



Paul Robeson as Othello: the 1942-1945 Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson production of Shakespeare's Othello

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The Harvard Theatre Collection

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Paul Robeson as Othello

*The 1942–1945
Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson production
of Shakespeare's Othello*

*Based on the original production archive
in the Harvard Theatre Collection*

September 28, 2005
through
January 6, 2006

The Harvard Theatre Collection
The Edward Sheldon Exhibition Rooms
The Nathan Marsh Pusey Library
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts



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Paul Robeson as Othello

The 1942–1945

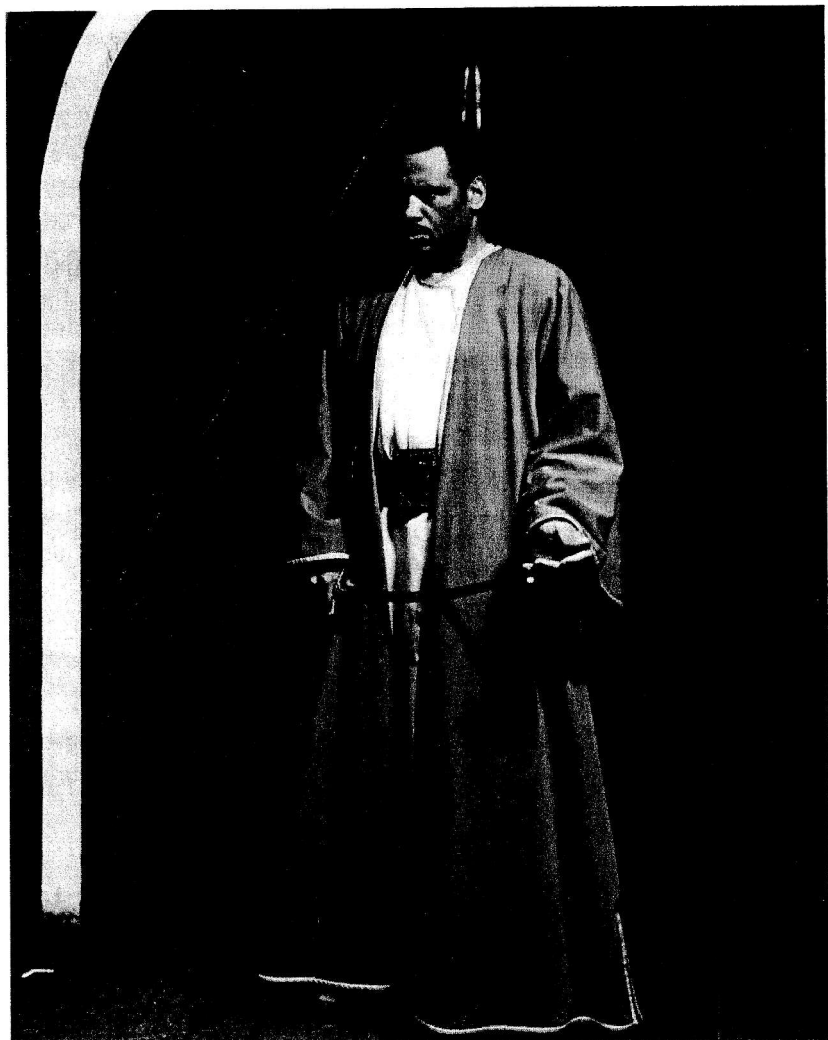
*Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson production
of Shakespeare's Othello*

This exhibition was originated and realized by Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection. It was produced with the assistance of Thomas Garrett, Margaret McMahon, Howard Turner, Karen Walter, Amanda Dye, James Griffin, Beth Carroll-Horrocks, and Dennis Marnon.

The exhibition is based mainly on documents from the archive of John Haggott, Harvard Class of 1935, stage manager and associate producer for the production. This collection was presented to the Harvard Theatre Collection in 2001, in memory of John Haggott and his wife, by his niece, Catherine Phinizy. Additional material in the exhibition was drawn from other collections in the Harvard Theatre Collection, including the archive of the Cambridge Drama Festival, given by William Morris Hunt, Harvard Class of 1939.

This exhibition was made possible through the generous support of the Beatrice, Benjamin, and Richard Bader Fund for the Visual Arts of the Theatre, an endowed fund in the Harvard Theatre Collection.





Paul Robeson as Othello. Publicity photograph for the Theatre Guild production, Shubert Theatre, New York City, 1943. Photograph by the Vandamm Studio, New York City.

“The Most Important Shakespeare Production of the Twentieth Century”

The African-American singer and actor Paul Leroy Robeson (1898–1976) was born in Princeton, New Jersey. (Some sources give his middle name as Bustill.) Unable to study at Princeton University because that institution was open only to white students, Robeson attended Rutgers College in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he became both an All-American football player and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and graduated in 1919 at the top of his class.

Robeson then enrolled in law school in New York City, but he had also developed an interest in singing and the stage. Living in Harlem during his Columbia law studies, he performed in the Blake-Sissle show *Shuffle Along* (1921). To support his legal education, he played football for the Akron Pros and the Milwaukee Badgers. In 1922 he went to London to perform in a production of *Taboo*, there called *Voodoo*. After graduating from Columbia in 1922, he sang at the Cotton Club in Harlem. In 1924 he performed in Eugene O'Neill's play *All God's Chillun Got Wings* at the Provincetown Playhouse, in New York City, when one critic described him as “an earnest, hard-working amateur and nothing more.” This was followed by a revival of O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, at the Fifty-Second Street Theatre, in 1925. Robeson also performed recitals; after a recital of Negro spirituals at the Provincetown Playhouse he was offered a recording contract by the Victor Talking Machine Co.

Robeson's breakout role was the supporting part of Joe in the Kern-Hammerstein musical *Show Boat*, in the 1928 London production. He also gave recitals at the Royal Albert Hall and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The producer Max Gordon cast him in a production of *Othello* at the Savoy Theatre in London, which opened on March 19, 1930, opposite Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona and with Hilary Fisher-White and Sybil Thorndike as Iago and Emilia. Robeson's resonant voice, imposing stature, and artless acting were largely responsible for the twenty curtain calls at the London premiere.

This was the first time since the appearances of the African-American actor Ira Aldridge in the 1820's through the 1850's that a black actor had

portrayed Shakespeare's Moor in a major theatrical production. At the time Robeson was quoted in the press as saying that he would never be able to play the role in America because of racial intolerance there — referring not simply to the appearance of a black man in any leading role, or even in a serious dramatic role, but as this particular character, who is married to a white woman, and in a play whose themes include interracial marriage.

As a side issue, Robeson, as a black man, often found it difficult to secure hotel rooms or to eat in public restaurants; protests raised publicly by him and on his behalf led to a change of policy among many London hotels and restaurants. This was to be repeated in some of the American cities where Robeson was later to appear.

It was to take the combination of the experienced Shakespearean director Margaret Webster and a young, Harvard-educated stage manager and producer to pave the way for Robeson's appearance in America as Othello. John Haggott, Harvard Class of 1935, but seven years out of college, was able to arrange through his Cambridge connections for Robeson's *Othello* to appear at Brattle Hall, home of the Brattle Theatre Company. (The Brattle Theatre, in that same building, survives as an art film theatre.) The Brattle Theatre Company was a forward-looking, privately-managed company that presented a number of innovative and challenging productions; *Othello*, however, was presented here under the auspices of the Cambridge Summer Theatre, for a two-week engagement. The production then moved to the McCarter Theatre in Princeton.

This 1942 Cambridge-Princeton production was directed by Margaret Webster (1905-1972). She was born in New York City, daughter of the British actors May Whitty (1865-1948) and Ben Webster (1864-1947), who had come to America to perform on the stage and screen. (Margaret Webster was to write an engaging memoir titled *Don't Put Your Daughter On the Stage*.) She had impeccable credentials as an actress and director — she had established, mainly through a series of collaborations with the British actor Maurice Evans, a reputation as a preëminent Shakespearean director. These productions, at New York's St. James Theatre, usually produced by Evans himself, included *Richard II* (1937 and 1940), *Henry IV, Part I* (1939, with Evans as Falstaff), *Hamlet* (1939), *Twelfth Night* (1940, with Helen Hayes), and *Macbeth* (1941, with Judith Anderson).

Haggott's Broadway experience up to that time was much more

limited. He had been co-producer with Maurice Evans of those same Shakespeare productions with Margaret Webster, and stage manager of Maxwell Anderson's *Candle in the Wind*, for the Playwrights' Company. It is likely that Haggott first worked with Margaret Webster during Evans's *Macbeth* production.

Together Webster and Haggott approached Robeson, and in the absence of Broadway backers they formed a three-way partnership. The initial agreement gave them joint control over the production, and they engaged the remainder of the cast, in particular José Ferrer and his youthful wife Uta Hagen to play Iago and Desdemona. Ferrer, at thirty years old in 1942, was himself a relatively youthful Iago, a role described in the play as Othello's "ancient," and often played by an older man. But such casting would betray a misreading of the play, for Iago declares his own age as "four times seven," and the term "ancient" indicated an advisor or factotum. (Actually, Ferrer had not been Haggott's first choice — a letter survives from Alfred Lunt, declining an offer to play Iago opposite Robeson.)

The Brattle Theatre appearance was attended by enormous, far-reaching publicity and a rush on tickets; according to contemporary accounts the opening performance went flawlessly and extended calls followed the performance, accompanied by collegiate-style foot-stamping. A similar reception was seen at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton. Even *Life* magazine included this college-town production in its long-running feature series, entitled "Life Goes to a Production of Othello."

It was not that the trio did not want Broadway backing, but that Robeson's prophesy of twelve years ago was all too true — that the venture was regarded cautiously, as socially, if not artistically, risky. The initial appearances in university towns was essentially a proof-of-concept, that the production itself could be artistically successful and commercially viable. Webster wrote that immediately after the Cambridge opening, many Broadway producers wanted a share of the production; nevertheless, it took several months to come to terms with the influential Theatre Guild, which was run by the strong hand of its president, Lawrence Langner, and another six months for Robeson to complete his recital engagements.

By the late summer of 1943, the production was in rehearsal — now with costumes and scenes by the Harvard-educated designer Robert Edmond Jones. Jones had designed and directed an *Othello* thirteen years

earlier, a Max Gordon production starring Walter Huston, and he was reluctant to return to the play so soon afterward. Haggott and Webster were persuasive, however, although in truth the result did not represent Jones's best work, and he adopted the general stage plan of the 1942 production in which he took no part.

In some ways this production seemed stripped-down — spare and compact sets, few scene changes, two acts instead of the original five, a minimal musical score pre-recorded by a small ensemble and performed through loudspeakers. All of these characteristics were especially practical for traveling, which was a part of the original plan.

Out-of-town tryouts, following the pattern of the day, were seen at the Colonial Theatre in Boston, preceded by a week in New Haven and followed by a week in Philadelphia, before the production settled in at the Shubert Theatre on West Forty-fourth Street, where it attained a record-breaking Broadway run of 296 performances.

Almost immediately after the hugely successful opening it fell to John Haggott to arrange a national tour. In some ways this was a more daring enterprise even than the New York production had been, because the racial issues inherent in the production, complicated by Robeson's controversial and public left-wing political stance, were certain to be challenging to the audiences, not to say the social and political leaders, of the many cities to which the production was likely to travel.

Even the basic matters of transportation and accommodations would prove to be difficult, but fortunately the sympathetic assistance of E. M. Statler, a leading hotelier, went a long way to solving the latter problem, and hiring a private Pullman sleeping car for Robeson's use more or less took care of the former. Among the terms of Robeson's extraordinary contract were not only a guaranteed salary and a considerable share of the gross takings, but perquisites that few other actors could command. The production was to make him a wealthy man.

