



Boris Aronson: stage design as visual metaphor

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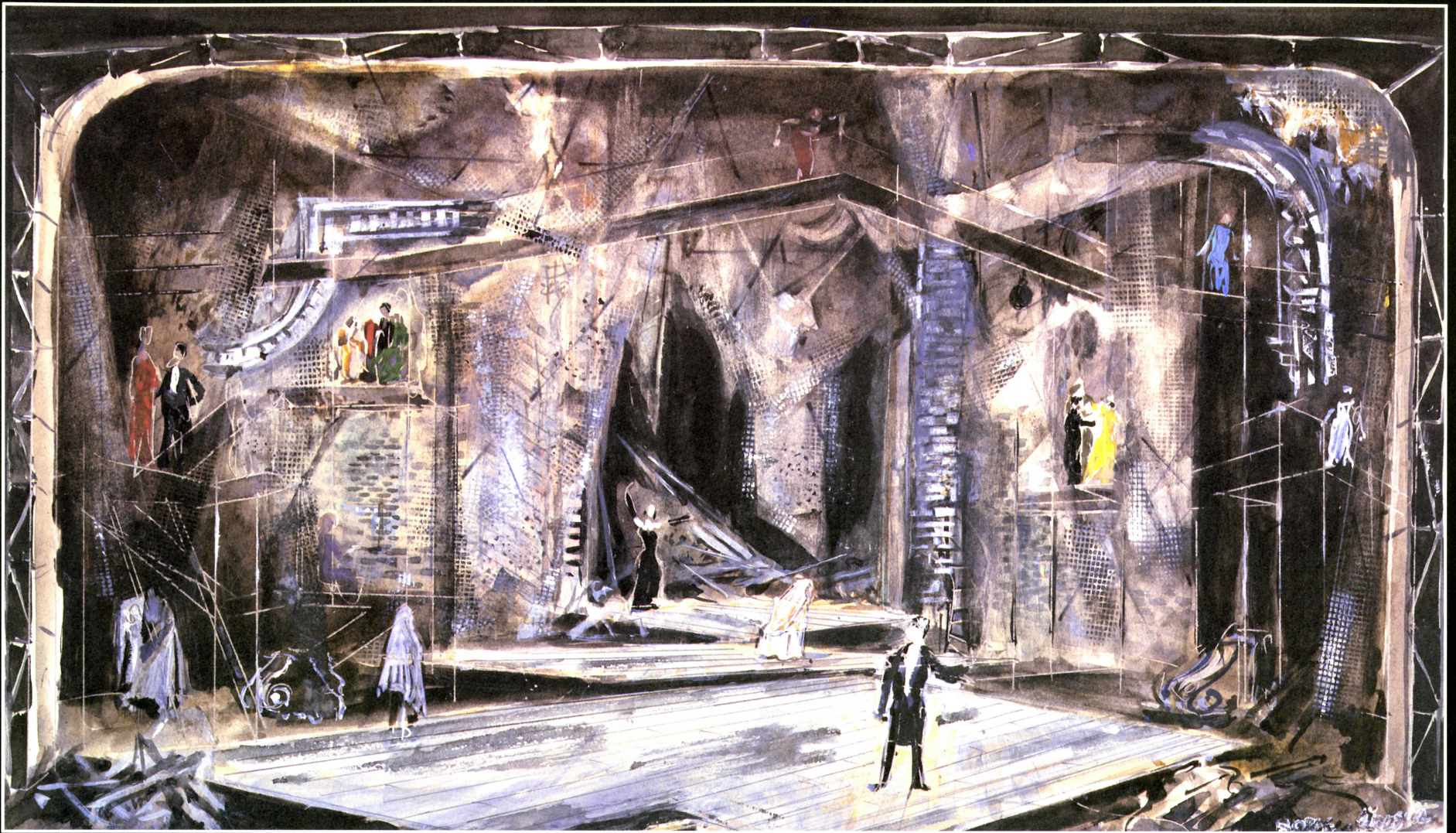
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B O R I S A R O N S O N



S T A G E D E S I G N A S V I S U A L M E T A P H O R

B O R I S A R O N S O N

T H E K A T O N A H G A L L E R Y

KATONAH, NEW YORK

OCTOBER 8—DECEMBER 31, 1989

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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH—APRIL 1990

G U E S T C U R A T O R : F R A N K R I C H

S T A G E D E S I G N A S V I S U A L M E T A P H O R

FOREWORD

This publication and its accompanying exhibition bring to light the extraordinary work of Boris Aronson—an artist whose talent had an extraordinary impact on the world of theatre over the course of the last fifty years. Aronson's drawings and models can and do exist on their own as complete works of art, and it is fitting that a group of them should be presented in a museum setting.

For making the exhibition possible I am grateful to Frank Rich for his curatorial expertise and to the lenders—Lisa Aronson, the Harvard Theatre Library and the Metropolitan Opera Archives.

GEORGE G. KING
Director

INTRODUCTION

The genesis of this exhibition occurred in the spring of 1988 when Marc Aronson (the son of Lisa and Boris Aronson) proposed the idea to me at the annual Theatre Library Book Awards presentation at Lincoln Center. One of the books cited that evening, *The Theatre Art of Boris Aronson* (Knopf, 1987), served as an invaluable starting point for The Katonah Gallery's exploration of a complex and sophisticated artist whose energy and imagination were devoted to stage design.

The more one reads about Boris Aronson, the more one looks at his art, and the deeper one travels into the many layers of his imagination, the more one realizes how intimately connected he had been with the raging current of 20th-century art. And like significant artists of his time—Dubuffet and Noguchi, for example—Aronson constantly changed and evolved. He was a superb artist who never became trapped in a formulaic signature style or mired in a personal idiom.

In his exhaustive research into the subject and subtexts of a play, Aronson was a fanatical detective. As the problems of each production's interpretation were specific to it alone, so the solutions were specific, often surprising. Aronson's ability to capture the underlying nuances of a playwright's intention gave his stage designs palpable dynamism. His search for the most refined essence led him to investigate the subconscious, collective memory of man.

