John Morrisey Collection

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** John Morrisey Collection  
**Dates:** circa 1890s-1920s  
**Collection Number:** 000.009  
**Creator/Collector:** Morrisey, John  
**Extent:** 6.75 Linear Feet (3 document cases, 3 print boxes, and 1 oversize box)  
**Repository:** Museum of Performance and Design, Performing Arts Library  
San Francisco, California 94124  

**Abstract:** The John Morrisey collection consists of several original photographs of vaudeville performers, circus performers, athletes, theater managers, and actors from the silent film era. Morrisey was the General Manager of the San Francisco Orpheum, the first Orpheum Theatre in the Orpheum Circuit, from approximately the late 1890s to 1912. As a result of Morrisey's work with the Orpheum, the majority of the photographs are autographed to Morrisey and/or to his wife. The collection also includes copies of the publication "Variety", certificates, and other collected documents. The collection is arranged by format, with the majority of items accessioned at the item level.  

**Language of Material:** English  

**Access**  
The collection is open to all researchers with no restrictions.  

**Publication Rights**  
The majority of the materials in the Morrisey Collection are in the public domain. Museum of Performance + Design holds property rights and publication rights to all other materials.  

**Preferred Citation**  

**Acquisition Information**  
Collection was donated by Martha Emigh in 2000.  

**Biography/Administrative History**  
John Morrisey was the General Manager of the San Francisco Orpheum from approximately the late 1890s to 1912. Opening as the Orpheum Opera House in 1886 by vaudeville impresario Gustav Walter, the success of this theatre combined with growth of the railway lines led to the opening of additional theaters in the United States, launching the Orpheum Circuit. Over the course of the next several years, the Circuit would be home to prominent vaudeville and stage performances. Several of the photographs in this collection came from various performers who performed in the San Francisco Orpheum or in other venues in the Orpheum Circuit.  

**Scope and Content of Collection**  
The John Morrisey collection consists of several original photographs of vaudeville performers, circus performers, athletes, theater managers, and actors from the silent film and early sound era. As Morrisey worked as the manager at the Orpheum San Francisco, the first Orpheum Theatre in the Orpheum Circuit, the majority of the photographs are autographed to Morrisey and/or to his wife. The photographs include vaudeville duos such as Cressy and Dayne and McIntyre and Heath, athletes such as James and Marie Finney, various minstrel performers, such as George Primrose, screen actors such as Nance O'Neil and Theodore Roberts (who worked heavily with Cecil B. DeMille), among several others. Also included in the collection are entrepeneurs and vaudeville general managers such as Gustav Walter (the founder of the Orpheum Circuit) and Morris Meyerfield. The collection also includes copies of the publication "Variety", certificates, and other collected documents. The collection is arranged by format, with the majority of items accessioned at the item level. Please refer to the attached inventory for details. Processing of this collection was funded in part by a Processing/Cataloging Grant from California Revealed, an initiative of the California State Library.  

**Indexing Terms**  
Performing arts--United States.  
Vaudeville--California--San Francisco.  
Vaudeville.  
Photographic Materials  
Photographic prints.  

Morrisey Collection Inventory