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Guide to the
Chelsea Theater Center records
1968-1984
*T-Mss 1984-007

Compiled by L. Reyman, January 2012

Summary

Creator: Chelsea Theater Center (New York, N.Y.)

Title: Chelsea Theater Center records, 1968-1984

Size: 6.72 linear feet (16 boxes)

Source: Donated by Steve Gilger of the Chelsea Theater Center in 1984.

Abstract: The Chelsea Theater Center records document the workings of this nonprofit company founded by Robert Kalfin in 1965. Files consist of production materials and scripts.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Creator history

The Chelsea Theater Center was a not-for-profit theater company founded by Robert Kalfin in 1965. The company started at St. Peter's Church on West 20th Street in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. Then, in 1968, it moved most of its productions to the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The company stayed there through the majority of the 1970s. Its final home was located at 407 W. 43rd Street.

Early on the group settled on what was to be its winning format, "the presentation of large physical productions requiring large casts and settings in addition to the presentation of intimate but innovative works that do not require the spending of a great deal of money." Most of these productions were limited in audience appeal, but through the years they were awarded five Tonys and 28 Obies. One of the first major productions was of *The Screens*, a seven-hour play by Jean Genet that opened to rave reviews. Other well-received productions consist of: Peter Handke's *Kaspar* starring Christopher Lloyd; *The Prince of Homburg*, *The Crazy Locomotive*, *The Beggar's Opera* and *Yentl the Yeshiva Boy* (which later became the tour-de-force motion picture for Barbra Streisand). Some actors and directors who spent time with the Chelsea Theater Center were Meryl Streep, Hal Prince, Glenn Close, Sam Waterston, Louise Schaeffer, and Denny Dillon.

Throughout its life span, the Chelsea Theater Center had financial struggles-going from feast to famine. The first subscription series in 1971 sold out in four weeks, but ten years later during the 1981 season, the musical *Hijinks!* was forced to close because of lack of ticket sales. Then due to lack of general funding, the rest of the season was canceled. The Chelsea Theater Center folded in 1984.

Scope and content note

The Chelsea Theater Center records is divided into two series: production materials and scripts. The production materials contain photographs, press releases, clippings, resumes, flyers, and musical scores. The scripts contain manuscripts that were both produced and wanted-to-be produced shows.

Arrangement

The Chelsea Theater Center records are organized into the following series:

Series I: Production Materials, 1967-1980

Series II: Scripts, 1972-1978

Key terms

Subjects

Theater -- 20th century

Theater -- Production and direction

Theater -- United States -- New York (N.Y.)

Theater and society

Names

Brooklyn Academy of Music

Chelsea Theater Center (New York, N.Y.)

Kalfin, Robert

Container list

Series I: Production Materials, 1967-1980 (9 boxes)

The production materials contain photographs, press releases, clippings, resumes, resumes, flyers and musical scores (from the musical *By Bernstein*). The photographs are of productions and publicity for those productions. Press releases were sent to local publications for upcoming shows. Clippings are mostly reviews of productions. Resumes are from actors and directors, this material was used for auditions and biographical information for programs. Flyers were used for advertising purposes. Series I is arranged alphabetically.