Twenty years ago, in the précis for a book manuscript titled *Preparation and Visualization, Designing for the Theatre*, Aronson wrote: "Present day theatre has been built up as a gambling institution rather than a sound art form. The theatre is a sweepstake—the gambler has

only one chance to succeed. Despite this, Broadway remains vital—it lacks only continuity because it is constantly awaiting a fresh spark to set it off again." Aronson's designs for the theatre set off many sparks: some became flames, some were extinguished, not a few became bonfires.

The Katonah Gallery hopes that this exhibition will stimulate a deeper awareness of the complexities of stage design and provoke interest in the layers of art which support its resolution. We honor the artist Boris Aronson.

ANGELA HEIZMANN GILCHRIST
Exhibition Coordinator

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Katonah Gallery was delighted when Frank Rich, chief drama critic for *The New York Times*, agreed to curate an exhibition of the stage designs of Boris Aronson. Co-author with Lisa Aronson of *The Theatre Art of Boris Aronson*, Mr. Rich selected those productions which demonstrate a particular aspect of the artist's work that had not been explored in his monograph. In his essay for this catalogue, he challenges one to look beyond the theatrical glitter of the Broadway scene to the metaphorical concepts which inform the artist's finest designs.

For Aronson, the means by which a theatre artist arrives at his final realization is always more important than the realization itself. Special thanks are owed to Ming Cho Lee who helped prepare a supplementary exhibition illustrating Aronson's design process. An internationally known theatre artist himself and Professor of Design at the Yale School of Drama, Mr. Lee apprenticed with Aronson in 1959–60, assisting on the production of "Do Re Mi." We are grateful to him for his personal recollections as well as his professional insights, and for the many hours he spent with us, selecting, organizing, and mounting the material.

Many dedicated people at the Katonah Gallery have contributed their talents and energy to this effort. George King, our Director, welcomed the project from its inception and assisted us every step of the way with characteristic patience and enthusiasm. Rosalie Dolmatch created the incisive and informative video presentation on the life and work of Boris Aronson which supplements the exhibition. Yvonne Pollack, The Gallery's Chairman of Education, continues to

find innovative ways to stimulate and challenge young people through school participation and family workshops. And Arthur M. Clark has again demonstrated his extraordinary creativity in transforming the exhibition space, revealing Boris Aronson's Constructivist roots. We express our gratitude to the entire Gallery staff—to Naomi Brocki, Edris Guest, Mary Brenda Joyner, Pat Keane, and Barbara Plachaty—for their thoughtful attention to the countless details of exhibition preparation, and to the members of our docent corps who have worked so hard to make this exhibition accessible to The Katonah Gallery's visitors.

We also thank Jeanne Newlin, Curator of the Harvard Theatre Library, William Tuggle, Director of the Archives of the Metropolitan Opera, and Richard M. Buck of the Performing Arts Research Center at The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, for their commitment to this project. Finally, we are particularly indebted to Lisa Aronson for making precious material available for the exhibition. Her encouragement and gracious collaborative support directed and sustained us throughout this entire endeavor, and we extend to her our deepest appreciation and affection.

NANCY WALLACH
Exhibition Coordinator

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METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES

Major funding for this exhibition has been provided by public funds from the Westchester Arts Fund of the Council for the Arts in Westchester, which is supported by corporate contributions and the County of Westchester.

The Katonah Gallery gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Exhibition Patrons.



*“There is, in actuality,
no such thing
as a stage designer.
Anyone who successfully
designs for the theatre
is also a painter,
sculptor, architect, or
engineer.
In rare instances,
he is all of these.”*

— BORIS ARONSON

BORIS ARONSON IN THE 1960'S · PHOTO: VAN WILLIAMS

Boris Aronson (1898-1980) was a rare artist: a painter, sculptor and man of the theatre whose sensibility was shaped by the modernist revolutions of twentieth-century art but whose creative outpouring found its home for a half-century in the practical world of the stage. How does an artist reconcile an esthetic influenced by Constructivism, Cubism and other forms of abstraction with the needs of a theatre in which flesh-and-blood actors must pretend to be “real” people in “real” settings? Aronson’s solution to this problem resulted in some of the most exciting theatrical designs in the history of the American theatre — art seething with the conflict of reality and illusion, art as transitory as all work in the theatre but imperishable in terms of its lasting influence.

Aronson helped redefine the whole nature of what a theatrical designer does. In the American theatre, he pioneered the notion that scenic design is not an adjunct of architecture or painting or the decorative arts but is instead a sophisticated, if little understood, art in its own right. To reconcile advanced modernist esthetics with the practical demands of stagecraft, his designs transformed a playwright’s settings into three-dimensional environments that made little attempt to replicate reality but instead remade reality in the form of abstract visual metaphors. Aronson’s sets were as much concerned with the ideas and themes of plays as with the specific venues where the plays ostensibly took place. His visual metaphors would communicate those themes and ideas; such practical matters as where the actors might sit or enter or exit were thought about later, and were subservient to the

abstract imagery that frequently dominated, indeed determined, the design.

Aronson came by his original ideas about art and the theatre naturally. They flowed out of the Russian artistic revolution in which he came of age. Aronson was a student of Alexandra Exter (1882-1949), the visionary Constructivist scenic and costume designer, and also a friend of Marc Chagall, whose art he championed in a book written in 1923. As a young man, he was a visitor to the collection of the Moscow textile merchant Sergey Ivanovich Shchukin, who maintained his own private “Museum of Matisse and Picasso” in his mansion at a time (c. 1909) when such art was unknown to the Russian public. Aronson also came under the sway of the iconoclastic stage director of the Moscow Kamerny Theatre, Alexander Tairov (1885-1950), who used Exter as his principal designer and whose theories, as stated in a manifesto titled *The Emancipated Theatre*, would bear fruit in Aronson’s own later work. Tairov condemned naturalistic theatre which gives “the false impression” of “the actual reality of life.” The director called for “scenic solutions” in which the design does not “recall any true-to-life illusions” but instead creates its own world in unity with a performance and a text. “From the point of view of reality, they seem fictitious,” wrote Tairov of his ideal theatrical sets. “But they are true — true from the point of view of theatre-art — because they are in harmony with the reality of the material.”

