

University of Victoria Special Collections and University Archives

Finding Aid - Denis Johnston collection (SC063)

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Denis Johnston collection

Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary information | 3 |
| Administrative history / Biographical sketch | 3 |
| Scope and content | 3 |
| Notes | 4 |
| Access points | 4 |
| Collection holdings | 4 |
| SC063-1982-038, "The Brazen Horn" (1969) | 4 |
| SC063-1997-115, "Shadowdance" (1926) | 5 |
| SC063-2002-046, Photocopied Manuscripts (1926) | 5 |
| SC063-2002-046-1, "Alpha" | 6 |
| SC063-2002-046-2, "Odd Sheets" | 6 |
| SC063-2002-046-3, "Beta" | 7 |
| SC063-2002-046-4, "Delta" | 7 |
| SC063-2003-002, Correspondence, Manuscripts (1965-1977) | 8 |
| SC063-2004-009, "The Brazen Horn" (1972) | 8 |
| SC063-2009-006, Correspondence (1973-1992) | 8 |
| SC063-2009-006-1.1, General correspondence from Denis and Betty Johnston to Bill and Mary Harbold (1973-1982) | 9 |
| SC063-2009-006-1.2, Autographed b&w photograph of W. Denis Johnston | 10 |
| SC063-2009-006-1.3, Book reviews (1978-1991) | 10 |
| SC063-2009-006-1.4, Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts (1968) | 11 |
| SC063-2009-006-1.5, Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts (1953) | 11 |

Summary information

Repository: University of Victoria Special Collections and University Archives

Title: Denis Johnston collection

ID: SC063

Date: 1926 - 1992 (date of creation)

Physical description: 12 cm of textual records

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Denis Johnston was an Irish playwright and writer. He was born in Dublin and educated at Dublin, Edinburgh, Cambridge and Harvard Law School, receiving an M.A. and LL.M. from Cambridge in 1926. He became interested in playwriting while he was at Harvard. Upon his return to Dublin, he wrote "Shadowdance" (later called "The Old Lady Says No!") in 1926. After practising law, both in Ireland and England, he joined the Dublin Gate Theatre and became its Director from 1931-1936. Next, he worked in various capacities for the BBC. After moving to America, he became head of the Department of Theatre at Smith College, Massachusetts in 1961 and subsequently held many academic posts in the United States until 1973. He authored numerous plays including "The Old Lady Says 'No'", "The Moon in the Yellow River", "The Golden Cuckoo", and "The Scythe and the Sunset". His autobiography, "Nine Rivers from Jordan", was published in 1953. This formed the basis for his later work "The Brazen Horn". He died in Dublin.

Scope and content

The collection consists of Johnston's second typescript draft (as finally rejected) of "Shadowdance", later called "The Old Lady Says No!", with holograph corrections by W.B. Yeats and others. Also included are photocopies of several early drafts of this play, including the aforementioned. In addition, there is the author's proof copy, with corrections, of "The Brazen Horn, Lenaea 5" (1968) [probably for 2nd ed. 1969, amended to Lenaea 6]. The fonds also consists of correspondence from Denis and Betty Johnston to Bill and Mary Harbold from 1973-1982; a signed photograph of Johnston; photocopies of book reviews and book chapters re Johnston; a copy of Nine Rivers from Jordan with final corrections; and a copy of the libretto of Nine Rivers from Jordan.

Notes

Title notes

Finding aids

Box list available.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Description identifier:** denis-johnston-collection

Access points

- Yeats, W. B. (William Butler), 1865-1939 (subject)
- Authors, Irish--20th century--Manuscripts (subject)
- Dramatists, Irish--20th century--Correspondence (subject)
- Dramatists, Irish--Manuscripts (subject)
- English drama--Irish authors (subject)
- Irish drama (subject)
- Irish literature (subject)
- Johnston, Denis, 1901-1984. Brazen horn (subject)
- Johnston, Denis, 1901-1984. Nine rivers from Jordan (subject)
- Johnston, Denis, 1901-1984. Old lady says no! (subject)
- Johnston, Denis, 1901-1984--Correspondence (subject)

Collection holdings

Series: SC063-1982-038 - "The Brazen Horn"

Title: "The Brazen Horn"

ID: SC063-1982-038

Date: 1969 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The file consists of a proof copy, with corrections, of "The Brazen Horn, Lenaea 5" (1968) [probably for 2nd ed. 1969, amended to Lenaea 6].

