San Jose Repertory Theatre Records

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Descriptive Summary

Title: San Jose Repertory Theatre Records
Dates: 1985-2014
Collection Number: 2014-66
Creator/Collector: San Jose Repertory Theatre
Extent: 20 boxes (approx. 17 linear feet)
Repository: History San Jose Research Library
San Jose, California 95110

Abstract: San Jose Repertory Theatre, or "The Rep," was founded in 1980 by James P. Reber, the first resident professional theater company in San Jose. The Rep's opening production of Noel Coward's 'Private Lives' was well received and was followed by three more plays in 1981. For roughly the next thirty years the company was prominent in Downtown San Jose's artistic community, until filing for bankruptcy and closing its doors in 2014. The records primarily document theatrical productions (programs, posters, photographs, scripts, production notes, and press kits), as well as educational outreach programs, with limited financial records.

Language of Material: English

Access
The records are available to the public by appointment with the Curator of Library & Archives.

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Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
Transferred to History San Jose by the City of San Jose's Office of Cultural Affairs in December 2014.

Biography/Administrative History
The San Jose Repertory Theatre, or "The Rep," was founded in 1980 by James P. Reber, the first resident professional theater company in San Jose. The Rep's opening production of Noel Coward's 'Private Lives' was well received and was followed by three more plays in 1981. For roughly the next thirty years the company was prominent in Downtown San Jose's artistic community. Early grants came from the San Jose Fine Arts Commission as well as the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation who provided a grant to help hire professional staff. As a nonprofit, fund-raising and grants were crucial. A board of trustees was set up quickly to speak publicly and fund-raise for the company. In 1997, The Rep moved from the Montgomery Theater to a new building in downtown San Jose, 101 Paseo de San Antonio. This purpose-built theater was more spacious, seating 584 people. The 2002-2003 season was by far the most profitable with over 15,000 subscribers; however it was becoming increasingly hard to keep this level of interest in the arts in the Bay area. In 2006 the company saw a drop in subscriptions as well as a drop in city funding after the state ordered the dissolution of local redevelopment agencies. The company required a $2 million loan to keep afloat. Loan payments, combined with the economic downturn of 2008 and a continued drop in subscriptions forced The Rep to file for bankruptcy in 2014, closing its doors in June of that year.

Scope and Content of Collection
The San Jose Repertory Theatre Records primarily consist of theatrical production programs, advertising, reviews and press clippings from 1985 to 2014. The contents of the boxes are sorted chronologically, by production. There are three boxes of administrative information in the form of subscription newsletters, financial information, media plans, a five year play from 1985, inter-department memos and audit reports. There is also a small collection of awards and plaques awarded to the company during its life time. Other administrative information available in this collection includes shareholders information (2013), Board of Trustees information (2007, 2008), and financial reports (2000-2003). The Rep's "Red Ladder Company," designed specifically for children and geared towards education, is documented for years 2001 and 2002. Also included are extensive photo CD-ROMs and DVDs, and a small number of audiocassettes and digital video of productions, as well as staff
and member events, organized chronologically where possible. Included are a small number of photographs of the construction of the new theater in 1998.

**Indexing Terms**
- Theatrical companies
- Theater programs
- Art and popular culture
- San Jose Repertory Theatre
- San Jose (Calif.)