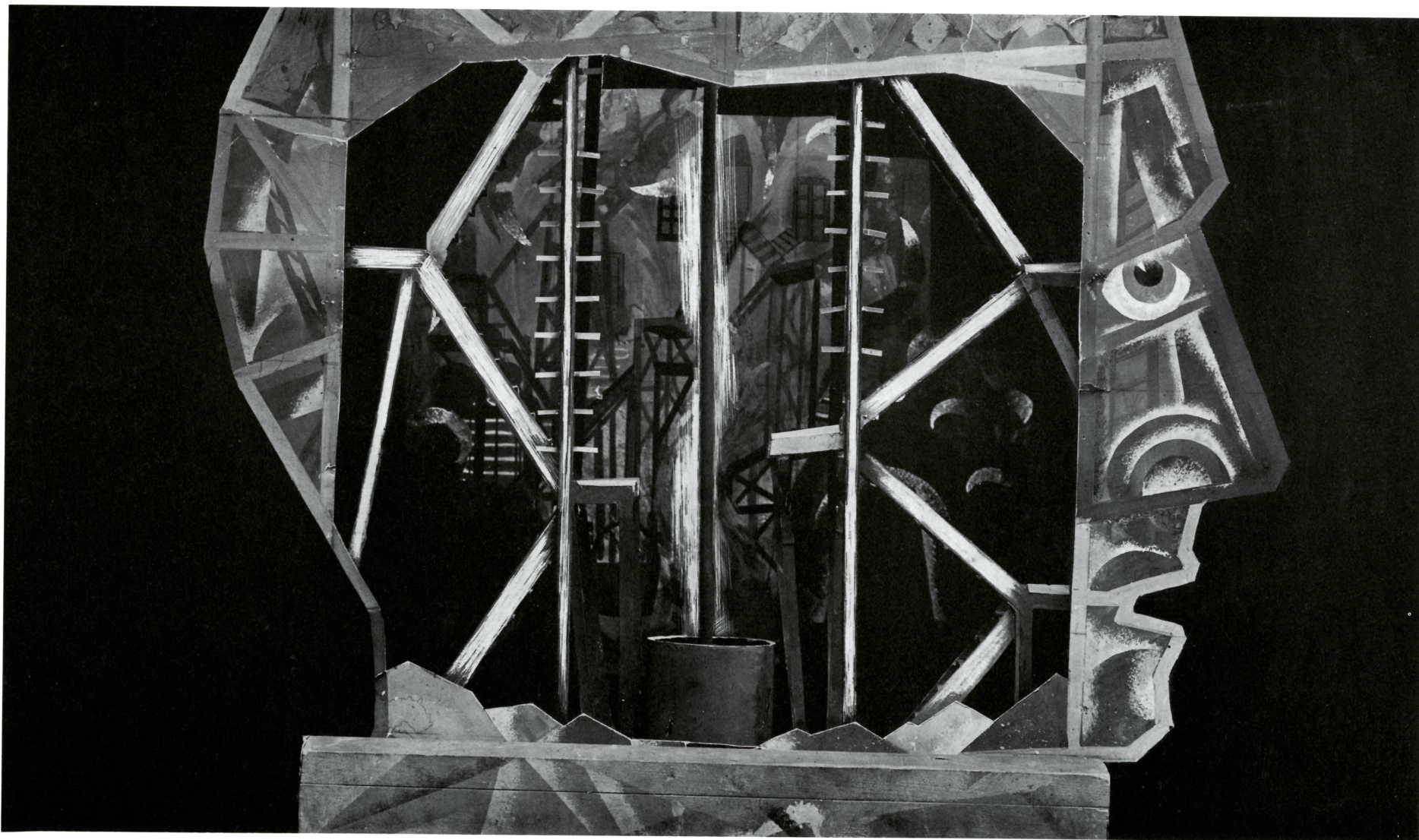
These ideas are echoed not only in Aronson’s designs but also in his own, eloquently stated design philosophy. “I strongly believe that for each play you

first and foremost must create a space which, inherent in its design, already holds the mystique of the entire event,” he wrote. “My main approach to theatre design is to recognize the **individuality** of each production in terms of theme and concept of the script...My eventual choices for creating the set for *Fiddler on the Roof*, for instance, could scarcely be used satisfactorily to design *Cabaret*; no other play could be performed in my set for *J. B.* Each has its own special message, its own singular quality to maintain. You have to be reborn with each assignment...In order to surprise the audience, you must be able to surprise yourself.”

To create a space holding “the mystique of the entire event” — a design of individuality and surprise — Aronson found his visual metaphors for each production, often after much trial-and-error experimentation, sometimes with the consultation of collaborators, occasionally with great inner struggle. The process can be seen in his earliest assignments after arriving as an immigrant in New York in the 1920’s. These jobs were with the avant-garde Yiddish theatre companies that flourished as a consequence of the same wave of immigration that brought Aronson to America. The men running these companies were sympathetic to Aronson’s experimentation because they were often students of the same artistic upheavals that had affected the designer during his formative years in Russia.

The Bronx Express (1925), a comedy by Ossip Dymov presented by Rudolph Schildkraut in the Bronx, told the story of a tired buttonmaker who goes home on the subway, falls asleep and dreams of the places evoked by the subway car’s advertising cards. “My

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT · 1926



HELL · SEPIA PHOTO WITH INK AND PENCIL · 12½ × 19½

idea,” said Aronson, “was that when somebody falls asleep there is always a chance to awaken temporarily, and what happens is that when one awakens, one finds oneself in the same locale where one started to dream.” To render this idea visually, Aronson had the subway disappear during the dream sequences but had the subway ceiling, with its hanging straps and Wrigley’s gum advertisement, remain in place. In *The Tenth Commandment* (1926), the extravaganza with which Maurice Schwartz opened his Yiddish Art Theatre on Second Avenue a year later, Aronson departed much more from realism. To represent hell as a state of mind, Aronson wanted both to take the audience inside the brain and to convey “the flame of work and passion, labor and drudgery.” Accordingly, he designed hell in the shape of a huge human profile and made it a fiery red crucible with steep ladders, evocative of an Essex Street sweatshop factory on a hot summer day. “A fire escape was constructed as a symbol of emergency and trouble, practical for action and emotion. Twenty actors gave the effect of a hundred by sliding down the fire pole, returning up the staircase, and sliding down again.”