Toward the end of the New York engagement, an unanticipated situation arose, concerning the billing of the principal actors, which was to have great ramifications. It was in Robeson's contract that he was to be accorded "sole star" status, but as a gesture of solidarity with Ferrer and Hagen, who had won praise for their characterizations, he offered them both above-the-title star billing. But he made this offer without consulting

the producer or director, and the difficulty was that Margaret Webster — as director and originator of the production, and as Emilia its fourth principal — was in effect slighted by the promotion of the other actors. Furthermore, she had grown dissatisfied with Uta Hagen's performance (though she was to direct Hagen once again, in 1951, in the title role in Shaw's *Saint Joan*), and it insulted her to suffer lower billing than this younger and less accomplished colleague. Most of all, with three above-the-title acting credits, her own billing as director was at risk. A standoff between Webster and Robeson was broken when Webster withdrew from the cast altogether, and although her directorial credit was given enhanced prominence, from that time she left the supervision of the production largely to Haggott and to the traveling company manager, Jack Yorke.

One other awkward situation arose: Robeson and Hagen had become engaged in an affair. During the London production of *Othello*, Robeson had had an affair with his Desdemona, Peggy Ashcroft, and that had created tensions with his wife that became very public. His affair with Hagen remained more private, but there were serious risks to the production, since Uta Hagen was married to José Ferrer, and they had been engaged to join the production as a couple. Ironically, Ferrer tacitly accepted his wife's affair — and may even have welcomed it, since it afforded him an opportunity to carry on a romantic liaison with another cast member.

Booking the road tour was complicated. Among the terms contained in the contracts between the Theatre Guild and the theatres on the national tour was the requirement that no section of the theatre should be barred to Negro audiences — in other words, that the houses should be completely integrated. In fact, this stipulation alone flew in the face of Jim Crow laws that were still very much in force in a number of the cities and states that were under consideration for the tour, and in many places those laws simply reflected prevalent local attitudes. Haggott's response to theatre managers' complaints and appeals made it clear that there were to be no exceptions to this principle.

The tour visited more than twenty cities, in engagements that lasted from a few nights to a few weeks. It began at Trenton, New Jersey for a single night, and after more than forty stops over eight months, it ended at the Erlanger Theatre in Chicago, followed by a return engagement in New York City at the City Center. The longest stops of the tour were in Los

Angeles and San Francisco (3 weeks each), Detroit and Seattle (2 weeks each), and Chicago. The tour passed through the west coast, the midwest, upstate New York, and Canada. It never went to Washington or Baltimore or returned to Philadelphia — three of the traditional touring destinations — or anywhere south of the Mason-Dixon line.

A best-selling phonograph record album, recorded in the summer of 1944, appeared on Columbia Masterworks records. It featuring the touring cast (that is, with Edith King in the part of Emilia), but it was made without the knowledge or participation of Margaret Webster, who, not surprisingly, disapproved of the recorded performance. There was also a proposal from Universal Pictures to film the production for educational audiences, on the grounds that this was “the most important Shakespeare production of the twentieth century,” but this possibility was vetoed by Robeson.

Before *Othello*, Robeson had starred in several plays on Broadway — Roark Bradford’s *John Henry* (1940), Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern’s *Show Boat* (1932), Frank Mitchell Dazey’s *Black Boy* (1926), Eugene O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones* (revival, 1925), and Mary Hoyt Wiborg’s *Taboo* (1922) — always in roles that were fashioned to feature and dignify a black actor. *Othello* was his final Broadway appearance. His stage and film roles mainly challenged racial stereotypes or else portrayed black characters nobly and sympathetically. Robeson’s final stage appearance was again as *Othello*, at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1959, a production that was not well received.

Margaret Webster became a co-founder of the original American Repertory Theatre, in New York City, with Eva Le Gallienne and Cheryl Crawford, and she acted in at least eight of its productions between 1946 and 1948.

Before *Othello*, José Ferrer (1912–1992) had appeared in *Brother Rat* (1936), Maxwell Anderson’s *Key Largo* (1939), and in a 1940 revival of Brandon Thomas’s farce *Charley’s Aunt*. Ferrer’s most famous stage role was *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1946, with Frances Reid as Roxane), adapted as a film, for which he received an Academy Award for best actor in 1951.

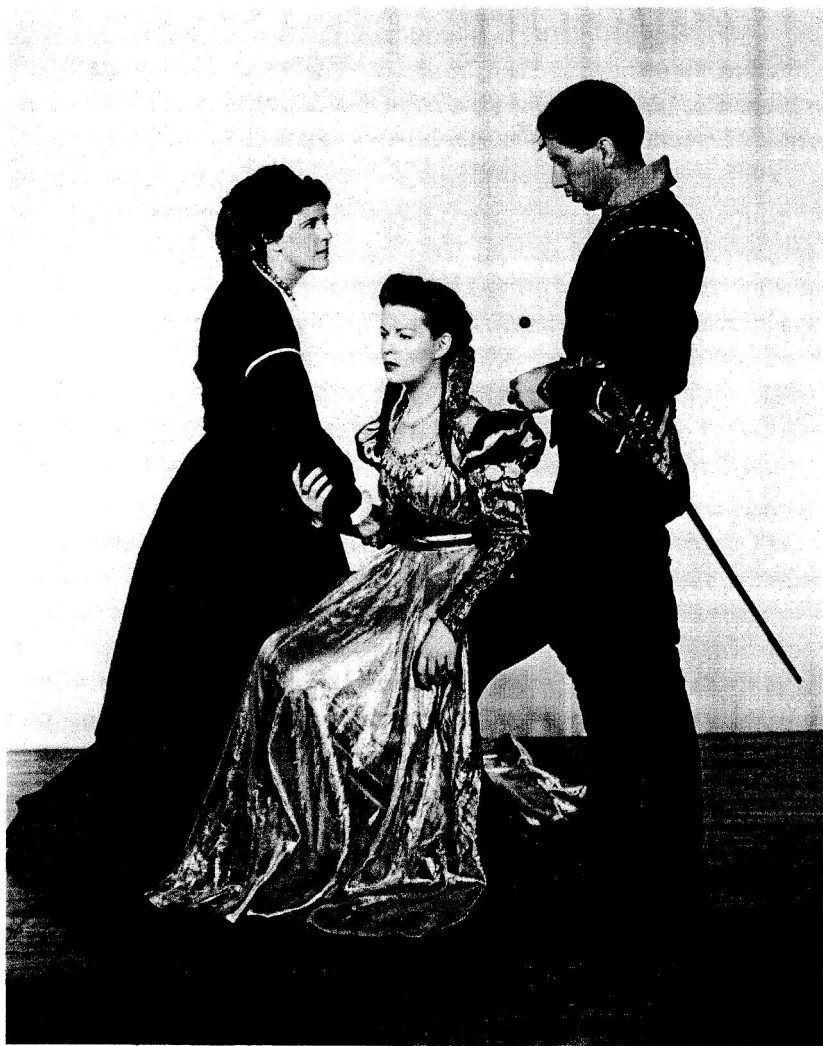
Uta Hagen (1919–2004), who married Ferrer in 1938, had also appeared in *Key Largo*, and in a few other Broadway productions. She and Margaret Webster had both appeared in the cast of a 1938 revival of Chekhov’s *The Seagull*. After *Othello*, she appeared in many productions, notably as Joan of Arc in Shaw’s *Saint Joan* (1951), directed by Margaret Webster, and as Martha

in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962).

John Haggott (1914–1964) directed three plays on Broadway and co-produced one show; his final Broadway credit was in 1952, when he was 38 years old.

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson





Margaret Webster as Emilia, Uta Hagen as Desdemona, and José Ferrer as Iago. Photograph by the Vandamm Studio, New York, 1943.

Paul Robeson as Othello

*The 1942–1945
Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson production
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First (Outer) Gallery, Left Side

Paul Robeson

Othello

Portrait photograph of Paul Robeson.

Photograph by Vandamm Studio, New York City, 1943. 8 by 10 inches. *From the Boston Globe Entertainment Desk archive.*

A typewritten caption on the back of the photograph indicates that it was taken as a publicity photograph for the *Othello* production, in advance of the Boston tryouts at the Colonial Theatre in September 1943. The Vandamm Studio was the main theatrical photographer of the time.

Photograph of Paul Robeson as Joe in the film version of *Show Boat*.

Universal Pictures publicity photograph. Negative no. 744-4. 8 by 10 inches. *Gift of Will Rapport.*

The supporting role of Joe in the Kern-Hammerstein musical *Show Boat* is one of the most memorable parts for a black actor with a deep voice, largely on account of the show-stopping song, “Ol’ Man River.” Robeson had appeared in this part in the 1932 Broadway revival of the show, as well as in the London production, and then again in the 1936 Universal Pictures film.

Letter from Paul Robeson to E. M. Statler, owner of the chain of hotels.

Carbon copy of typewritten letter, dated February 7, 1926, not signed, note initialed “PR.” 1 page. *Purchased with income from the Henry Munroe Rogers Bequest, 2001.*

Robeson writes to thank Statler for a review that had appeared in

a publication of the Hotell Pennsylvania, one of Statler's hotels, saying that the article represented what Robeson aspired to achieve. It was Stadler who established a non-discriminatory policy toward African-American guests in a day when most hotels and restaurants were resolutely segregated.

Paul Robeson as Othello in London.

Program of the Savoy Theatre production, 1930. 2 copies shown.

Robeson's first appearance as Othello was in London, twelve years before he played the role in America. The role of Desdemona was taken by Peggy Ashcroft.

Paul Robeson's 1959 Stratford Production

Figurine.

Paul Robeson | Othello. White earthenware, ca. 13 in. tall, with black decoration and coloring. Produced in 1959, at the time of Robeson's second British production, at Stratford-upon-Avon. *Lent by James Griffin.*

The Initial Partnership

The 1942 Cambridge Production

Program of the 1942 Cambridge production.

Cambridge Summer Theatre, Brattle Hall, Cambridge, Massachusetts, beginning August 10, 1942. Two copies shown.

The cast of principals seen in Cambridge and Princeton in the summer of 1942 was the same as eventually appeared on Broadway the following year. But Robert Edmond Jones had not yet been involved, and some of the supporting cast was different. The stage manager in Cambridge was William Van Lennep, recently appointed curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection.

The Theatre Guild

Margaret Webster, Paul Robeson, and John Haggott

Initial agreement of Paul Robeson, Margaret Webster, and John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild.

May we recommend for courtesy and service
The Piccadilly Circus Garage Ltd., Denman St., Pic. Cir. W.1.

SAVOY THEATRE STRAND, W.C. 2.

