Guide to the Valerie Post Starlight Opera Collection MS 60

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Mills
San Diego History Center Document Collection
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Title: Valerie Post Starlight Opera Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 60
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.75 Linear feet (3 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1946-1978

Abstract: This collection contains programs, newspaper articles, and other papers regarding the San Diego Civic Light Opera Association (also known as Starlight Opera) compiled by performer and board president Valerie Post from 1946 to 1978.

creator: Post, Valerie

Biographical / Historical Notes
The San Diego Civic Light Opera Association, commonly known as Starlight, was established in 1946, opening with an inaugural performance of The Mikado. The company changed its name several times, including Star-Light, Starlight, Starlight Opera, Starlight Theatre, Starlight Musical Theatre, and then finally back to San Diego Civic Light Opera Association. The company's mission was to bring light opera and musical theatre to San Diego, as well as to provide opportunities for local performers to acquire training and performance experience. The company brought numerous Broadway hits to the San Diego stage, and its yearly casting calls attracted actors, dancer, and musicians from all over the county.

The first two seasons were held in the San Diego Zoo's Wegeforth Bowl. The company's first president, Robert J. Sullivan, was also a Zoo director. There were several problems with the venue, which was used for seal shows during the day, including a moat between the stage and seats that had to be drained daily, and noise from nearby animals. In 1948, Starlight moved to the Balboa Park Bowl. It remained at this location until 1968, when financial concerns made it necessary to move again. The company collaborated with the United States International University (USIU) and moved performances to the San Diego State University amphitheater and later to the Wegeforth Bowl. By 1974, Starlight had regained full control again. Performances were moved back to the Balboa Park Bowl, which was later renamed Starlight Bowl.

Valerie Post (b. 1904; d. 3/23/1993), was born in Russia and moved to the United States with her family as a child. She received two degrees in Chemistry from the University of California Berkeley. It was during her college years that she first decided to pursue a career as a musician, after attending a concert at the university. From there she performed with the San Francisco Grand Opera Company, the Los Angeles Opera Company, the New York Opera Company, and the Columbia Grand Opera Company. In 1927, she married Lauren C. Post, a professor of geography at San Diego State University. She performed the lead in the first Starlight production and played roles in many productions throughout the years. She was the first female member of the Starlight board of directors, and served as president of the association from 1964-1969. She was involved in the formation of the Starlight Women's Society, an auxiliary of the San Diego Civic Light Opera Association. She also taught voice lessons to San Diego students for many years, and some of her students went on to perform for Starlight.

Mrs. Post was also active in a fundraising association known as COMBO, or the Combined Arts of San Diego. COMBO hosted auctions to raise funds for local performance groups such as the Old Globe Theatre, the San Diego Ballet, the San Diego symphony, and Starlight Opera. This collection mainly reflects Mrs. Post's involvement in COMBO II in 1967; the first COMBO auction took place in 1965.

Scope and Content
This collection contains programs, newspaper articles, and other papers regarding the San Diego Civic Light Opera Association (also known as Starlight Opera) compiled by performer and board president Valerie Post from 1946 to 1978. Other papers include invitations to events, newsletters, photographs, audition notices, promotional materials, and information regarding the performing arts fundraising organization Combined Arts of San Diego (COMBO).

Arrangement
The collection is arranged by material type and subject.

Preferred Citation
Valerie Post Starlight Opera Collection, MS 60, San Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA.

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
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**Processing Information**

Collection processed by Julia Cagle in March 2007 and Samantha Mills in March 2017.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Combined Arts of San Diego (COMBO).
- Music Teachers' Association of California.
- San Diego Civic Light Opera Association.
- San Diego Civic Theatre.
- Starlight Opera.
- Starlight Women’s Association.
- Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)
- Opera Programs
- San Diego (Calif.)

**Box-folder 1:1**

**Starlight Programs, 1946-1950**

Includes:


**Box-folder 1:2**

**Starlight Programs, 1955-1961**

Includes:


**Box-folder 1:3**

**Starlight Programs, 1956-1965**

Includes:


**Box-folder 1:4**

**Starlight Programs, 1962-1965**

Includes:


**Box-folder 1:5**

**Starlight Programs, 1966**

Includes:

Programs for: Flower Drum Song, Kiss Me Kate, Tom Sawyer, and South Pacific.

**Box-folder 1:6**

**Starlight Programs, 1967**

Includes:

Programs for: Sounds of Starlight '67, Finian's Rainbow, Oliver, Gypsy, 100 Years of Musical Comedy, Walking Happy, and a season program for "Starlight Musicals at the Zoo."