The production with which Aronson solidified his reputation in the English-speaking theatre was Irwin Shaw’s *The Gentle People* (1939), staged by Harold Clurman for the Group Theatre. Shaw called his drama “a Brooklyn fable”; it was a straightforward Depression morality tale about two innocent immigrant Coney Island fishermen hounded by a gangster. But Aronson, taking Shaw’s fabulist intentions seriously, did not provide a documentary rendering of a Coney Island pier. To capture the spirit of the setting, he

turned to Japanese woodcuts, “a form which develops accuracy to a lyrical art.” Emphasizing mood more than reality, the design for the pier was drained of color and stripped of inessential literal details. As in a Hokusai print, the pier was built two-dimensionally but in perspective. To suggest water, gauze was jostled up and down, Kabuki-style, with ripples added by projections. Shortly thereafter, Aronson used multiple projections for *The Great American Goof* (1940), a Eugene Loring ballet (with scenario by William Saroyan) that appeared on the opening program of Ballet Theatre. Applying a technique that he called “Painting with Light,” Aronson projected collage designs, done on glass slides, on silvery screens of various abstract shapes and materials to create the ballet’s many settings and moods. The results were so novel that the Museum of Modern Art exhibited the designs seven years after *The Great American Goof* itself had come and gone.

The impulse that led Aronson to stylize *The Gentle People* can be seen in his approach to many of the dramas he would design thereafter, even if the plays themselves, like Irwin Shaw’s, might seem to be fixed in a specific here and now. Starting with Tennessee Williams’ *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), Aronson would use painting to obliterate the realism of the architecture in settings, using the language of modern painting to bring out a drama’s poetry. In *The Rose Tattoo*, he painted the deepest part of the set the lightest in color, to give it an inner glow, “like the heart of the candle.” In a similar manner, and with conscious reference to the graphic dramatization of loneliness in Edward Hopper’s *Nighthawks*, Aronson contrasted the warmth

of a diner’s interior with the dark, stormy landscape surrounding it in William Inge’s *Bus Stop* (1955).

For Arthur Miller’s bill of one-act plays, *A View from the Bridge* and *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1955), Aronson captured the playwright’s larger intentions by working classical elements into the Red Hook, Brooklyn setting of the tragic *Bridge* and by using abstractly painted window panes, with Paul Klee-like striations, to bathe the auto-parts warehouse of *Two Mondays* in the diffuse light of memory rather than the harsh reality of the Depression. When Aronson was assigned Miller’s Ibsenesque *The Price* (1968), he made inanimate objects into symbolic participants in the drama: an old brownstone’s dusty attic, a battleground for two brothers disposing of their late father’s estate (and the past it represents), is full of specially constructed furniture whose jumbled, discomfiting arrangement expresses the characters’ psychological distress. As Miller later said, the furniture was not real “but more than real.” For Miller’s subsequent *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972), a retelling of Genesis, Aronson went even further into the metaphorical. To create a modern view of the origins of Earth, he turned for inspiration to the engravings of William Blake, the later work of Joan Miró, and, given the God-as-scientist dialogue in the play, photographs of molecular formations from the magazine *Scientific American*. These photographs were blown up to suggest an abstract pattern for the stage floor, which was then sculpted out of fiberglass.

The roots of a design like *The Creation of the World* can be found in ideas developed by Aronson and the

director Elia Kazan in the landmark set for another play with Biblical origins, *J. B.* (1958), Archibald MacLeish's retelling of the Book of Job. MacLeish conceived of his setting as "a traveling circus which has been on the roads of the world for a long time," and Aronson, a devotee of the circus, was able to execute a timeless metaphor for a universe in which "fear is mixed with pleasure, horror with excitement" and where everything is reduced "to big and small, the giant and the midget, God's will and Job." (When the tent collapses, it is an apocalypse.) Like Christopher Fry's meditation on Exodus, *The Firstborn* (1958), in which Aronson realized the essence of Egypt in the sculptural abstraction of a hieroglyph-engraved wall, *J. B.* was the sort of epic theatre particularly hospitable to Aronson's scenic metaphors.

Along with epic plays, it was the musical theatre that most lent itself to Aronson's poetic concept of stage design. The very conventions of musical theatre fight the whole notion of putting literal reality on stage. This is true in an opera like Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1970), in which Aronson borrowed elements of medieval locks and machines to stylize the cruel atmosphere of a dungeon, or in a Broadway musical like Kurt Weill and Alan Jay Lerner's *Love Life* (1948), in which newspapers metamorphose into revolving doors to suggest the panic of modern urban life.

Even when the musical *Cabin in the Sky* (1940) required the depiction of contemporary poverty, Aronson reinvented the reality in his own terms. Struck by the naive decorative collages in the homes of poor Southern blacks he visited in Richmond, Va., he

extended their visual ideas in his set. For the equally unlikely environment of *Do Re Mi* (1960) — the jukebox industry — Aronson again thought in terms of collage to capture the symbolic essence of a specific sociological milieu. A nightclub mixed up actors with cut-out mannequins; a Broadway bar was seen in bold, Stuart Davis-like forms and words anticipating Pop Art; the microphones in a recording studio danced in air as if in an Alexander Calder mobile.

