Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library. "Friedman-Abeles photograph collection." New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed January 20, 2021.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/friedman-abeles-photograph-collection#/?tab=about&scroll=20>.

Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library. "Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Laurents, Hal Prince, Robert E. Griffith, Leonard Bernstein, and Jerome Robbins during rehearsal for the stage production West Side Story" New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed January 20, 2021.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/de6f38c0-8357-0134-1212-00505686a51c>.

Internet Broadway Database. "West Side Story." The Broadway League. Accessed January 20, 2021.

<https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/west-side-story-2639#ProductionStaff>.

Schwarm, Betsy. "West Side Story." Encyclopaedia Britannica. Encyclopaedia Britannica, inc. Accessed January 20, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/West-Side-Story>.

Arrangement

This is a single item collection.