Proprietors ... THE SAVOY THEATRE, LTD. Lessees ... THE EXECUTORS OF H. B. IAVING
Lessees ... C. EGERTON KILLICK and VICTOR PAYNE-JENNINGS

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH
C. EGERTON KILLICK and VICTOR PAYNE-JENNINGS

EVENINGS at 8.15

MATINEES: MONDAYS and THURSDAYS at 2.30

MAURICE  BROWNE

presents

OTHELLO

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Duke of Venice	LAWRANCE D'ORSAY
Brabantio, a senator	CONWAY DIXON
Gratiano, brother to Brabantio	JOHN GARSIDE
Lodovico, kinsman to Brabantio	PHILIP DESBOROUGH
Othello, a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian State	PAUL ROBESON
Cassio, his lieutenant	MAX MONTESOLE
Iago, his ancient	HILARY FISHER-WHITE
Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman	RALPH RICHARDSON
Montano, governor of Cyprus	VERNON FORTESCUE
Clown, servant to Othello	HORACE SEQUEIRA
Desdemona, daughter to Brabantio and wife to Othello	PEGGY ASHCROFT
Emilia, wife to Iago	SYBIL THORNDIKE
Bianca, mistress to Cassio	NAOMI LUDOLF
A Singer	JOHN THOMPSON

Senators, Officers, Gentlemen, Musicians and Attendants: A. J. Brown, Andrew Cruikshank, Robin Craven, Michael Curwen, Harold Dewhurst, W. V. Garrod, Geoffrey Gomer, Wilfred Grantham, John Horsley, Gerald Kent, Cecil Rayne, Russell Sedgwick, Alaister Sim, Leslie Sorrell, John Thompson, John V. Trevor, Richard Turner, Herbert Uzielli, Gerald Vane, C. Jervis Walter, Richard Williams.

Trumpeters: Rowland Dyson, A. Whitaker.

Attendants on Desdemona: Rita Daniel, Winifred Oughton.

Ladies of Cyprus: Margaret Barr, Joyce Peters, Rosemary Showler.

Program for the Maurice Brown production of *Othello* at the Savoy Theatre, with Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona, London, 1930.

Carbon copy of typewritten document, dated January 26, 1943, signed by all parties, Lawrence Langner representing the Theatre Guild, with the Guild's blind embossed seal. 2 pages shown.

Robeson, Webster, and Haggott entered into an agreement with the Theatre Guild which left artistic control of the production jointly but exclusively in their hands. Robeson had final say over casting and his own costumes, and he was to receive billing as "the sole star role."

Statement of Preliminary Expenses.

On onionskin paper printed with the name J. C. Koritzer, accountant for the Theatre Guild.

A budget projection for the production of *Othello*. By today's standards the budget is very low indeed (the orchestration was estimated to cost \$72.10, for example).

José Ferrer and Uta Hagen ***Iago and Emilia***

Portrait photograph of José Ferrer and Uta Hagen.

Photograph by Alfredo Valenti. 8 by 10 inches.

Ferrer and Hagen were married in 1938, and they joined the *Othello* cast as a package.

Photograph of José Ferrer as Cyrano de Bergerac.

Photographer not identified. Publicity photograph in connection with the appearance at the Opera House, Boston, 1946.

Ferrer's most famous role, for which he won a Tony Award, was as Cyrano de Bergerac in Brian Hooker's adaptation of Edmond Rostand's novel. The play was adapted for film, and again Ferrer had a triumph in this part, winning an Academy Award for best actor.

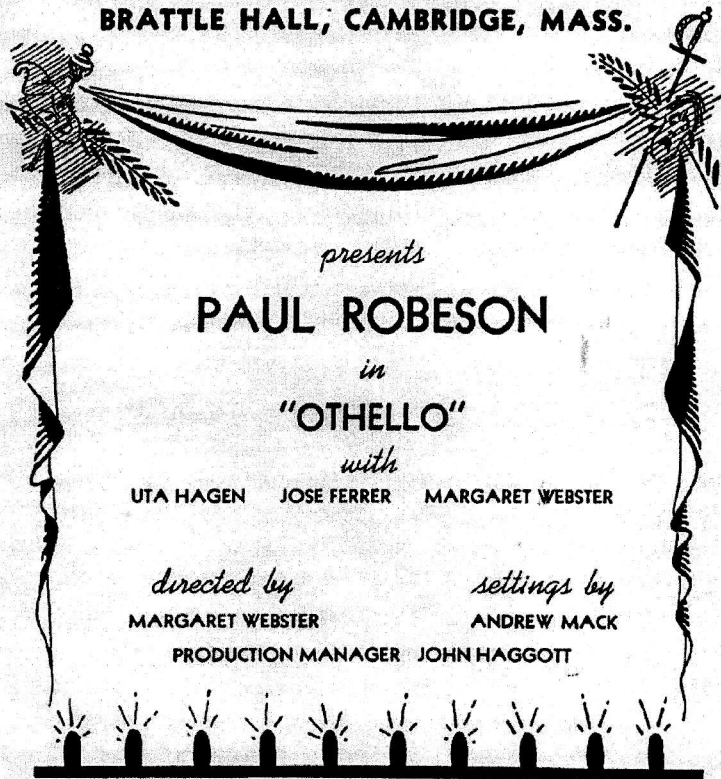
Rider to the Contract between José Ferrer and the Theatre Guild.

Carbon copy of typewritten document, not signed, not dated, initialed by John Haggott ("JH").

Uta Hagen and José Ferrer were engaged as a couple, in the principal roles of Desdemona and Iago. Ferrer's weekly salary ranged between \$600 and \$900, depending on the box office receipts. Ferrer

CAMBRIDGE SUMMER THEATRE

BRATTLE HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



presents

PAUL ROBESON

in

"OTHELLO"

with

UTA HAGEN

JOSE FERRER

MARGARET WEBSTER

directed by

MARGARET WEBSTER

settings by

ANDREW MACK

PRODUCTION MANAGER JOHN HAGGOTT

WEEK OF AUGUST TENTH 1942

Program for the Cambridge Summer Theatre production of *Othello*, Brattle Hall, Cambridge, beginning August 10, 1942.

was not required to perform if any actor other than Robeson played Othello, and he was entitled to star billing under Robeson's.

Uta Hagen's contract was similar in most respects to Ferrer's, but her weekly salary ranged from \$400 to \$600. She was also not required to appear if her husband was unable to perform.

Letter from Alfred Lunt to John Haggott.

Handwritten letter, sent from Genessee Depot, Wisconsin, written on Lunt's stationery, dated December 27, no year [1941].

José Ferrer was not the first choice to play Iago, or at least he was not the only actor to whom the part was offered. The famous actor Alfred Lunt writes to John Haggott, declining to play Iago to Robeson's Othello. Margaret Webster wrote that it had been Eva Le Gallienne who had suggested Ferrer for the role of Iago.

Letters by Margaret Webster concerning José Ferrer.

1. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, addressed to José Ferrer, not signed or dated, with annotations in ink to John Haggott. 1 page.
2. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, addressed to Arthur Friend (José Ferrer's agent), dated July 21, 1943, not signed. 2 pages.

An unexpected problem arose as the casting was being set for the New York production in 1943. From the first a road tour was contemplated, and it was necessary for the Ferrers to make arrangements for the care of their baby daughter Letty while both parents would be away for extended periods of time.

Webster writes a friendly letter to Ferrer, suggesting that the matter could more easily be settled through informal assurances rather than to require new contracts to be drafted. Ferrer's reply indicated his willingness to achieve an understanding, with the aid of "illegal commodities," in other words, alcohol, which was rationed during wartime.

COLONIAL THEATRE

— BOSTON —

Direction L. A. B. Amusement Corp.

TWO WEEKS, BEGINNING SEPT. 20

First Play of Theatre Guild-American Theatre Society Subscription Series

The Theatre Guild

Presents

PAUL ROBESON

in

The Margaret Webster Production

of

OTHELLO

by

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

with

**Jose Ferrer
Margaret Webster**

**Uta Hagen
James Monks**

The Production Designed and Lighted by

ROBERT EDMOND JONES

Music Composed by **TOM BENNETT**

Associate Producer

John Haggott

Program for the pre-Broadway tryout of the Theatre Guild-Margaret Webster production of *Othello*, Colonial Theatre, Boston, beginning September 20, 1943.

The Boston Pre-Broadway Tryout

1943

Weekly Statement for the 1943 Boston tryout.

Carbon copy of typewritten document, for the Shubert Theatre, Boston, week ending September 23, 1943. 1 page.

The production opened to expectedly full houses, and continued to do unprecedented business for a classic play. (The abbreviation "20M" represents \$20,000, not \$20,000,000.)

The New York Production

1943-1944

Contract between Paul Robeson and the Theatre Guild.

1. Carbon copy of typewritten document, on printed form of Actors' Equity Association, dated February 28, 1944.
2. Rider to the above, carbon copy of typewritten document, not dated, not signed.

The Actors' Equity Association's "Standard Run-of-the-Play Contract" is only the framework for the star's agreement, the salient terms of which are inevitably contained in a rider. This contract was executed at the time when all of the principal contracts were renegotiated and the billing of the stars was changed. Both portions of the agreement are shown here.

Playbill for the Boston pre-Broadway tryouts.

Paul Robeson in *Othello*. Colonial Theatre, Boston, 1943. Two copies shown,

The "preliminary" production of *Othello* was seen first in Cambridge, and the New York production was first seen in Boston, before arriving on Broadway by way of New Haven and Philadelphia.

Playbill for the New York run.

Othello | The Playbill | For the Sam S. Shubert Theatre, New York City. Two copies shown, early and later in the run.

Review in the New York Times.

The Play in Review, by Lewis Nichols. The New York Times, October 20, 1943.

3 columns.

"The news, of course, is Mr. Robeson's arrival back home in a part he played a few seasons ago in London and tentatively experimented with in the rural playhouses the summer before last. He looks like the part. He is a huge man, ... his height and breadth accentuated by the costumes he wears. His voice ... reverberates through the house ..."

"Not for several seasons has a play received the tumultuous applause that was accorded last night's presentation ... Cries of "Bravo!" echoed through the packed Shubert Theatre, while from the galleries higher-pitched notes of approbation were directed toward the stage. At least ten curtain calls were demanded. ... Miss Webster was forced to say a few words. She said that she and Paul Robeson had dreamed for many months of such a night as they had encountered, but had never expected it to occur ..."

Life Magazine Articles

"Life Goes to a Performance of Othello."

Life magazine covered the production with two photographic essays, first in the August 31, 1942 issue, at the time of the Cambridge Summer Theatre production, and then again after the New York opening. One page from each article is shown.

"As the first Negro in America to take on the role of the dark-skinned Moor, Paul Robeson chose his audiences carefully for the experiment, played only at such centers as Harvard and Princeton" (1942).

"At the New York opening Robeson received one of the most prolonged and wildest ovations in the history of the New York theater" (1943).

John C. Haggott

Stage Manager – Associate Producer

Biographical statement.

Carbon copy of typewritten document. 1 page.

John Haggott, associate producer and stage manager for the production of *Othello*, prepared this brief biographical sketch some time after the production.

"In 1943 I produced the Margaret Webster version of "Othello" with Robeson. Since by this time I had an exclusive service contract with the [Theatre] Guild, they became the financial partners in this production and got a share in the all time high profit for Classical productions."

Although for many years Margaret Webster and John Haggott exchanged affectionate letters and visits as intimate friends, Webster never mentions Haggott by name in her memoir, *Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage*, and makes only one reference to him, as "the stage manager."

Program for a Harvard Dramatic Club production.

La Machine Infernale, by Jean Cocteau. Harvard Dramatic Club, performing at the Repertory Theatre of Boston (now the Boston University Theatre, home of the Huntington Theatre Co., December 14-15, 1934.

Haggott is credited as the scene designer and the co-adapter of the play. He graduated from Harvard College in 1935.

(The role of Oedipus in this production was played by a long-time donor to the Harvard Theatre Collection, William Morris Hunt, II, Class of 1939.)

Clipping from a local newspaper concerning John Haggott's role in the production.

"Denver Man Puts 'Othello' On Map." Unidentified Denver, Colorado newspaper, ca. 1944. 1 column.