Aronson's greatest opportunities to pursue scenic metaphors came in the musicals Harold Prince directed in the 1960's and 70's. To represent the Weimar Germany of *Cabaret* (1966), Aronson symbolized a world on the brink of Nazism with a black space dominated by a trapezoidal mirror. The mirror both distorted the shapes of the actors into George Grosz-esque contortions and caused a 1960's American audience to examine its own predicament within the turbulence of another time. The Greece of *Zorba* (1968) was symbolized simply by omnipresent platforms representing a hillside road and heavily textured fabrics suggesting the sun-blasted countryside; the white and black color scheme dramatized the polarity of life and death in the libretto as well as the contrasts of the Mediterranean landscape. The Scandinavia of *A Little Night Music* (1973), a musical adapted from Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night*, was reduced to its essence of birch trees, painted on sliding plexiglas panels that disrupted conventional perspective (and naturalism) in the manner of Magritte's *Blank Signature*. Even the interior domestic scenes in *Night Music* took place within the birch forest. In *Pacific Overtures* (1976), the

last of his collaborations with Prince and the composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim, Aronson refracted the traditional Japanese prints he loved through Western collage and even modern Western technology (a color Xerox machine) to find the abstract visual equivalent to the culture-clash themes of a musical about Commodore Matthew Perry's 1853 mission to "open up" an isolated Japan to Western trade and influence.

But perhaps the quintessential Aronson designs were created for Prince-Sondheim musicals that came a few years before *Pacific Overtures*. In *Company* (1970), he was finally able to mate the Constructivism of his early years in Russia to his adopted home. Using a composition of austere platforms and elevators, Aronson created a two-level "urban jungle gym": a simple metaphor for the entirety of a neurotic, technologically fixated Manhattan inhabited by alienated married couples living in high-rise glass cages. In *Follies* (1971), Aronson turned the stage itself — an empty stage — into a metaphor. The story of a reunion of middle-aged *Follies* performers set in their once gilded, now half-demolished theatre, *Follies* allowed Aronson to create a haunted playhouse out of empty space, exposed scaffolding, a platformed floor and rubble. The set was as much about the absence of "scenery" as its presence. In the deconstruction of a theatre, Aronson had indeed achieved a metaphor for the artistic mission of his own career. His design for *Follies* represented the fractionalized values of modern civilization, and the abstract esthetics produced by that civilization, that had at last swept away the old world and old theatre of reality and romance. □

WALK A LITTLE FASTER · 1932



SHOW CURTAIN · GOUACHE · 13½ × 20¼

THE GENTLE PEOPLE · 1939



CONEY ISLAND PIER · GOUACHE WITH LITHO PENCIL · 8¼ × 14½

THE GREAT AMERICAN GOOF · 1940



SET DESIGN · LITHO PENCIL · 11¼ × 19⅜



NEWSPAPERS AS REVOLVING DOORS · GOUACHE · 7 × 12¼ · 7 × 9¾ · TWO DESIGNS FOR A BALLET SEQUENCE (NEVER STAGED)

A MEMORY OF TWO MONDAYS · 1955



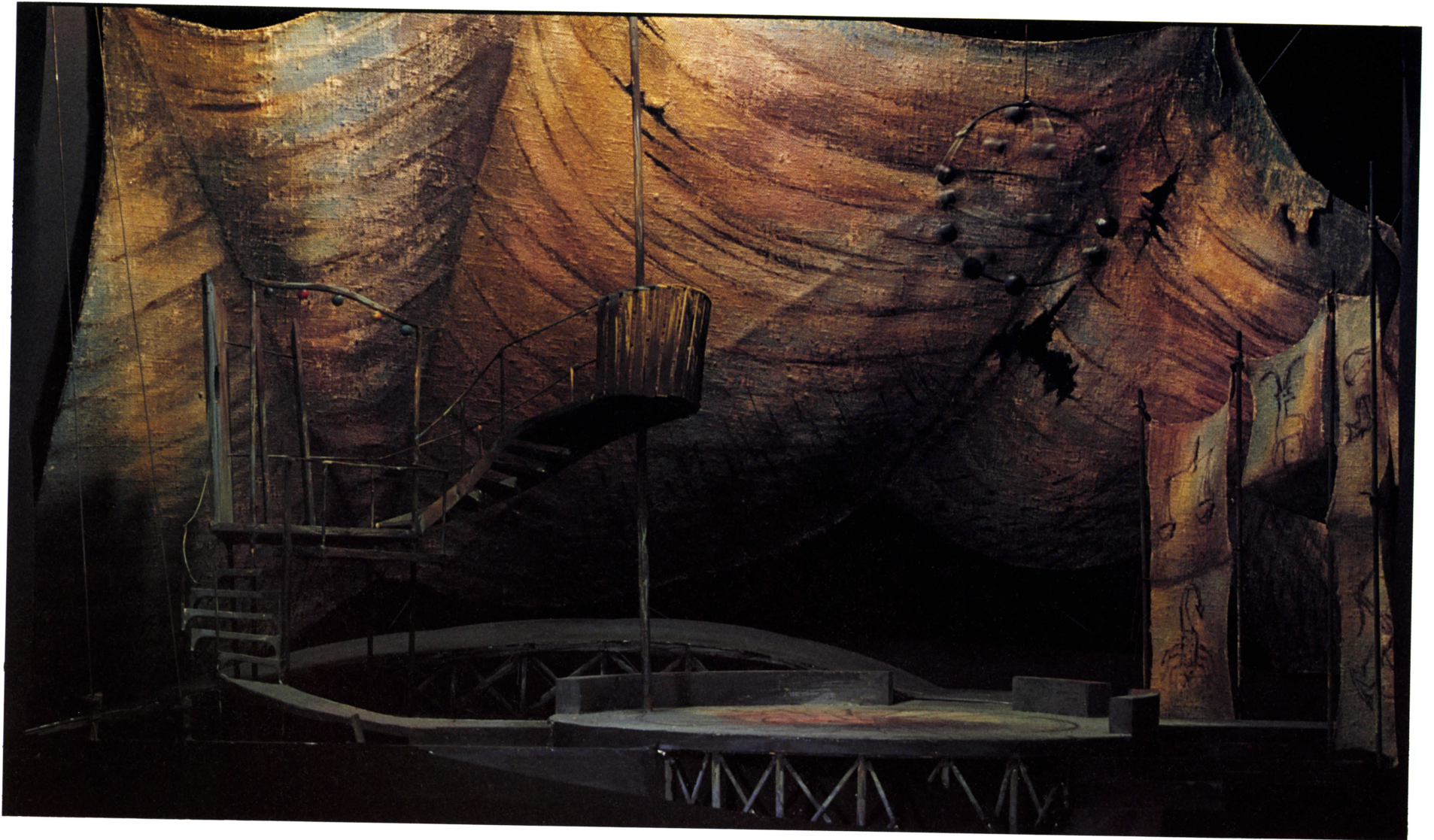
WAREHOUSE SHIPPING ROOM · GOUACHE · 9¾ × 17¼