- b.1 f.1 *1st Brown Bag*, undated
- b.1 f.2 *2 x Offenbach*, 1980
- Actors and Acting Groups
- b.1 f.3 Bartlett, D'Jamin, undated
- b.1 f.4 Biro, David, 1980
- b.1 f.5 Black, Lewis, undated
- b.1 f.6 Brocksmitth, Roy, undated
- b.1 f.7 Brownhold and Spellos, 1980
- b.1 f.8 Cohen, Margery, 1979
- b.1 f.9 Corrin, Brenda, 1980
- b.1 f.10 Davis, Thulani, undated
- b.1 f.11 Dillon, Denny, 1979
- b.1 f.12 Garee, Ryon, undated
- b.1 f.13 Hadary, Jonathan, undated
- b.1 f.14 Harmon, Peggy, 1980
- b.1 f.15 Hartley and Hughes, undated
- b.1 f.16 Heit, Sally-Jane, 1979
- b.1 f.17 Koka, Juliette, 1980
- b.1 f.18 Lauer, Kurt, undated
- b.1 f.19 LeCarre, Mary, undated
- b.1 f.20 Legere, Phoebe, undated
- b.1 f.21 Lonardo, Ellen, 1979
- b.1 f.22 Lubin, Shellen, undated
- b.1 f.23 Murray, Ben, 1979
- b.1 f.24 Norcia, Patti, 1980
- b.1 f.25 Ricketts, Jim, undated
- b.2 f.1 Sanders, Fred, undated (The Lenny Bruce Show)
- b.2 f.2 Sandier, Ellen, undated
- b.2 f.3 Schreier and Roth, 1979
- b.2 f.4 Schwab, Sophie, undated
- b.2 f.5 Scott, Michael, undated
- b.2 f.6 Simkin, Diane, undated
- b.2 f.7 Soboil, Maggie, 1976 (Chelsea Cabaret)
- b.2 f.8 Stack and Lane, 1980
- b.2 f.9 Stephanie Sings Mel, 1980

Series I: Production Materials, 1967-1980 (9 ... (cont.)

Actors and Acting Groups (cont.)

- b.2 f.10 Stern, Nicky, 1977
- b.2 f.11 Trott, Karen, undated
- b.2 f.12 Ward, Brendan, undated
- b.2 f.13 Westphal, Reagan, 1979
- b.2 f.14 Whitehead, Martha, undated
- b.2 f.15 Williams, Jack Eric, 1980
- b.2 f.16 *Another Conception* with Edith Stein, 1967
- b.2 f.17 Attendance Records, 1979
- b.2 f.18 *Belle's Jests*, 1980
- b.2 f.19 Broadway Local, 1979
- b.2 f.20-21 *Captain Jinks and the Horse Marines*, 1976-1978
 - b.3 f.1 Cornelia Street, ca.1977
 - b.3 f.2 *Crab Nebula*, undated
 - b.3 f.3 Daily Reports, 1979-1980
- Directors
 - b.3 f.4 A - B, 1970-1975
 - b.3 f.5 C - E, 1972-1977
 - b.3 f.6 F - G, 1969-1976
 - b.3 f.7 H - J, 1969-1976
 - b.3 f.8 K - L, 1971-1977
 - b.4 f.1 M -N, 1965-1977
 - b.4 f.2 O - R, 1967-1978
 - b.4 f.3 S, 1965-1976
 - b.4 f.4 T, 1970-1975
 - b.4 f.5 U - Z, 1966-1975
 - b.4 f.6 Dreck and Vile, 1978-1979
 - b.4 f.7 Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre, 1978-1979
 - b.4 f.8 Encore, 1979
 - b.4 f.9 *Everest Hotel*, 1980
- b.5 f.1-4 *Family*, 1975
 - b.5 f.5 Flyers, undated
 - b.5 f.6 Fred's Old Pages, undated
 - b.5 f.7 Glossies, 1976-1980
 - b.5 f.8 *The Godforgotten*, 1977
 - b.5 f.9 *Golden Fleece*, 1980
- b.5 f.10 Graphics and Copy, undated
- b.5 f.11 *The Great American Dream*, undated
- b.6 f.1 Group Sales, ca. 1972-1973
- b.6 f.2 Interplay, 1980

Series I: Production Materials, 1967-1980 (9 ... (cont.)