"A goodly measure of credit for the success of 'Othello' belongs to John Haggott of Denver and New York. The record-breaking Shakespearean hit ... was languishing in the summer theatre circuits without a Broadway sponsor when Haggott brought it to the attention of the Theatre Guild ..."

Agreement between John Haggott and the Theatre Guild.

Typewritten letter, on the letterhead of the Theatre Guild, dated February 28, 1944, signed by both parties. 2 pages. Signed by Lawrence Langner, President

of the Theatre Guild.

The document, drafted at the time when the national tour was being planned and responsibilities for the production were being re-evaluated in the light of Margaret Webster's withdrawal from the cast, clarifies that Haggott had served as Stage Manager, and would continue to do this in New York, with a salary additional to his share of the profits, and it assigns to him the additional responsibility of Technical Supervisor.

Statement of John Haggott's share of profits.

Typewritten document on printed form, on the billhead of the Theatre Guild, dated August 31, 1944.

As associate producer (a title that represented his part in the formation of the production as well as his ongoing management) John Haggott received 10% of the profits.



Second (Inner) Gallery

Robert Edmond Jones

Designer

Robert Edmond Jones's production of *Othello*.

1. **Herald for the Boston pre-Broadway tryout.**

Max Gordon Presents Walter Huston in Robert Edmond Jones's Production of "Othello." Boston Opera House, beginning Monday, November 30, 1936.

2. **Design sketch by Robert Edmond Jones, for the *Othello* scene.**

Pencil scene design sketch. *Gift of Elizabeth Jones, sister of the artist, from the Robert Edmond Jones archive.*

Max Gordon produced this revival of *Othello*, which was directed and designed by the Harvard-educated theatrical designer Robert Edmond Jones. It ran for twenty-one performances at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York City, and starred Walter Huston as Othello and Brian Aherne as Iago.

Designs for the Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson production of *Othello*.

1. **Letter from Robert Edmond Jones to John Haggott and Margaret Webster.**

Written from the Harvard Club, New York City, on Jones's stationery, dated April 14, 1943, signed "Bobby."

"I am going to ask you to release me from my agreement to design your production of *Othello*. I am sorry. The reason is that I realized after our talk at lunch the other day that you did not approve of the way I had produced the play, and that — quite apart from this — I would not really see eye to eye with you as to the way you are going to do it."

In the end, Jones did design the scene and costumes, and he adopted as a starting point the basic design for the Cambridge Summer Theatre production the year before.

2. **Scene plot sketch by Robert Edmond Jones.**

Black and red pencil, 1 leaf, 2 pages.

The basic set is shown to be a diagonal view of a chamber, with an archway entrance on each of the two walls.

3. **Photograph of the original scene design.**

4. **Letter from Robert Edmond Jones
to John Haggott and Margaret Webster.**

Autograph letter, dated June 14, 1944, signed "Bobby."

"I don't know what to do about the costumes for the tour of Othello. My idea, roughly, is as follows — a new silver robe for Desdemona, perhaps a new nightgown, two new dresses for Bianca (we might re-cut the red one), at least one new robe for Paul, a new doublet and cloak for Montano, and new boots for the soldier in green ..."

5. **Costume plot.**

Carbon copy of typewritten list, dated June 9, 1944.

The costume inventory of which this page for "Wardrobe and Understudies" forms a part was made at the conclusion of the New York production.

The Play Text

The Stage Manager's Prompt Book.

The prompt book was by convention the most important document connected with the production of a play. It was considered the authoritative copy, annotated by the stage manager with textual changes, interpretive and stage directions, and technical cues for entrances, sound, curtain, and lighting. The pages of the published edition were pasted down, here on blank utility typing paper of poor quality, and annotations were made mostly in black and red pencil.

Several representative pages from the prompt book are shown here.

1. Act 1, Scene 1. Tabulation of cues and presets.
2. Act 1, Scene 3, page 23. "My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty ..."
3. Act 3, Scene 3, page 82. "What will you give me now for that same handkerchief?"
4. Act 5, Scene 2, page 150. "Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?"
5. Act 5, Scene 2, page 154. The end of the play.

Othello, the New Temple Edition.

Othello by William Shakespeare. Edited by M. R. Ridkey, M.A. Illustrated by Eric Gill. J. M. Dent & Sons, London, and E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1935. 170 pp., opened to the first page of the play. *Copy purchased in 1935 with income from the bequest of W. W. Naumberg, Class of 1889.*

The prompt book for this production was based on the New Temple Edition of the play, a pocket-sized edition that had been published seven years earlier. Presumably this would have been the edition used by the actors as well. It was a plain-text edition — that is, it did not show editorial matter such as variant readings or readers' notes; all such apparatus was tucked away at the end of the volume.

Thomas Bennett *Composer*

Letter from the composer Thomas Bennett, complaining about the size of the orchestra.

Typewritten letter, written on letterhead of the National Broadcasting Company, signed ("Tom"), dated June 18, 1943.

There were no live musicians behind the scenes or in the orchestra pit during the performances of *Othello*; the music was pre-recorded in a studio. The date of this letter suggests that the music was being composed for recording in advance of the rehearsals and out-of-town tryouts. Indeed, the prompt book indicates music cues by the notation "Sound On."

This letter also represents Bennett's attempt at negotiation of his fee. If the range of payment was \$0.05 on one hand (Bennett's estimate

of Haggott's budget) and \$500.00 on the other (Bennett's idea of his worth), Haggott got the best of the composer, with a final fee of (\$72.20).

The incidental music by Tom Bennett.

Photostatic copy of the manuscript Conductor's part. Scene 11. Written on music paper imprinted for the National Broadcasting Co., with the copyist's union stamp, not dated.

The musical score consisted only of short fanfares and other segments for punctuation or transition. The instrumentation included only 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, and 1 reed (one player who played saxophone, flute, oboe, clarinet, and baritone saxophone).



First (Outer) Gallery, Right Side

Margaret Webster

Director – Emilia

Portrait photographs.

1. **Photograph taken during rehearsals for the 1942 Cambridge Summer Theatre production.**
Photographer not identified. 8 by 10 inches. *Gift of Margaret Webster, 1969.*
2. **Publicity photograph for the New York City production.**
Photograph by the Vandamm Studio, New York City, 1943. 8 by 10 inches. *From the Boston Globe Entertainment Desk archive.*

Biographical statement.

Carbon copy of typewritten document, not signed. 2 pages.

The essentials of Margaret Webster's life are summarized in this brief essay that formed the basis of the biography published in the souvenir program book for the production of *Othello*. She was born in New York of well-known British actors, trained in London, particularly at the Old Vic Theatre. Prior to *Othello* she had directed several Shakespeare productions starring Maurice Evans.

"But by far her greatest gift to the theatre has been the currently running production of "Othello" starring Paul Robeson. It is a Webster production from conception to finish and is well on its way to be the most outstanding Shakespearian that this country has ever seen."

Separate initial contract between Margaret Webster and the Theatre Guild.

Carbon copy of typewritten document, signed by both parties, Lawrence Langner representing the Theatre Guild, dated January 26, 1943. 2 pages.

Webster's compensation as director consisted of 20% of the profits, plus \$3,000, plus traveling expenses.

The Star Billing Dispute

Memorandum from Margaret Webster, concerning the billing dispute.

Carbon copy of typewritten memorandum, dated February 14, 1944, addressed to Paul Robeson, John Haggott, and the Theatre Guild.

This document records Webster's position regarding the divisive issue concerning the elevation of José Ferrer and Uta Hagen to above-the-title star status, a distinction previously held only by Robeson.

Paul Robeson's original 1943 contract, as well as the 1944 extension (both seen earlier in this exhibition), stipulated that he would receive sole star billing in the production. It pitted Webster against Ferrer, Hagen, the Theatre Guild, and, ironically, Robeson. Webster felt that she had no alternative but to withdraw from the cast.

Revised agreements for Paul Robeson, Margaret Webster, and John Haggott with the Theatre Guild.

Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, signed by all parties, dated February 24, 1944. 1 page.

Following the bitter division occasioned by the re-billing of José Ferrer and Uta Hagen (in which Paul Robeson supported Ferrer and Hagen, to the relative detriment of Margaret Webster), Webster withdrew from her supporting role of Emelia and from that time the three artists, who had together conceived of the production, dealt individually with the Theatre Guild instead of as a partnership.

Letter from Margaret Webster to the Theatre Guild, resigning her role of Emilia.

Carbon copy of typewritten letter, addressed to "Terry" [Theresa Helbrun, Administrative Director of the Theatre Guild], not signed, not dated [1944]. 1 page.

Margaret Webster writes to her staunch ally among the Theatre Guild directors, discussing her feelings about casting her replacement as Emilia. One of Webster's candidates, Edith King, was selected. (King also performs the role on the Columbia phonograph recording.)

New contract between Margaret Webster and the Theatre Guild,

reflecting her withdrawal from the cast.

Carbon copy of typewritten draft document, not signed, dated February 24, 1944. 3 pages.

The revised contract calls for Webster to train her own replacement in the role of Emilia, as well as any other major cast replacements, and from time to time to supervise the production while on tour.

Theatre Guild press release announcing the record-breaking run and star billing for Ferrer and Hagen.

Mimeograph copy of a typewritten press release, on Theatre Guild letterhead, not dated [March 1944]. 1 page.

“On Saturday, March 4, when The Theatre Guild–Margaret Webster production of “Othello” becomes the long-run Broadway record-holder for all Shakespearean presentations, José Ferrer and Uta Hagen will be elevated to co-stardom with Paul Robeson, it was announced today.”

The Souvenir Program Book

Printed by the Artcraft Printing Co. Edited by John Haggott. Souvenir program book printed on heavy glossy paper, illustrated. Four copies shown.

Virtually every production that toured or that featured a star performer had an illustrated souvenir book, which was sold in the lobby of the theatre or by the ushers and brought in significant additional revenue. In the mid-twentieth century most of these books were printed by the Artcraft Printing Company, which also printed heralds (handbill advertisements), posters, and window cards (smaller posters printed on stiff card stock).

Typically the souvenir book does not list the names of the secondary cast, and was revised only when any of the principal cast members changed. The copies shown reflect the several changes that were required over the period of the New York run and the road show.

The Tempest Dispute

Program for the Margaret Webster production of *The Tempest*.

Alvin Theatre, New York City, February 25, 1945. Two copies.

While the *Othello* production was touring, it became known that Margaret Webster was negotiating with the African-American actor Canada Lee to appear as Caliban in a production of *The Tempest* that would also star Vera Zorina as Ariel and Arnold Moss as Prospero. The production opened on January 25, 1945, and had a very successful run of 100 performances, through March 17. (It is interesting to note that the incidental music was composed by David Diamond.)

Letter from Margaret Webster to John Haggott.

Typewritten letter, addressed "My dear Johnny," signed "Peggy," written from Chicago, dated February 23, no year [1945]. 2 pages.

Those with an interest in the financial success of *Othello* were concerned that Webster's production of *The Tempest* would not only constitute a conflict of interest on her part, but that the appearance of another black actor in a Shakespearean role would tend to diminish the "stunt value" (the phrase she used) in the Robeson production.

In this letter, Margaret Webster defends herself to John Haggott against these accusations, claiming that the production had been in progress for three years, that the two productions were not comparable, and that everyone connected with *Othello* owed the producer of *The Tempest*, Cheryl Crawford, a debt of gratitude for being the first New York producer to offer to back the production. In the end, *The Tempest* did not affect the success of the *Othello* production.

The New York Production

Profit statement at the end of the New York run.