Physical description: 1 file.

Note [generalNote]:

Removed from PR6019/O397B7/1969.

Publication status:

Published

Series: SC063-1997-115 - "Shadowdance"

Title: "Shadowdance"

ID: SC063-1997-115

Date: 1926 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The file consists of Johnston's second typescript draft (as finally rejected) of "Shadowdance", later called "The Old Lady Says No!"

Physical description: 1 file.

Note [generalNote]:

Removed from PR6019/O397O4/1926.

Publication status:

Published

Series: SC063-2002-046 - Photocopied Manuscripts

Title: Photocopied Manuscripts

ID: SC063-2002-046

Date: 1926 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The accrual consists of photocopies of versions of "The Old Lady Says No" - titled "Alpha", "Odd Sheets - Alpha", "Beta" and "Delta".

Physical description: 4 vols.

Note [generalNote]:

"Beta" is a edited copy of Accession 1997-115. These were used by donor Dr. St Peter to prepare an edition of the play for her U of T PhD thesis.

Publication status:

Published

Item: SC063-2002-046-1 - "Alpha"

Title: "Alpha"

ID: SC063-2002-046-1

Scope and content:

1 of 4 cerlox bound volumes

Physical description: 1 vol.

Note [generalNote]:

"Alpha" 1st script
photocopy of an edited tss with added holograph revisions and notes
untitled
[1], 72 l.
-back of pg. 30 inserted
-page of 'corrections for Beta' inserted as p.57a
-2 page nos. on 1 page (66 & 67)

Publication status:

Published

Item: SC063-2002-046-2 - "Odd Sheets"

Title: "Odd Sheets"

ID: SC063-2002-046-2

Scope and content:

1 of 4 cerlox bound volumes

Physical description: 1 vol.

Note [generalNote]:

"Odd Sheets"

Publication status:

Published

Item: SC063-2002-046-3 - "Beta"Title: "Beta"ID: SC063-2002-046-3Scope and content:

1 of 4 cerlox bound volumes

Physical description: 1 vol.Note [generalNote]:

"Beta" 2nd script (as finally rejected)

Publication status:

Published

Item: SC063-2002-046-4 - "Delta"Title: "Delta"ID: SC063-2002-046-4Scope and content:

1 of 4 cerlox bound volumes

Physical description: 1 vol.Note [generalNote]:

"Delta"

photocopy of an edited tss with added holograph revisions and notes
titled here "The Old Lady Says No!"

78. 1.

-pagination 1-69, other pages inserted (mostly music) unpaginated

Publication status:

Published

Series: SC063-2003-002 - Correspondence, Manuscripts

Title: Correspondence, Manuscripts

ID: SC063-2003-002

Date: 1965-1977 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The files consist of: 1. tls to Ann Saddlemyer from Johnston 15 May 65 1 l; 2. material from Denis Johnston's visit to U of T including: poster for Irish Drama and Politics (Seminar?) at Hart House Theatre (U of T) March 1976, programme for Johnston's play "The Scythe and the Sunset" at Hart House Theatre, and programme for Johnston's play "The Moon in the Yellow River" at Seneca Studio Theatre; 3. 2 clippings re Johnston from "The Irish Times" 12 Feb 77; 4. 2 photocopies of "The Brazen Horn" (Lenaea 6) see 1982-038.

Physical description: 2 files.

Publication status:

Published

Series: SC063-2004-009 - "The Brazen Horn"

Title: "The Brazen Horn"

ID: SC063-2004-009

Date: 1972 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The accrual consists of The Brazen Horn - Linnea 8, Copy No. 5 ([8], 370 p.).

Physical description: 1 doc.