THE FIRSTBORN · 1958



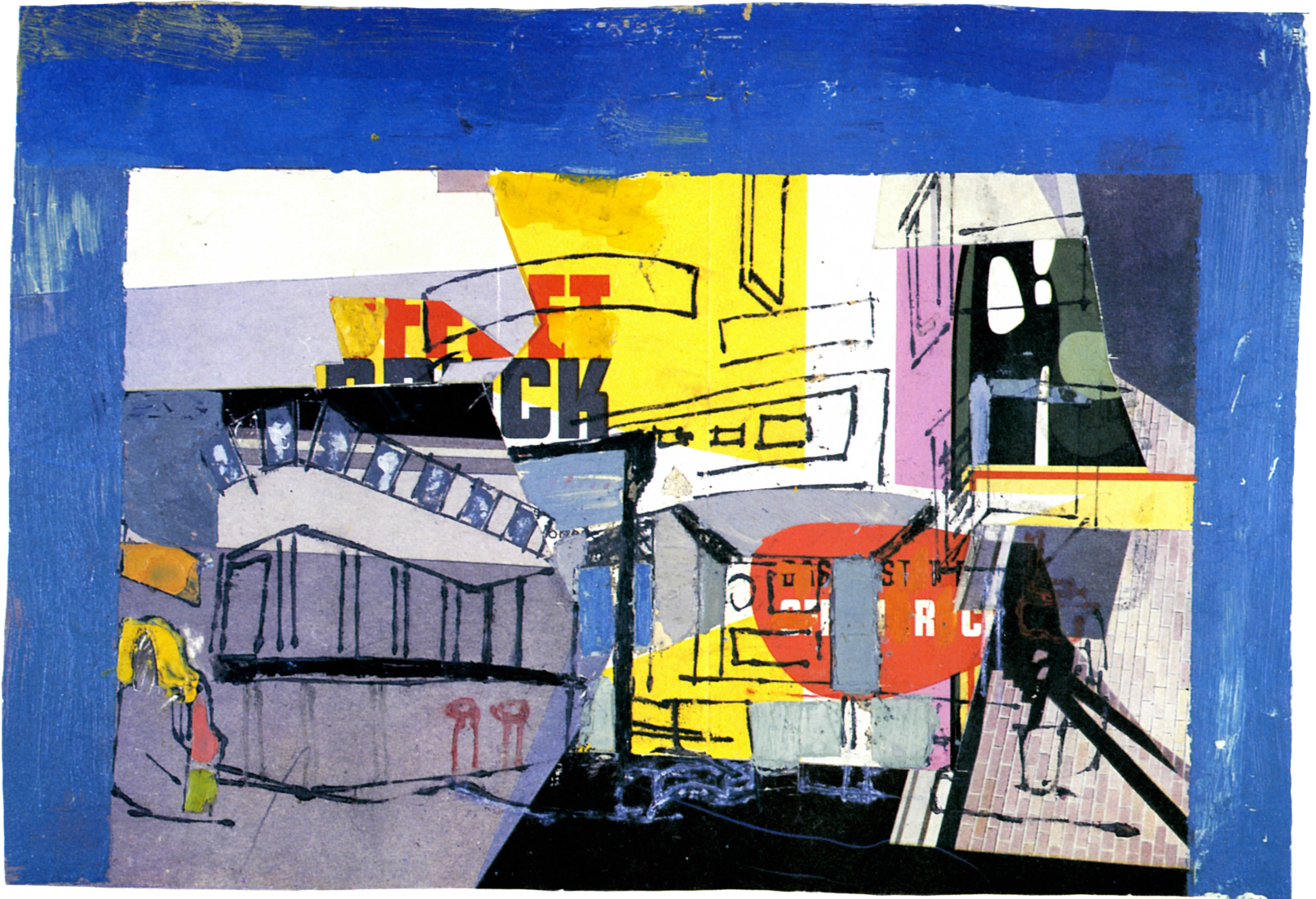
EGYPT · PALACE OF SETI II · ENCAUSTIC · 14 × 23½