"Summary Statement of Operations as of August 31, 1944." Carbon copy of typewritten document, on the onionskin paper printed with the name of J. C. Koritzer, accountant for the Theatre Guild. 1 page.

Based on box office receipts of \$646,396.94 the profit was a very healthy \$203,786.38, or about 32%. The total production cost was less than 8% of receipts. Additional income probably represented program advertising and souvenir program sales.

Desdemona's handkerchief used in the production.

Silk handkerchief with embroidered strawberries in two corners.

The John Haggott archive included this single stage property, the most crucial in the play, around which the plot revolves. The colors have run somewhat, no doubt through repeated launderings and handling by the cast.

The National Road Tour

1944–1945

Season route for the road tour.

Printed route card, September 1944 through April 1945.

The front of the card is shown together with a photocopy of the back side.

Box Office Statement for the 1944–1945 road tour.

Carbon copy of typewritten document on printed form, for the Biltmore Theatre, Los Angeles, for the night of February 3, 1945. 1 page.

The statement indicates that the house was full — the receipts indicate that every available seat was sold at full price, with a house total receipt of \$3,710.00.

Letter from Margaret Webster to John Haggott, reporting on the state of the production on the road.

Autograph letter to "Johnny darling," signed "Peggy," written on her stationery, dated March 27, no year [1945]. 4 pages.

The last stop on the road tour was Chicago, an important engagement, and Margaret Webster decided to see the production shortly beforehand in order to set right what needed correction. "No-one had any idea I was in the front [i.e., in the audience] so I caught quite a lot of things. ... Actually, the show's in surprisingly good shape. The paint job is excellent and the clothes look astonishingly fresh. ... The cyc [cyclorama, i.e., backdrop] is simply god-awful. ... The performance is in remarkably good shape too — Paul hasn't altered it all and all the small parts are good. Uta is pretty awful ... I was very worried by Jo [José Ferrer] in the first half — he's got fearfully heavy and mannered and speaks with an "e" after every final consonant. ..."

Segregation and Accommodation

Letter from A. J. Armstrong, President of Baylor University.

Typewritten letter, written on letterhead of the New Browning Library, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, signed, dated June 6, 1944. 1 page.

Baylor University was one of the potential hosts of the *Othello* tour, but the president of the university wrote to point out that some points in the contract — namely, the stipulation that the entire theatre should be open to all races — was in fact against the law in Texas.

On June 12, John Haggott replied on behalf of the Theatre Guild, “The phrase which we use in our Standard Theatre contract is: “There shall be no segregation, grouping or setting apart of audiences because of race, creed or color.” It would seem that you got the idea the first time and am sorry that any negotiations are impossible.”

The tour did not include Waco, Texas — or any other place in the South.

Letter from John Haggott to Sara Greenspan of the Theatre Guild, concerning difficulties encountered on tour in Indianapolis.

Retained draft of typewritten letter, not signed, dated November 20, 1944. 2 pages.

“Both Mr. Robeson and Mr. Rockmore [Robeson’s agent] knew we would have trouble in Indianapolis and Cincinnati regarding hotel accommodations for Robeson.”

To take a mixed-race cast to perform in cities even in the northern states was a daring plan in 1944, both on the account of possible trouble in the theatres (which seldom occurred) and to secure accommodations at hotels and restaurants. The production met with organized opposition in the midwest. Ironically, the controversy was fueled by local civil-rights groups who pressured Robeson to cancel performances on principle.

Return to New York *The New York City Center*

Program for the City Center, New York City.

New York City Center of Music and Drama. Program, week of June 3, 1945.

The cast had remained remarkably stable during the road tour and the return to New York. Edith King played the part of Emilia through the entire run. James Monks was replaced, in the role of Cassio, by Ralph Crampton.

Box Office Statement for the New York City Center, after the road tour.

Carbon copy of handwritten document on printed form, for the City Center of Music and Drama, New York City, for the night of Saturday, May 26, 1945. 1 page.

Even after a long New York production and a long road tour, the house was full — only thirty seats were unsold, and these were most likely complimentary house seats. Even though, compared to the Los Angeles theatre, the seats were cheaper (as was the policy at the City Center) the house total was \$4,232.50, on account of the larger theatre capacity. The statement is signed by the Company Manager (John Yorke, representing the Theatre Guild), and the house treasurer and house manager, representing the theatre.

Paul Robeson's 1959 Stratford Production

Review by Caryl Brahms.

Published in May 1959. Production opened April 7, 1959.

Paul Robeson's final stage appearance was in another production of *Othello* at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, directed by Tony Richardson, with Mary Ure as Desdemona and Sam Wanamaker as Iago.

Phonograph Recording

Phonograph recording of the production.

1. Advertisement.

"Hail Columbia's Robeson the Renowned ... As Shakespeare's Greatest Othello." Full-page advertisement, in color, published in Life magazine.

"Today's great announcement, for lovers of the articulate arts, is Columbia's recording of the renowned Paul Robeson, with José Ferrer, Uta Hagen, and a great supporting cast, in a nearly complete production of Shakespeare's *Othello* ... the rôle Robeson has made memorable, with the outstanding dramatic interpretation of all time."

2. Phonograph records.

3 long-playing discs, in original box and sleeves. Columbia Masterworks M-MM-554. (Also released as SL-153.)

The recording was made in the summer of 1944. Margaret Webster, who had left the cast but was still billed as the director of the production, later wrote that she had not been aware that this recording

was taking place, and that it was made without her participation as director.

[Extended excerpts from the original cast recording on Columbia Masterworks records can be heard in the inner exhibition room during this exhibition.]

A Film Version

Proposal for a film of the production.

1. Letter from E. L. McEvoy of Universal Pictures.

Typewritten letter, dated May 1, 1944, written on letterhead of Universal Film Exchanges, signed "Ed McEvoy." 1 page.

2. Memorandum from John Haggott.

Retained carbon copy of typewritten memorandum, dated March 28, 1944. 1 page.

E. L. McEvoy, representing Universal Pictures, writes to John

Haggott to propose filming a performance of *Othello* in New York on a limited budget, for rental to schools, colleges, and churches. He argues that an educational film version of the stage production of *Othello* would be artistically satisfying to the company and a service to schools. Haggott, supporting this proposal, informs his colleagues at the Theatre Guild about the proposal. It was Paul Robeson who objected to the plan; whether it was dissatisfaction with his own performance, the inadequate income to be realized from a low-budget educational film, or some other reason, is not known.



The Lammot du Pont Copeland Gallery

A Gallery of Othellos

Charles Macready (1793–1873) as Othello.

"Mr. Macready as Othello." Engraving published by the London Printing and Publishing Co., not dated. Act 2, Scene 3. "Now by heavens My blood begins my safer guides to rule."

Ira Aldridge (1807–1867) as Othello.

1. Portrait engraving.

Portrait printed in Germany, with captions in English and German. Printed at the time of Aldridge's appearance at the Royal Opera House, Berlin.

Inevitably, Paul Robeson was compared to Ira Aldridge, the African-American actor who played Shakespeare's Moor a century earlier than Robeson. The comparisons were more frequent in Britain at the time of Robeson's appearance there in 1930, because Aldridge, like Robeson, did not play this role in his native country.

2. Playbill.

"The African Roscius," Adelphi Theatre, London, February 17, 1832.

In this playbill Aldridge's name was never given.

Miss Percy Knowles as Othello.

Playbill. Theatre Royal, Plymouth, December 15, 1856.

It must have been a curiosity to see a young white American woman play Othello in England, as this playbill from Plymouth announces. Her Desdemona was named Miss Ambrose.

Edwin Forrest (1806–1872) as Othello.

"Mr. Edwin Forrest as Othello." Engraving, not dated. Act 3, Scene 3. "No, Iago! I'll see before I doubt."

The great American tragedian Edwin Forrest was the definitive Othello for Americans in the nineteenth century.

Edwin Booth (1833–1893) as Othello.

Hand-colored engraving, based on a drawing by Hennessy, dated 1870,

engraved by W. Clinton.

The cerebral American actor Edwin Booth played both Othello and Iago during his career.

John Wilkes Booth (1838–1865) as Othello.

Playbill. Willard's Howard Athenæum, Boston, October 5, 1863.

The actor-turned-Presidential-assassin John Wilkes Booth was the younger brother of Edwin Booth. Julia Bennett Barrow, who played Desdemona, was a favorite actress in Boston; she played the leading roles for Booth's entire repertory.

Charles Dillon (1819–1881) as Othello.

Engraving, not dated.

Among all of the actors shown here, Dillon alone attempted a realistic portrayal of a Negro character.

Wilson Barrett (1846–1904) as Othello.

Engraving published by the Swan Electric Engraving Co., based on a photograph by Barraud and Co., London.

Barrett's portrayal was rather more Eastern than African.

Francesco Tamagno (1850–1905) as Otello, in Verdi's opera.

Photograph by Napoleon Sarony, New York, 1890.

Tamagno, the celebrated opera singer, created the title role in Verdi's operatic adaptation, *Otello*.

Charles Kemble (1775–1854) as Othello.

"Mr. C. Kemble. Rôle d'Othello." Drawing by Aïde Valmont. Colored lithograph.

Edmund Kean (1787–1873) as Othello.

Hand-colored engraving by C. Tomkins, published by William West, London. West's Theatrical Portraits, No. 38, published December 1, 1824.

Kean was a volatile actor and his Othello was described as a "lightning-flash" interpretation.

Tomasso Salvini (1829–1915) as Othello.

Photogravure engraving by Gebbie & Co., based on a photograph, 1890.

The Italian actor first appeared as Othello in New York in 1873, and two years later in London.

Philip Merivale (1886–1946) as Othello.

Photograph. Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York City, dated September 27, 1935.

Merivale was the husband of Gladys Cooper, and they toured together as Othello and Desdemona, but in New York the production only lasted for 11 performances. (Kenneth McKenna, who played Iago in this production, was the brother of scene designer Jo Mielziner.)

Orson Welles (1915–1985) as Othello.

St. James Theatre, London, 1951. Photograph by Angus McBean. *From the Angus McBean Photograph Archive, purchased in 1970.*

Orson Welles was invited by Laurence Olivier to direct a play for his company at the St. James Theatre; with a film of *Othello* in planning, the always resourceful American chose to present *Othello* to the London public using much of the same cast as in his 1955 film version. Here Gudrun Ure plays Desdemona.

Laurence Olivier (1907–1989) as Othello.

National Theatre, Old Vic, London, 1964. Photograph by Angus McBean. *From the Angus McBean Photograph Archive, purchased in 1970.*

In spite of his always-excessive makeup and his mannered performances, Olivier proved to be the Othello of his age in the National Theatre production presented at the Old Vic Theatre. Maggie Smith played Desdemona.

James Earl Jones (b. 1931) as Othello.

1. Photograph.

American Shakespeare Festival production. *Gift of the Shubert Organization, New York City.*

2. Program.

American Shakespeare Festival production, Winter Garden Theatre, New York City, 1982.

The production was directed by Peter Coe, and Diane Wiest played Desdemona.