Publication status:

Published

Series: SC063-2009-006 - Correspondence

Title: Correspondence

ID: SC063-2009-006

Date: 1973-1992 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The accrual consists of correspondence from Denis and Betty Johnston to Bill and Mary Harbold from 1973-1982; a signed photograph of Johnston; photocopies of book reviews and book chapters re Johnston; a copy of Nine Rivers from Jordan with final corrections; and a copy of the libretto of Nine Rivers from Jordan.

Physical description: 1 doc.

Publication status:

Published

File: SC063-2009-006-1.1 - General correspondence from Denis and Betty Johnston to Bill and Mary Harbold

Title: General correspondence from Denis and Betty Johnston to Bill and Mary Harbold

ID: SC063-2009-006-1.1

Date: 1973-1982 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

General correspondence from Denis and Betty Johnston to Bill and Mary Harbold, 1973-1982:

- TLS, 20 September 1973, 1 l.
- ALS, 9 December 1973, 1 l.
- TLS, 19 March [1974], 1 l.
- TLS, 26 March 1974, 1 l.
- ALS, 28 [April] 1974, 2 l., with envelope
- ALS, 28 September 1974, 1 l., with envelope
- ALS, 29 September [1974], 1 l.
- TLS, 30 January 1975, 1 l.
- ALS, [March 1975], 1 l.
- ALS, 29 September 1975, 5 l., with envelope and receipt
- ALS, 22 October 1975, 1 l.
- ALS, [1975], 1 l.
- ALS, 13 December 1977, 1 l.
- ALS, 13 September 1978, 1 l.
- ALS, 25 May 1980, 1 l.
- ALS, [December 1980], 1 l.
- ALS, [July 1981], 1 l.
- ALS, 5 September 1981, 1 l.
- ALS, 5 January 1982, 1 l.
- ALS, [March 1982], 1 l.
- ALS, [April 1982], 1 l.
- ALS, 21 December 1982, 1 l.

Physical description: 1 file.

Publication status:

Published

File: SC063-2009-006-1.2 - Autographed b&w photograph of W. Denis Johnston

Title: Autographed b&w photograph of W. Denis Johnston

ID: SC063-2009-006-1.2

Scope and content:

Autographed b&w photograph of W. Denis Johnston. Found in book Nine rivers from Jordan (see 1.5)

Physical description: 1 file.

Publication status:

Published

File: SC063-2009-006-1.3 - Book reviews

Title: Book reviews

ID: SC063-2009-006-1.3

Date: 1978-1991 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Book Reviews

- photocopy of book review of Nine rivers from Jordan from: O'Brien, Eoin. Reading for pleasure. British Medical Journal. 27 May 1978.
- photocopies of pages from: Deane, S., Carpenter, A., & Williams, J. (1991). The Field Day anthology of Irish writing. Lawrence Hill, Derry, Northern Ireland: Field Day Publications.
- photocopies of pages from: Location register of twentieth-century English literary manuscripts and letters: A union list of papers of modern English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh authors in the British Isles. (1988). Boston, MA: G.K. Hall.
- photocopies of pages from: Jeffares, A. N. (1982). Anglo-Irish literature. History of literature series. New York: Schocken Books.

Physical description: 1 file.

Publication status:

Published

File: SC063-2009-006-1.4 - Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts

Title: Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts

ID: SC063-2009-006-1.4

Date: 1968 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Weisgall, H., & Johnston, D. (1968). Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts. Bryn Mawr, Penn: Theodore Presser.

Physical description: 1 file.

Publication status:

Published

File: SC063-2009-006-1.5 - Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts

Title: Nine rivers from Jordan: An opera in a prologue and three acts

ID: SC063-2009-006-1.5

Date: 1953 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Johnston, D. (1953). Nine rivers from Jordan; The chronicle of a journey and a search. London: D, Verschoyle.

- with final corrections

- in ink on the inside front cover: "Master copy. Corrected in 1976. DJ."

- on the verso of the title page is a typewritten note, pasted in, "As revised and cut for any further editions. Nov. 1969." and below in ink, "and Spring, 1974"

Physical description: 1 file.

Publication status:

Published