- b.6 f.3 Jazz Trio, 1980
- b.6 f.4 Jazz Press List, 1976
- b.6 f.5 *Jus' Like Livin'*, undated
- b.6 f.6 Kaddish in England, 1973
- b.6 f.7 Mailing Labels, undated
- b.6 f.8 Manhattan Plaza, undated
- b.6 f.9 *More Ragged Panties*, 1980
- b.6 f.10 Musical Scores, undated
- b.6 f.11 New Renaissance, 1979
- b.6 f.12 New York Board of Trade, 1972
- b.6 f.13 New York Theatre Studio, undated
- b.6 f.14 Nice Letters, 1972
- b.6 f.15 *No Bing for Christmas*, 1978
- b.6 f.16 *Nobody's Fool*, 1980
- b.7 f.1 *Old Man Joseph*
- b.7 f.2 Party Invitation
- b.7 f.3 *Phobea: The Ultimate Experience in Terror*
- b.7 f.4 Production Artwork
Photographs
 - b.7 f.5 *The Blood of the Pig and the Bite of the Dog*
 - b.7 f.6 *The Boss*
 - b.7 f.7 *The Brass Butterfly*
 - b.7 f.8 Cast Party
 - b.7 f.9 *Diamond Studs*
 - b.7 f.10 El Teatro Canoesubi Productions
 - b.7 f.11 *The Great Air Robbery*
 - b.7 f.12 *Kaspar*
 - b.7 f.13 *The Killing of Sister George*
 - b.7 f.14 *Lady Day: A Musical Tragedy*
 - b.7 f.15 *Ice Age*
 - b.7 f.16 Negatives
 - b.7 f.17 *Saved*
 - b.7 f.18 *Screens*
 - b.7 f.19 *Sunset*
 - b.7 f.20 *Total Eclipse*
 - b.7 f.21 Unidentified-Bill Munroe (Photographer)
 - b.7 f.22 Unidentified--Contact Sheets
- b.8 f.1 Unidentified--Production Shots
- b.8 f.2 Unidentified--Publicity Shorts

Series I: Production Materials, 1967-1980 (9 ... (cont.)

Photographs (cont.)

- b.8 f.3 Unidentified--Milton Washington (Photographer)
- b.8 f.4 Picture Captions, undated
- b.8 f.5 Play by Play, 1980
- b.8 f.6 *Play of 1,000 Words*, 1980 (Mary Beth Miller)
- b.8 f.7 Political Lists, undated

Press

- b.8 f.8 1966-1969
- b.8 f.9 1969-1970
- b.8 f.10 1970-1972
- b.8 f.11 Program Originals, undated
- b.8 f.12 *Screens*, undated
- b.8 f.13 *Serious Bizness*, 1979
- b.8 f.14 *Side By Side*, 1979
- b.9 f.1 *Total Eclipse* Opening, 1974
- b.9 f.2 *Two Grown Men*, undated (Paul Kandel and Mitchel Greenburg)
- b.9 f.3 *Unnatural Acts*, 1979
- b.9 f.4 *Water Hen*, 1972

Series II: Scripts, 1972-1978 (7 boxes)

Many of these scripts were produced by the Chelsea Theater Center. A few of them were rejected from production. Several of the plays were written by playwright Richard Lortz who died in 1981. Sixteen of the plays were donated to the Chelsea Theater Center by Ms. Florida Friebus in 1983. The scripts are arranged alphabetically by title.

- b.9 f.5 *Absence of a Cello*, undated
- b.9 f.6 *An American Gothic*, undated (Richard Lortz)
- b.9 f.7 *Another Way Out*, undated
- b.9 f.8 *The Beggar's Opera*, 1972
- b.9 f.9-10 *The Bernstein Show*, undated
- b.9 f.11 *Big Man*, undated
- b.9 f.12-13 *Biography: A Game*, undated
- b.9 f.14-15 *The Boss*, undated
- b.10 f.1 *Boxes*, 1978
- b.10 f.2 *Breaking the Sweet Glass*, 1979
- b.10 f.3 *By Bernstein*, undated
- b.10 f.4 *The Buddy System*, 1980
- b.10 f.5 *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines*, 1902
- b.10 f.6-7 *Captain Jinks and the Prima Dona*, undated

Series II: Scripts, 1972-1978 (7 boxes)

Many ... (cont.)