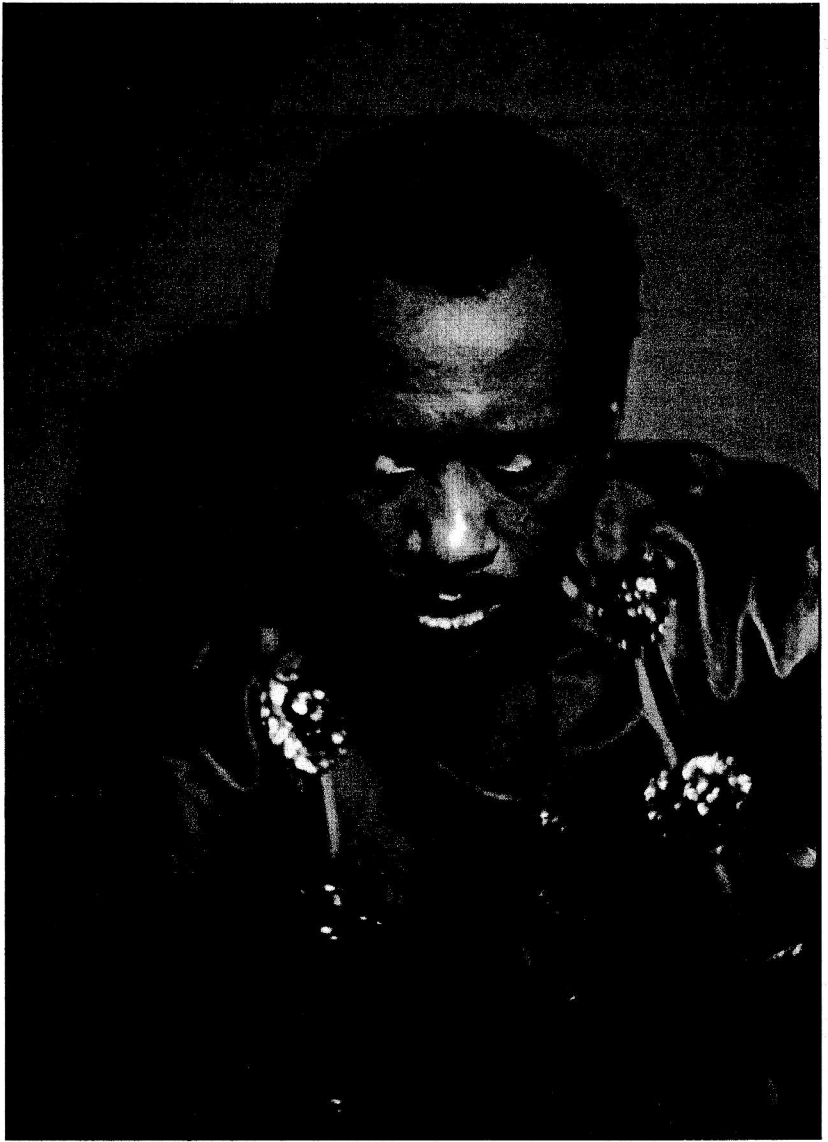


Paul Robeson as Othello and Uta Hagen as Desdemona. Colonial Theatre, Boston, 1943. Photograph by Richard Tucker, Boston.

Excerpts from the Paul Robeson Recording of Othello

*Paul Robeson as Othello, José Ferrer as Iago,
and Uta Hagen as Desdemona,
with Edith King as Emilia, Jack Manning as Roderigo,
Alexander Scourby as Cassio and Brabantio,
Philip Huston as Lodovico and Montano, and
Ainsworth Arnold as Gratiano and the Duke of Venice.*

1. Act 1, Scene 1. Roderigo, Iago.
Tush, never tell me. I take it most unkindly ...
2. Act 1, Scene 2. Iago, Othello, Brabantio.
Though in the trade of war I have slain men ...
3. Act 1, Scene 3. Duke, Brabantio, Othello, Desdemona, Iago.
Here comes Brabantio and the Valiant Moor ...
4. Act 2, Scene 2. Iago.
That Cassio loves her I do well believe it ...
5. Act 2, Scene 3. Cassio, Iago.
Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch ...
6. Act 3, Scene 3. Cassio, Desdemona, Iago, Othello.
Madam, I'll take my leave ...
7. Act 3, Scene 4. Desdemona, Emilia, Othello.
Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia ...
8. Act 4, Scene 1. Iago, Othello.
Will you think so? ...
9. Act 4, Scene 2. Othello, Emilia, Desdemona.
You have seen nothing, then? ...
10. Act 5, Scene 2. Othello, Desdemona, Iago, others.
It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul ...



Paul Robeson as Othello. Brattle Hall, Cambridge, 1942.

The John Haggott Papers

on the 1942–1945

Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson Production
of Shakespeare's Othello

The gift of Catherine Phinizy
in memory of John Haggott
and Frances Harison Phinizy Haggott.

*Item numbers followed by the sign * are represented in the exhibition.*

*Items marked with the sign § were acquired
since the receipt of the original archive.*

This collection has been assigned the accession number 2005 MT–1.

*All items are stored in flat storage boxes except for oversize items,
which are stored in flat folders in a drawer.*

Series 1 – Correspondence (Box 1)

1. Lloyd V. Almirall, to the Theatre Guild (Sara Greenspan), dated September 14, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on his business letterhead, signed, 2 pages. (Concerning the rental of electrical equipment from Maurice Evans.) §
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
2. Lloyd V. Almirall, to the Theatre Guild (J. C. Koritzer), dated June 9, 1944. Original typewritten letter, on his business letterhead, signed, 2 pages. (Concerning the rental of electrical equipment from Maurice Evans.) §
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
3. Lloyd V. Almirall, to the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated January 9, 1945. Reply, dated January 22, 1945. Carbon copies of typewritten letters. Each 1 page on 1 leaf.
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
4. Lloyd V. Almirall, to John C. Haggott, dated January 23, 1945. Original typewritten letter, 1 page, signed "Lloyd."
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
5. American Trusteed Funds, Inc., from the Theatre Guild (Lawrence

- Langner, president), dated September 25, 1943. Original typewritten letter, 2 pages, signed by Lawrence Langner and agreed to by John C. Gould (spelling uncertain). (Letter of receipt, setting out the terms of investment in the production of *Othello*.) §
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
6. Ken Austin, to John Haggott. Original typewritten letter, dated February 26, 1945, signed in ink.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 7. Philip Barry, to Mrs. John Haggott ("Fizz"). Telegram, dated December 25, 1945. Handwritten note, signed, not dated.
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 - 8.* Baylor University (A. J. Armstrong, president), to the Theatre Guild (John Haggott), dated June 6, 1944. Original typewritten letter, on New Browning Library letterhead, signed in ink. 1 page on 1 leaf. Reply, carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed, dated June 12, 1944. 1 page on 1 leaf.
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 - 9.* Thomas Bennett, to John Haggott, dated June 18, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on National Broadcasting Company letterhead, signed "Tom." 1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 10. Howard S. Cullman, to John Haggott, dated September 29, 1943, and October 20, 1943. Original typewritten letters, on his business letterhead, signed "Howard." Each 1 page on 1 leaf.
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 11. Fredric ("Ric") Downs, to Margaret Webster, dated May 5, 1945. Original handwritten letter, on Royalton Hotel letterhead, signed.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 12. F. Edward Fellows, from the Theatre Guild (John Haggott), dated June 7, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on Theatre Guild letterhead, signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. Accompanied by a carbon copy, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. Also accompanied by a memorandum by John Haggott, carbon copy of typewritten document, dated June 1, 1943, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. (Concerning an insurance policy on Paul Robeson for the benefit of the Theatre Guild.) §
3 items, 3 pages on 3 leaves.

13. F. Edward Fellows, to the Theatre Guild (J. C. Koritzer), dated September 29, 1943, on his business letterhead.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
14. José Ferrer, to the Theatre Guild, dated August 1943. Carbon copies of typewritten letter, not signed. 2 copies, each 2 pages on 1 leaves.
2 items, 4 pages on 4 leaves.
15. José Ferrer, to the Theatre Guild, dated March 31, 1944. Original typewritten letter, on his printed stationery, signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
16. José Ferrer, to Margaret Webster ("Peggy"), dated July 21, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
17. Arthur Friend, from John Haggott, dated April 5, 1944. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
18. Arthur Friend, to the Theatre Guild ("Johnny," John Haggott), dated April 7, 1944. Typewritten letter, on Friend and Reiskind letterhead, signed.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
19. Arthur Friend, to the Theatre Guild (John Haggott), dated April 28, 1944. Typewritten letter, on Friend and Reiskind letterhead, signed "Arthur." 1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
- 20.* Arthur Friend, from Margaret Webster, dated August 18, no year [1943]. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
21. Guild Associates (F. A. Pattison, assistant treasurer), from the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated September 23, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on Theatre Guild letterhead, signed by Lawrence Langner and agreed to by J. E. Swan. (Letter of receipt, setting out the terms of investment in the production of *Othello*.) §
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
22. Uta Hagen, to the Theatre Guild, dated August 1943. Carbon copies of typewritten letter, not signed. 2 copies, each 2 pages on 2 leaves.

- 2 items, 4 pages on 4 leaves.
23. John Haggott, to Frances Harison (Mrs. John) Haggott, dated February 1, 1943. Carbon copies of typewritten letter, each signed by both parties. 2 copies, each 1 page on 1 leaf.
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 24. John Haggott, to Frances (Mrs. John) Haggott, various dates.
9 items, 13 pages on 11 leaves.
 25. John Haggott, to the Theatre Guild ("Jack," J. C. Koritzer, accountant), dated August 6, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed. (Assigning his interest to Cullman Bros.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 - 26.* John Haggott, to the Theatre Guild, dated August 9, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 - 27.* John Haggott, to the Theatre Guild (Sara Greenspan), dated November 20, 1944. Original typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
 28. John Haggott, to Margaret Webster ("Peggy"), dated July 30, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 29. John Haggott, to Margaret Webster ("Pegeen-By-The-Sea"), dated August 4, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 30. John Haggott, to Margaret Webster, not dated. Telegram, on Western Union blank.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 31. Al [Haight], from John Haggott, dated September 20, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 32. Helen Hayes, to John Haggott ("Johnny"), dated September 20, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on her printed stationery, signed "Helen."
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 - 33.* Robert Edmond Jones, to John Haggott ("Johnny"), various dates. Original handwritten letters, signed "Bobby."

Dated June 11, 1944. 3 pages on 3 leaves.

Dated June 14, 1944. 4 pages on 4 leaves.

Dated June 21, 1944. 2 pages on 1 leaf.

Dated May 24, 1925, on his printed stationery. 1 page on 1 leaf.

Dated July 2, 1945. 1 page on 1 leaf.

Dated February 19, 1946. 1 page on 1 leaf.

Dated "Sat 20," 1951. 1 page on 1 leaf.

Not dated, on Parker House, Boston letterhead, signed "R.E.J." 2 pages on 1 leaf.

8 items, 15 pages on 13 leaves.