J.B. · 1958



PRELIMINARY DESIGN OF CIRCUS TENT · ENCAUSTIC · 14 × 23½

DO RE MI · 1960



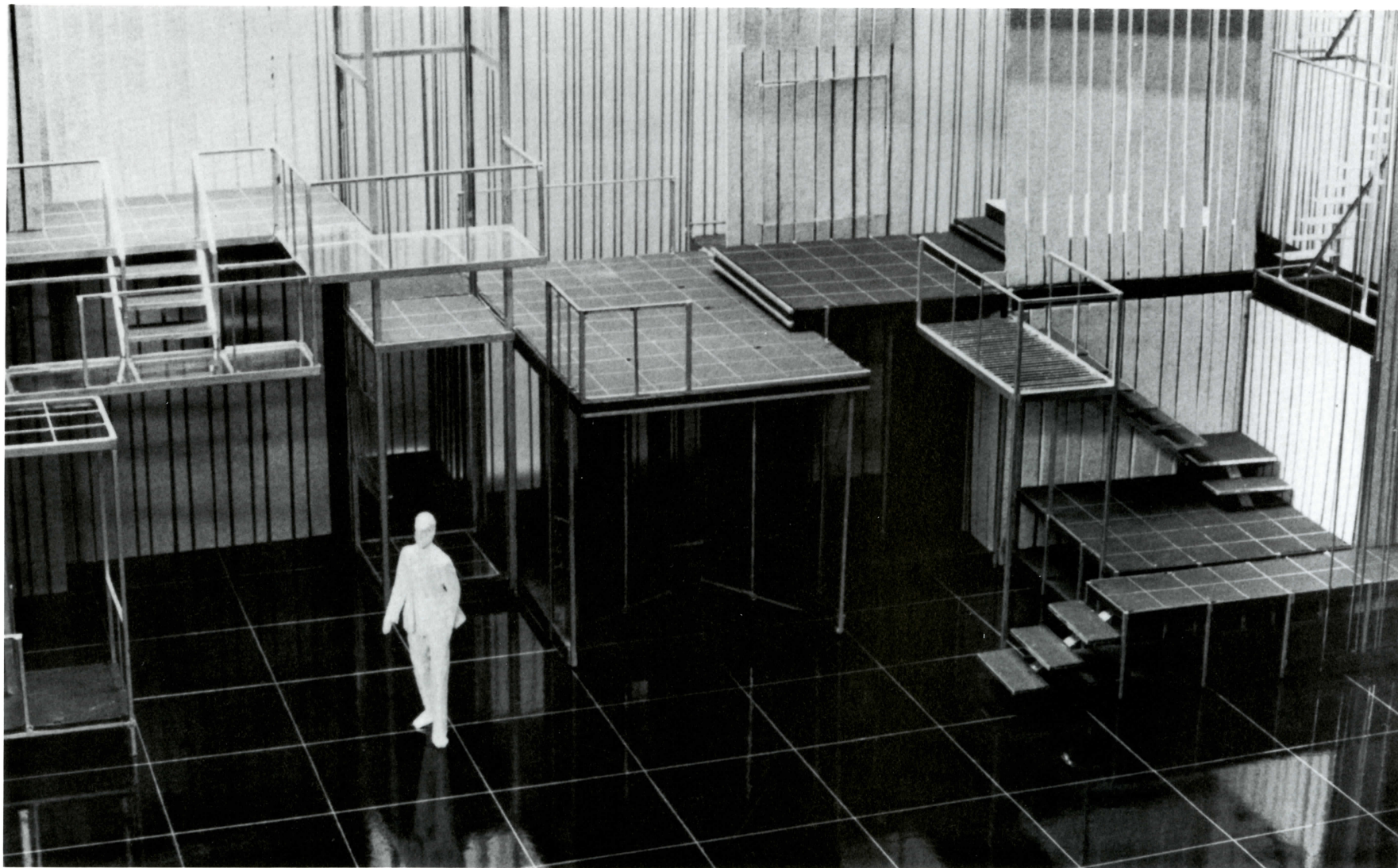
BROADWAY BAR · GOUACHE AND COLLAGE · 6¼ × 9¼

CABARET · 1966



MODEL · LIMBO SET · 14 × 20¼ × 12½

COMPANY · 1970



SET MODEL · 24½ × 37 × 28

FIDELIO · 1970



PRISON COURTYARD · GOUACHE · 15½ × 22

PACIFIC OVERTURES · 1976



SET MODEL WITH SHIP EXPANDED · 20¼ × 46½ × 32

CHECKLIST

All stage designs by Boris Aronson

All theatres are in Manhattan

unless otherwise specified.

(Principal actors)

Producer/Director

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width.

Objects loaned by Lisa Jalowetz Aronson,

unless otherwise specified.

THE BRONX EXPRESS · 1925

by Ossip Dymov

Costumes by Boris Aronson

Schildkraut Theatre, Bronx

- 1 · Subway Interior
Gouache; $7\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$
- 2 · Boardwalk in Florida
Handpainted print; $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT · 1926

by Abraham Goldfadden

Costumes by Boris Aronson

Yiddish Art Theatre

Maurice Schwartz

- 3 · Hell
Sepia photo with ink and pencil; $12\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$

WALK A LITTLE FASTER · 1932

book by S.J. Perelman, music by Vernon Duke,

lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

(Beatrice Lillie, Clark & McCullough)

Shubert-Majestic Theatre

Courtney Burr/Monty Woolley

- 4 · Show Curtain
Gouache; $13\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{4}$

THE GENTLE PEOPLE · 1939

by Irwin Shaw

(Sam Jaffe, Franchot Tone, Sylvia Sidney,

Elia Kazan, Lee J. Cobb)

Belasco Theatre

Group Theatre/Harold Clurman

- 5 · Coney Island Pier
Gouache with litho pencil; $8\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$

THE GREAT AMERICAN GOOF · 1940

choreography by Eugene Loring,

libretto by William Saroyan

Costumes and projections by Boris Aronson

Center Theatre

Ballet Theatre

- 6-8 · Three Set Designs
Litho pencil; $11\frac{1}{4} \times 19\frac{3}{8}$ each

CABIN IN THE SKY · 1940

book by Lynn Root, music by Vernon Duke,

lyrics by John Latouche

(Ethel Waters, Katherine Dunham,

Dooley Wilson)

Costumes by Boris Aronson

Martin Beck Theatre

Albert Lewis/George Balanchine

- 9 · Little Joe's Room
Gouache; $11\frac{1}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$

LOVE LIFE · 1948

book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner,

music by Kurt Weill

(Nanette Fabray, Ray Middleton)

46th Street Theatre

Cheryl Crawford/Elia Kazan

- 10-11 · Two designs for a ballet sequence
(newspapers become revolving doors)
Gouache; $7 \times 12\frac{1}{4}$; $7 \times 9\frac{3}{4}$

- 12 · Curtain
Gouache; $7\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$