**Box-folder 1:7**

**Starlight Programs, 1969-1970**

Includes:

Programs for: My Fair Lady, Stop the World- I Want to Get Off, My Cousin Josefa, Man of La Mancha, Oklahoma, and Mame.
Box-folder 1:8  Starlight Programs, 1971-1973
Includes:
Programs for: The Sound of Music, Oliver!, The King and I, South Pacific, The Music Man, 1776, Show Boat, and Once Upon a Mattress.

Box-folder 2:1  Newspaper Articles, 1947
Includes:
Articles on The Pirates of Penzance.

Box-folder 2:2  Newspaper Articles, 1963
Includes:
Articles on The Unsinkable Molly Brown.

Box-folder 2:3  Newspaper Articles, 1964
Includes:
Articles on Song of Norway, The Wizard of Oz, The Sound of Music, and Here's Love. Also includes articles on new Starlight director Richard S. Kyber, and Valerie Post being elected president of Starlight.

Box-folder 2:4  Newspaper Articles, 1965
Includes:
Articles on Carnival, Little Me, and Peter Pan.

Box-folder 2:5  Newspaper Articles, 1966
Includes:
Articles on Kiss Me Kate, Flower Drum Song, Tom Sawyer, and South Pacific. Also includes articles on the death of William Adams, 1965 Starlight House Manager; the death of Ruby Hays, local actress; and the formation of the Starlight Women's Association.

Box-folder 2:6  Newspaper Articles, 1967
Includes:
Articles on Sounds of Starlight, Finian's Rainbow, Oliver, and Gypsy. Also includes articles on Starlight Theatre moving to Civic Theatre, Starlight financial difficulties and postponement of productions, and COMBO fundraising.

Box-folder 2:7  Newspaper Articles, 1968
Includes:
Articles on Walking Happy and 100 Years of Musical Comedy. Also includes articles on Starlight's return to San Diego Zoo.

Box-folder 2:8  Newspaper Articles, 1969
Includes:
Articles on My Fair Lady, Stop the World I Want to Get Off, and My Cousin Josefa, as well as Bruce Farley being elected president of Starlight.

Box-folder 2:9  Newspaper Articles, 1970
Includes:
Articles on Man of La Mancha, Oklahoma, and Mame, as well as the 25th anniversary of Starlight Opera.
Box-folder 2:10  **Newspaper Articles, 1971**
Includes:
Articles on The Sound of Music, Oliver, and The King and I, as well as the death of Carmen Conger.

Box-folder 2:11  **Newspaper Articles, 1972**
Includes:
Articles on Giselle, South Pacific, The Music Man, and 1776.

Box-folder 2:12  **Newspaper Articles, 1973**
Includes:
Articles on Show Boat and Once Upon a Mattress.

Box-folder 2:13  **Newspaper Articles, 1974**
Includes:
Articles on Fiddler on the Roof, The Student Prince, and Camelot.

Box-folder 2:14  **Newspaper Articles, 1975**
Includes:
Articles on Paint Your Wagon, Hello Dolly, and Brigadoon.

Box-folder 2:15  **Newspaper Articles, 1976**
Includes:
Articles on My Fair Lady, Carousel, and The Sound of Music.

Box-folder 2:16  **Newspaper Articles, 1977**
Includes:
Articles on Cabaret, The Desert Song, and The King and I.

Box-folder 2:17  **Newspaper Articles, 1978**
Includes:
Articles on Music Man, Kismet, and Annie Get Your Gun.

Box-folder 2:18  **Starlight Invitations, 1964-1976 and undated**
Includes:
Invitations for opening nights, planning meetings, family and corporate luncheons, Starlight Women’s Association events, dinner receptions, and other events.

Box-folder 2:19  **Starlight Season Ticket Forms, 1965-1978**

Box-folder 2:20  **Starlight Miscellanea, 1947-1977 and undated**
Includes:
Seating chart for Wegeforth Bowl; audition notices; association envelopes and letterhead; tickets; membership cards; stage set rental brochure; poster for Naughty Marietta; correspondence; newsletters; Starlight Women’s Association events and membership; and newsletters.

Box-folder 3:1  **Combined Arts of San Diego (COMBO), 1967-1978**
Includes:
Brochures, description of beneficiary coordinating committees, correspondence, a newsletter, and an arts calendar.

Box-folder 3:2  **Applause Magazine, 1974-1978**

Box-folder 3:3  **Photographs (Valerie Post), undated**
Box-folder 3:4  

**Miscellanea, 1961-1975 and undated**

Includes:

Business card for R.R. Richardson; lists of music libraries and plays; brochures, programs, or tickets for other music libraries and theatres (Music Library of New York, Valley Music Theatre of Woodland Hills, Harding Theatre of San Francisco; Bakersfield Community Theatre, Casa Manana Theatre of Fort Worth), programs for Music Teachers' Association of California recitals, schedule of events for San Diego Community Concourse, and San Diego Community College newsletter "Within Reach."