- 34.* Robert Edmond Jones, to John Haggott and Margaret Webster ("John and Peggy"), dated April 14, 1943. Original handwritten letter, on his printed stationery, signed "Bobby." (Asking to be released from the production of *Othello*.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
35. The League of New York Theatres (James F. Reilly, executive secretary), to the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated January 26, 1944. Original typewritten letter, on League of New York Theatres letterhead, signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
- 36.* Alfred Lunt, to John Haggott ("Johnny"), dated December 27, no year [1941?]. Original handwritten letter, on Genesee Depot, Wisconsin stationery, signed "Alfred L." (Declining an offer to play in *Othello* with Robeson, presumably as Iago.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
37. Rouben Mamoulian, to John Haggott, dated October 27, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on his printed stationery, signed "Rouben."
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
38. Arthur G. Post, to the Theatre Guild, dated June 17, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on his business letterhead, signed. (Concerning insurance on Paul Robeson for the benefit of the Theatre Guild.) 1 page. Accompanied by a telegram from John Minet to A. G. Post, dated June 17, 1943. Original telegram, Mackay Radio blank, not signed. 1 piece. (Requesting a doctor's certificate.) §

- 2 items, 2 pages on 2 pieces.
39. Paul Robeson, from Quentin Reynolds, not dated. Original typewritten letter, on Collier's letterhead, signed in pencil.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 40. Paul Robeson, from the city of Calgary, Canada. Two telegrams, on Western Union blanks. J. B. Barron (manager, Grand Theatre), dated November 24, [1944]. 1 page on leaf. Andrew Davidson (mayor), dated November 25, 1944. 1 page on 1 leaf. (Inviting Robeson to bring the *Othello* production to Calgary.)
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 41. Paul Robeson, to the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner), dated September 7, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on Barron, Rice and Rockmore letterhead, signed by Robert Rockmore as Robeson's attorney, and by John Haggott. 1 page on 1 leaf. Also a carbon copy, on letterhead, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. (Relating to the selection of the cast.)
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 42. Robert Rockmore, to the Theatre Guild, Inc. (Lawrence Langner, president), dated September 7, 1943. Original typewritten letter, on Barron, Rice & Rockmore letterhead, signed "Bob."
(Concerning a payment to Mr. Schnabel in compensation for his contract to appear in *Othello*.) 1 page on 1 leaf. Accompanied by a carbon copy of the letter, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. Also accompanied by a small memorandum from Rockmore to Langner, dated September 7, 1943, suggesting that Langner share the letter with Margaret Webster and John Haggott. 1 page on 1 leaf. Also accompanied by a reply from Lawrence Langner to Robert Rockmore, dated September 9, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. §
4 items, 4 pages on 4 leaves.
 43. Robert Rockmore, to the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner), dated September 7, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, on Barron, Rice and Rockmore letterhead, on thin yellow copy paper, not signed. (Concerning the days on which matinees would be given.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.

44. Robert Rockmore, to John Haggott, dated August 17, 1943, November 12, 1943, and March 31, 1944. 3 original typewritten letters, signed "Bob." Accompanied by a memorandum by John Haggott, dated March 28, 1944.
3 items, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
45. Robert Rockmore, from the Theatre Guild, dated March 1944. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, signed by Lawrence Langner. 1 page on 1 leaf. With another carbon copy, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. Accompanied by a copy of a loan agreement between Robert Rockmore and the Theatre Guild, dated January 26, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, signed by Lawrence Langner and agreed to by Robert Rockmore, with the embossed seal of the Theatre Guild. 5 pages on 6 leaves. (Concerning the continuation of the loan agreement notwithstanding the execution of new contracts for the production of *Othello*.) §
3 items, 7 pages on 8 leaves.
46. Robert Rockmore, from the Theatre Guild (John Haggott), dated February 29, no year [1944]. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, on Theatre Guild letterhead, not signed.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
47. Stefan Schnabel, from John Haggott, dated August 26, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, on onionskin paper, not signed. (Buying out Schnabel's contract to play Iago. See no. 42.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
- 48.* University Film Exchanges (E. L. McEvoy), to John Haggott, dated March 27, 1944, May 1, 1944, and another on May 1, 1944. Original typewritten letters, on University Film Exchanges letterhead, signed. Each 1 page on 1 leaf. (Concerning a proposed film version.)
3 items, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
49. Margaret Webster, to José Ferrer ("Joe"), dated July 13, no year [1943]. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed, annotated with notes for John Haggott, signed "PW."
1 item, 2 pages on 1 leaf.
- 50.* Margaret Webster, to John Haggott, various dates.
Dated "Thursday" [May 1943]. Handwritten letter, from

Hollywood, signed. 2 pages, 1 leaf.

Not dated [Summer 1943]. Original handwritten letter, signed. 2 pages on 1 leaf.

Dated February 23, no year [1943]. Typewritten letter, on her printed stationery, from Chicago, signed "Peggy." 3 pages on 2 leaves.

Not dated [October 1944]. Handwritten letter, on Hotel Statler, Detroit letterhead, signed "Peggy." 4 pages on 2 leaves.

Dated March 27, no year [1945]. Handwritten letter, on Hotel St. Francis, San Francisco letterhead, signed "Peggy." 4 pages on 2 leaves.

Dated February 23, no year [1943]. Original typewritten letter, on her printed stationery, signed "Peggy." 1 page on 1 leaf.

Dated "Monday" [1944]. Original handwritten letter, on her printed stationery. 2 pages on 1 leaf.

7 items, 18 pages on 10 leaves.

51. Margaret Webster, to Frances (Mrs. John) Haggott ("Fizz"), dated Wednesday. Original handwritten letter, written on her printed stationery, signed "P."
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
52. Margaret Webster, to John and Frances (Mrs. John) Haggott ("Fizz-and-Johnny"), not dated [1946]. Original typewritten letter, on her printed stationery, signed.
1 item, 2 pages on 1 leaf.
53. Margaret Webster, to Paul Robeson, John Haggott, and the Theatre Guild, dated February 14, 1944. "Memorandum re: Othello." Carbon copies of a typewritten document, not signed. 2 copies, each 5 pages on 5 leaves. (Making her case in a dispute, largely over billing.)
2 items, 10 pages on 10 leaves.
- 54.* Margaret Webster, to the Theatre Guild ("Terry," Theresa Helbrun), dated February 19, no year [1944]. Carbon copy of typewritten letter, not signed. (Resigning the role of Emelia.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
55. "Howard," to John Haggott, dated September 19, 1914. Original

typewritten letter, written on Hotel Statler, Buffalo letterhead, signed "Howard." (Possibly Howard Cullman.)
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.

Series 2 – Production Papers (Box 2)

- 1.* Biographical sketch of John Haggott, not dated. Carbon copy of typewritten document.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
- 2.* Biographical sketch of Margaret Webster, not dated. Carbon copy of typewritten document.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
- 3.* Costume inventory. Carbon copy of typewritten inventory. One page is dated June 9, 1944.
1 item, 12 pages on 12 leaves.
- 4.* Original design sketch by Robert Edmond Jones. "Othello Master Plan." Pencil and colored pencil.
1 item, 1 piece.
- 5.* Scene design by Robert Edmond Jones. Photograph of scene design in black and white gouache.
1 item, 1 piece.
- 6.* Musical score by Tom Bennett. Photostatic copy of conductor's short score and instrumental parts.
16 pieces.
7. List of musical instruments required for the incidental music in the production of *Othello*. 4 carbon copies of typewritten document, on onionskin paper, each 1 page on 1 short leaf. §
4 items, 4 pages on 4 leaves.
8. Lists of investors. Original typewritten document, on onionskin paper, headed "Othello Investors," not dated. 1 page on 1 leaf. With two carbon copies. Each 1 page on 1 leaf. Accompanied by another list, original typewritten document, not dated, with pencil annotations, apparently an earlier version. 1 page on 1 leaf. §
4 items, 4 pages on 4 leaves.
- 9.* Press release, Theatre Guild. Mimeograph document, on Theatre Guild letterhead, not signed. (*Othello* set a record for Shakespeare

- productions on Broadway on Saturday, March 4, 1944. Also announced star billing for José Ferrer and Uta Hagen.)
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
- 10.* Season route, road tour, September 1944 through April 1945, Printed card.
1 item, 1 piece.
 11. Memorandum from John Haggott to Theresa Helbrun, Margaret Webster, Lawrence Langner, and Paul Robeson, dated March 28, 1944, reporting on a proposal from E. L. McEvoy for a film version of the play.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 - 12.* Memorandum regarding a film version of the production, dated May 1, 1944. Original typewritten and carbon copy memorandum, 1 page original and 4 pages carbon copy.
1 item, 5 pages on 5 leaves.
 13. List of Shakespeare productions in America. Carbon copy of typewritten list.
1 item, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
 14. Ticket envelope (empty), The Guild Theatre, New York. "Robeson, c/o Rockmore." Typewritten on printed form, not dated. §
1 item, 1 piece.
 15. Lobby sign, Brattle Hall, Cambridge, Mass., August 10–15, 1942. White lettering on small black board.
1 item, 1 piece.

Series 3 – Contracts (Box 3)

Sub-Series 3.1 – Artist agreements with the Theatre Guild

- 1.* Paul Robeson, Margaret Webster, and John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated January 26, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, annotated in ink, with embossed blind Theatre Guild seal.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
- 2.* Paul Robeson, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated January 26, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, with embossed blind Theatre Guild seal, signed by Robeson and Langner.

- 1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
- 3.* Margaret Webster, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated January 26, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, signed by both parties, with the blind embossed seal of the Theatre Guild.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
4. John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated January 26, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, signed by Lawrence Langner and agreed to by John Haggott, with the embossed seal of the Theatre Guild. 2 copies, each 2 pages on 2 leaves. §
2 items, 4 pages on 4 leaves.
5. John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild (Theresa Helbrun), dated September 8, 1943. Carbon copy of typewritten contract, on Actors' Equity Association Standard Run-of-the-Play Contract blank, with the embossed blind Theatre Guild seal, signed by Robeson and Helbrun.
1 item, 2 pages on 1 leaf.
6. Paul Robeson, with the Theatre Guild (Theresa Helbrun), 1943–1944. Carbon copy of typewritten contract, on Actors' Equity Association Standard Run-of-the-Play Contract blank, signed by Theresa Helbrun.
1 item, 2 pages on 1 leaf.
7. Paul Robeson, with the Theatre Guild (Theresa Helbrun), 1943–1944. Rider to the Run-of-the-Play Contract. Carbon copy of a typewritten agreement, signed by both parties.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
8. Paul Robeson, Margaret Webster, and John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated February 24, 1944. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, signed by all parties.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
- 9.* Margaret Webster, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated February 24, 1944. Original typewritten draft agreement, annotated in pencil and ink, not signed.
1 item, 4 pages on 4 leaves.

10. John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated February 24, 1944. Original typewritten agreement, on Theatre Guild letterhead, not signed.
1 item, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
- 11.* Paul Robeson, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated February 28, 1944. Carbon copy of a typewritten contract, on Actors' Equity Association Standard Run-of-the-Play Contract blank, not signed.
1 item, 2 pages on 1 leaf.
- 12* Paul Robeson, with the Theatre Guild, dated February 28, 1944. Rider to the Run-of-the-Play Contract. Original typewritten agreement and two carbon copies, not signed. Each 2 pages on 2 leaves.
3 items, 6 pages on 6 leaves.
13. Margaret Webster, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated February 28, 1944. Photocopy of typewritten agreement, on Theatre Guild letterhead, signed by both parties, with annotations in red ink.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
14. John Haggott, with the Theatre Guild (Lawrence Langner, president), dated February 28, 1944. Original typewritten agreement, on Theatre Guild letterhead, signed by both parties.
1 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
- 15.* José Ferrer, with the Theatre Guild (John Haggott), not dated [February 1944]. Carbon copies of typewritten rider. 2 copies, both copies initialed by John Haggott ("JH").
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
16. Uta Hagen, with the Theatre Guild (John Haggott), not dated [February 1944]. Carbon copies of typewritten rider. 2 copies, both copies initialed by John Haggott ("JH").
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.