- THE ROSE TATTOO · 1951
by Tennessee Williams
(Maureen Stapleton, Eli Wallach)
Martin Beck Theatre
Cheryl Crawford/Daniel Mann
- 13 · Serafina's Cottage
Gouache; 15 × 26
- BALLADE · 1952
choreography by Jerome Robbins
Costumes by Boris Aronson
New York City Center
New York Ballet Center
- 14 · Sky backdrop with figures
Gouache; 10¾ × 16¾
- BUS STOP · 1955
by William Inge
(Kim Stanley, Anthony Ross, Elaine Stritch,
Albert Salmi)
Music Box Theatre
Robert Whitehead & Roger Stevens/
Harold Clurman
- 15 · Interior of Diner
Gouache; 12½ × 19½
- A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE,
A MEMORY OF TWO MONDAYS · 1955
previously titled TWO NEW PLAYS,
by Arthur Miller
(Van Heflin, Eileen Heckart)
Coronet Theatre
Kermit Bloomgarden & Roger Whitehead —
Roger Stevens/Martin Ritt
- 16 · A MEMORY OF TWO MONDAYS —
Warehouse Shipping Room
Gouache; 9¾ × 17¼
- 17 · A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE —
Apartment in Red Hook
Gouache; 14 × 23
- THE FIRSTBORN · 1958
by Christopher Fry
(Katharine Cornell, Anthony Quayle)
Coronet Theatre
Roger Stevens & Cornell/Anthony Quayle
- 18 · Egypt, Palace of Seti II
Encaustic; 14 × 23½
- J.B. · 1958
by Archibald MacLeish
(Christopher Plummer, Raymond Massey,
Pat Hingle)
ANTA Theatre
Alfred de Liagre/Elia Kazan
- 19 · Preliminary Design of Circus Tent
Encaustic; 14 × 23½
- 20 · Revised Design of Circus Tent
Gouache; 15⅝ × 22¾
- 21 · Set Model
25 × 30 × 24⅜
Harvard Theatre Collection
- DO RE MI · 1960
book by Garson Kanin, music by Jule Styne,
lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green
(Phil Silvers, Nancy Walker)
St. James Theatre
David Merrick/Garson Kanin
- 22 · Waldorf Astoria Ballroom
Encaustic and collage; 12¾ × 26¾
- 23 · Office of a Music Industry Tycoon
Gouache and collage; 5 × 8⅜
- 24 · Broadway Bar
Gouache and collage; 6¼ × 9¼
- 25 · Casablanca Nightclub
Encaustic and collage; 8¼ × 14¼
- 26 · Four Models (Casablanca Nightclub, Broadway Bar,
Waldorf Astoria, Recording Studio)
20½ × 27 × 12 (overall dimensions)
- INCIDENT AT VICHY · 1964
by Arthur Miller
(Hal Holbrook, Joseph Wiseman)
ANTA Washington Square Theatre
Repertory Company of Lincoln Center
(Elia Kazan, Robert Whitehead)/Harold Clurman
- 27 · Detention Room
Encaustic, 10¾ × 13¼
- 28 · Set Model
12 × 25 × 18
- CABARET · 1966
book by Joe Masteroff, music by John Kander,
lyrics by Fred Ebb
(Joel Grey, Lotte Lenya, Jack Gilford)
Broadhurst Theatre
Harold Prince & Ruth Mitchell/Harold Prince
- 29 · "Willkommen"
Gouache; 15 × 25
- 30 · Model (Limbo Set)
14 × 20¼ × 12½

- THE PRICE · 1968
by Arthur Miller
(Pat Hingle, Kate Reid, Harold Gary,
Arthur Kennedy)
Costumes by Boris Aronson
Morosco Theatre
Robert Whitehead, Robert W. Dowling/
Ulu Grosbard
- 31 · Model for the Attic Set
12 × 22 × 16
- ZORBA · 1968
book by Joseph Stein, music by John Kander,
lyrics by Fred Ebb
(Herschel Bernardi, Maria Karnilova)
Imperial Theatre
Harold Prince & Ruth Mitchell/Harold Prince
- 32 · The Village Square
Encaustic; 14½ × 21½
- 33 · Model of the Road
17½ × 24½ × 6½
- COMPANY · 1970
book by George Furth, music and lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
(Dean Jones, Elaine Stritch)
Projections by Boris Aronson
Alvin Theatre
Harold Prince & Ruth Mitchell/Harold Prince
- 34-37 · Four photographs with acetate overlays
25⅞ × 38¾ (overall dimensions)
- 38 · Set Model
24½ × 37 × 28
- FIDELIO · 1970
opera by Ludwig van Beethoven
Costumes by Boris Aronson
Metropolitan Opera House
Metropolitan Opera Association/Otto Schenk
- 39 · The Dungeon (Act II, Scene I)
Gouache; 18½ × 19½
Metropolitan Opera Archives
- 40 · Prison Courtyard (Act II, Scene II)
Gouache; 15½ × 22
Metropolitan Opera Archives
- 41 · Set Model
13 × 20 × 16
Metropolitan Opera Archives
- FOLLIES · 1971
book by James Goldman, music and lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
(Alexis Smith, Dorothy Collins, Gene Nelson,
John McMartin)
Winter Garden
Harold Prince & Ruth Mitchell/
Harold Prince & Michael Bennett
- 42 · "Loveland"
Collage; 11⅛ × 18¼
- 43 · Demolished Theatre, preliminary sketch
Gouache; 10⅔ × 18¼
- 44 · Set Model
27 × 38½ × 28½
- THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND
OTHER BUSINESS · 1972
by Arthur Miller
(Bob Dishy, Zoe Caldwell)
Projections by Boris Aronson
Shubert Theatre
Robert Whitehead/Gerald Freedman
- 45-48 · Four oval gouaches (God & Angels, Adam & Eve,
Expulsion from Eden, Cain & Abel)
9 × 15 each
- 49 · Set Model
10¼ × 14⅛ × 13¼
- A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC · 1973
book by Hugh Wheeler, music and lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
(Glynis Johns, Len Cariou, Hermione Gingold)
Shubert Theatre
Harold Prince & Ruth Mitchell/Harold Prince
- 50-52 · Model Assemblage with Three Relief Sketches:
Banquet Scene, Theatre Scene, Birchwoods and Cars
Gouache and collage; 30½ × 40½ × 3½
(overall dimensions)
- PACIFIC OVERTURES · 1976
book by John Weidman, music and lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
Winter Garden Theatre
Harold Prince & Ruth Mitchell/Harold Prince
- 53 · Model with Ship
20¼ × 46½ × 32

FRONT COVER · FOLLIES · 1971

DEMOLISHED THEATRE · PRELIMINARY GOUACHE SKETCH · 10³/₅ × 18¹/₄

BACK COVER · BORIS ARONSON IN THE EARLY 1930'S · PHOTO: GJON MILI

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