- b.10 f.8 *Cash On The Spot*, undated
- b.10 f.9 *Church Street*, undated
- b.10 f.10 *The Coffee Drinker*, undated
- b.10 f.11 *Come Back, Little Sheba*, ca. 1950
- b.11 f.1-2 *The Contractor*, undated
- b.11 f.3-4 *The Crazy Locomotive*, undated
- b.11 f.5 *Dance! Dance! Dance!*, undated
- b.11 f.6 *Dawn Song*, undated
- b.11 f.7 *Dona Rosita, While She Waits*, undated
- b.11 f.8 *The Drawing Room Set*, 1978
- b.11 f.9 *Eden, USA: A Foul Play Don't Look Now*, undated (Richard Lortz)
- b.11 f.10 *The Egg*, undated
- b.12 f.1-3 *The Family*, undated
- b.12 f.4 *The Final Hour*, 1978 (Richard Lortz)
- b.12 f.5 *Five-Point Bonus*, 1978
- b.12 f.6 *Fool Me Twice: A Play in three Acts*, undated (Milton Grieger)
- b.12 f.7 *Four Women: A Comedy*, undated (Richard Lortz)
- b.12 f.8 *The God Boy*, undated
- b.12 f.9 *A Good Woman*, undated
- b.12 f.10 *A Greek Difficulty, Interlude of the Hills, Venetian Nights/Oriental Echoes*, undated
- b.12 f.11-12 *Green Pond*, 1977
- b.13 f.1-2 *Happy End*, 1972
- b.13 f.3 *Hothouse*, undated
- b.13 f.4 *Jimmy and Billy*, 1978
- b.13 f.5 *The Legendary Stardust Boys*, 1979
- b.13 f.6 *Magic Summer*, undated
- b.13 f.7 *Mary Stuart*, undated
- b.13 f.8 *Medea*, 1946
- b.13 f.9 *A Meeting By The River*, 1970
- b.13 f.10 *Mother Courage and Her Children*, 1970
- b.13 f.11 *Night Shift*, undated
- b.13 f.12 *Queen Of Pentacles-Reversed*, 1977
- b.14 f.1 *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, undated
- b.14 f.2 *Pity The Rich*, undated
- b.14 f.3-4 *The Prince of Homburg*, 1975
- b.14 f.5 *The Respectful Prostitute*, undated
- b.14 f.6 *Rosa*, 1978
- b.14 f.7 *Rum and Coca Cola*, undated
- b.14 f.8 *Running For Blood*, undated

Series II: Scripts, 1972-1978 (7 boxes)

Many ... (cont.)

- b.14 f.9 *Safe Haven House*, 1977
- b.14 f.10-11 *Santa Anita '42*, undated
- b.14 f.12 *The Screens*, undated
- b.15 f.1 *Serious Pieces*, undated
- b.15 f.2 *Spectres*, undated
- b.15 f.3 *Springtime In Paris*, undated
- b.15 f.4 *Strider: The Story Of A Horse*, undated
- b.15 f.5 *Submerged*, undated
- b.15 f.6-7 *The Sunset*, undated
- b.15 f.8 *Three Minutes*, undated
- b.15 f.9 *Throne Of Straw*, 1975
- b.15 f.10 *Ticket-Of-Leave Man*, undated
- b.15 f.11 *The Trial of The Catonsville Nine*, 1971
- b.15 f.12 Untitled, undated (Two scripts)
- b.15 f.13 Various, undated
Several short scripts with various titles.
- b.16 f.1-2 *The Water Hen*, undated
- b.16 f.3 *A Wedding*, undated
- b.16 f.4-5 *The Wedding Feast*, undated
- b.16 f.6 *Yardstick: The Story of A Horse*, 1975
- b.16 f.7-8 *Yentl*, undated