Sub-Series 3.2 – Other Agreements

1. The City Center for Music and Drama, with the Theatre Guild, dated April 24, 1945. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, 3 pages, signed by Paul Moss and agreed to by Sara Greenspan. (For the appearance of the production of Othello from May 22

- through June 2, 1945.) §
1 item, 3 pages on 3 leaves.
2. The City Center of Music and Drama and the Theatre Guild, dated May 22, 1945. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, 1 page, on City Center of Music and Drama letterhead, signed by Paul Moss and accepted by Sara Greenspan. (Letter of agreement extending the engagement of the production of *Othello* for one week, to June 10, 1945.) §
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
 3. John Haggott, with Cullman Bros., Inc., dated August 5, 1945. Carbon copy of typewritten agreement, signed by both parties.
1 item, 1 page on 2 leaves.
 4. J. H. Minet and Co., London, dated September 7, 1943, 1 page
Printed and typewritten form. 1 page on 1 leaf. Accompanied by an original typewritten agreement. 1 page on 1 leaf. (Insurance policy on Paul Robeson for the production of *Othello*.) §
2 items, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
 5. Robert Rockmore, with the Theatre Guild, dated January 26, 1943. Carbon copies of typewritten agreement, signed by Lawrence Langner and agreed to by Robert Rockmore, with the embossed seal of the Theatre Guild. 2 copies, each 5 pages on 6 leaves. (Loan agreement for the production of *Othello*.) §
2 items, 10 pages on 12 leaves.
A third copy is filed in the Correspondence series.

Series 4 – Financial Papers (Box 4)

Sub-Series 4.1 – Weekly Statements

1. Dated September through December 1943. 15 items, 15 pieces.*
2. Dated January through March 1944. 13 items, 13 pieces.*
3. Dated April through June 1944. 13 items, 13 pieces.*
4. Dated July through September 1944. 7 items, 7 pieces.*
5. Dated October through December 1944, 12 items, 12 pieces.*
6. Dated January through March 1945, 13 items, 13 pieces.
7. Dated April through June 1945. 12 items, 12 pieces.*

(* Onionskin paper imprinted "J. C. Koritzer," the name of the

accountant for the Theatre Guild.)

Sub-Series 4.2 – Box Office Statements

1. Dated September 1944. 8 items, 9 pieces.
2. Dated October 1944. 9 items, 9 pieces.
3. Dated November 1944. 5 items, 5 pieces.
4. Dated December 1944. 10 items, 10 pieces.
5. Dated January 1945. 6 items, 6 pieces.
6. Dated February 1945. 10 items, 10 pieces.
7. Dated March 1945. 5 items, 5 pieces.
8. Dated April 1945. 9 items, 9 pieces.
9. Dated May 1945. 4 items, 4 pieces.
10. Dated June 1945. 3 items, 3 pieces.

Sub-Series 4.3 – Summary Statements

1. Dated August 31, 1944. Carbon copy of typewritten statement.
1 item, 1 piece.*
2. Dated September 30, 1944. Carbon copy of typewritten statement.
1 item, 1 piece.*
3. Dated June 30, 1945. Carbon copy of typewritten statement.
1 item, 1 piece.*
4. Dated August 25, 1945. Spirit copy of typewritten statement.
1 item, 1 piece.

(* Onionskin paper imprinted "J. C. Koritzer," the name of the accountant for the Theatre Guild.)

Sub-Series 4.4 – Other Financial Papers

1. Production Budgets. 4 original typewritten pages and 3 carbon copies. Each 1 page on 1 leaf.
5 items, 7 pages on 7 leaves.
- 2.* Statement of Preliminary Expenses, not dated. Original typewritten budget.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
3. Statement of Brokers' Sales, Shubert Theatre, dated January 1944.

Original typewritten statement.

1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.

4. Share Statement for John Haggott, dated August 1, 1944. Original typewritten statement on printed form, with Theatre Guild heading.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
5. Financial statement, dated August 3, 1946. Spirit copy of typewritten statement.
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.
6. Memorandum, not dated. Original typewritten document, signed by John Haggott ("JH"). 1 page on 1 leaf. With a carbon copy, not signed. 1 page on 1 leaf. (Concerning the investor Howard Cullman.)
2 item, 2 pages on 2 leaves.
7. Memorandum, not dated [1943]. "Summary of Ferrer-Hagen Discussion." Original typewritten document, signed by John Haggott ("JH" in type).
1 item, 1 page on 1 leaf.

Series 5 – Programs (Box 5)

- 1.* Program for *Othello*, Cambridge Summer Theatre, Brattle Hall, Cambridge, Mass., week beginning Monday, August 10, 1942. 8 pages.
1 item, 1 piece.
- 2.* Program for *Othello*, tryouts, Colonial Theatre, Boston, September 20, 1943. 8 pages. Original form of credits (star billing only for Paul Robeson).
1 item, 1 piece.
- 3.* Program for *Othello*, Sam S. Shubert Theatre, New York City, The Playbill, 1943. 20 pages and wrapper. Original form of credits (star billing only for Paul Robeson).
1 item, 1 piece.
- 4.* Program for *Othello* at Sam S. Shubert Theatre, New York City, The Playbill, beginning Monday, June 25, 1944. 20 pages and wrapper. New form of credits (star billing for Paul Robeson, José Ferrer, and Uta Hagen).

- 1 item, 1 piece.
- 5.* Souvenir program for *Othello*. Brown ink, white stock. Artcraft Publishing Co., 16 pages. Original form of credits (star billing only for Paul Robeson), original cast.
1 item, 1 piece.
- 6.* Souvenir program for *Othello*. Red ink on cover, brown ink inside, white stock. Artcraft Publishing Co., 20 pages. Original form of credits (star billing only for Paul Robeson), original cast. Cut sheets.
1 item, 10 pieces.
- 7.* Souvenir program for *Othello*. Red ink on cover, brown ink inside, white stock. Artcraft Publishing Co., 20 pages. New form of credits (star billing for Paul Robeson, José Ferrer, and Uta Hagen), replacement of Margaret Webster by Edith King.
1 item, 1 piece.
- 8.* Souvenir program for *Othello*. Red ink on cover, brown ink inside, yellow stock. Artcraft Publishing Co., 20 pages. New form of credits (star billing for Paul Robeson, José Ferrer, and Uta Hagen), replacement of Margaret Webster by Edith King and James Monks by Ralph Crampton. With two photographs clipped from the program, Robert Edmond Jones and Margaret Webster.
1 item, 3 pieces.

Series 6 – Newspapers and Magazines (Box 6)

Sub-Series 6.1 – Newspaper Clippings

1. Reviews of *Othello* in Cambridge, Mass., 1942.
3 items, 3 pieces, and 2 oversize items filed elsewhere.
2. Reviews of *Othello* in Boston, 1943.
2 items, 2 pieces, and 1 oversize item filed elsewhere.
- 3.* Reviews of and articles about *Othello* in New York City, 1943. The New York Times.
5 items, 5 pieces, and 1 oversize item filed elsewhere.
4. Reviews of and articles about *Othello* in New York City. The Herald Tribune.
2 items, 2 pieces.

5. Reviews of and articles about *Othello* in New York City, 1943. The New York Times.
14 items, 17 pieces.
6. Reviews of and articles about *Othello* on National Tour, 1944-1945.
6 items, 6 pieces.
7. Reviews of and articles about *Othello* in the New York press, after 1943.
8 items, 9 pieces, and 3 oversize pieces filed elsewhere.
8. Articles about and by Margaret Webster. (Including "Pertinent Words on His Moorship's Ancient," New York Times, not dated, 4 columns.)
2 items, 2 pieces.
- 9.* Article about John Haggott. "Denver Man Puts 'Othello' on Map," unidentified newspaper, 1 column.
1 item, 1 piece.

Sub-Series 6.2 – Magazine Articles

- 1.* Life Magazine. "Life Goes to a Performance of *Othello*," August 31, 1942. 1 item, 5 leaves. (Coverage of the Cambridge production.)
Also "Othello," 1943.
2 items, 5 pieces.
2. The New York Times Magazine, September 1943.
1 item, 5 pieces.
3. The New Yorker. "We." Profile of Margaret Webster by Barbara Heggie.
1 item, 6 pieces.

Sub-Series 6.3 – Advertisements

1. Advertisement for Paul Robeson in *Othello*, Shubert Theatre, New York City. The New York Times, October 21, 1943.
1 item, 2 piece.
- 2.* Advertisement for Columbia Masterworks Records.
"Othello." (With the original cast excepting Margaret Webster.)
1 item, 1 piece.

Series 7 – Prompt Book (Box 7)

- 1.* Prompt book for the 1944-1945 road tour. 150 leaves, pasted down

on blank sheets, intended to be held by a clasp binder annotated on the same pages, all versos blank. Each leaf is now inserted in a protective archival plastic sleeve, in one loose-leaf binder. (The original clamp binder is preserved in Box 11.)

1 item, 150 leaves.

Series 8 – Photographs (Box 8)

1. Scene photographs from the original production at Brattle Hall, Cambridge, Mass., August 1942. Black and white prints, 8 by 10 inches, glossy finish, by W. C. Robinson. 2 items.
2. Margaret Webster. Portrait photograph from rehearsals for *Othello*, Cambridge, Mass., 1942. Black and white print, matte finish, photographer not identified. 1 item. *Gift of Margaret Webster, 1969.*
3. Scene photographs from tryouts at the Colonial Theatre, Boston, October 1943. Black and white prints, 8 by 10 inches, matte finish, by Richard Tucker, Boston. 10 items.
4. Scene photographs from tryouts at the Colonial Theatre, Boston, October 1943. Black and white prints, 10 by 12 inches, matte finish, by Richard Tucker, Boston. 6 items.
5. Portrait photographs of Paul Robeson in the original production at the Shubert Theatre, New York City, Fall 1943. Black and white prints, 8 by 10 inches, glossy finish, by Vandamm Studios. 1 item.
6. Costume portrait photographs from the original production at the Shubert Theatre, New York City, Fall 1943. Black and white prints, 8 by 10 inches, glossy finish, by Vandamm Studios, New York. 5 items.
7. Scene photographs from the original production at the Shubert Theatre, New York City, Fall 1943. Black and white prints, 8 by 10 inches, glossy finish, by Vandamm Studios, New York. 4 items.
8. Costume portrait photographs of Paul Robeson as *Othello* and José Ferrer. Color prints, 9 by 12 inches, glossy finish, photographer not identified. 2 items. *Gift of William Morris Hunt, 1999.*

Series 9 – Sound Recording (Box 9)

- 1.* Recording of the Margaret Webster – Paul Robeson production of *Othello*. "Othello: Shakespeare," Columbia SL-153. 3 long-playing discs, in original box and sleeves.

1 item, 4 pieces.

(A commercial transfer of this recording to compact disc, Pearl Plays & Poets GEMS 0037, is catalogued in the Harvard Theatre Collection.)

Series 10 – Stage Properties (Box 10)

1. Handkerchief, with strawberry embroidery, used on stage.
1 item, 1 piece.
2. Hand-drawn document, with map, used on stage.
1 item, 1 piece, oversize item stored elsewhere.

Miscellaneous Additional Material (Box 10)

1. *The Theatre of Robert Edmond Jones*, edited by Ralph Pendleton. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Conn., 1958. 1 item.
2. Reproductions of designs by Robert Edmond Jones, cut from a book. 1 item, 3 leaves.

Original Enclosures and Bindings (Box 11)

1. Original binder for prompt book. Black clamp binder.
2. Original binder for financial papers. Black clamp binder.
3. Scrapbook album. Brown leather, embossed "John Haggott."
4. Portfolios for large color photographs.



PAUL ROBESON



as

OTHELLO

THE MOOR OF VENICE

Souvenir program for the Paul Robeson–Margaret Webster production of *Othello*. Artcraft Publishing Co., 1943. 16 pages, first edition, with star billing for Paul Robeson but not for José Ferrer or Uta Hagen.



