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Title: San José State University Theater Arts Collection
creator: San José State University
Identifier/Call Number: MSS.2009.09.01
Physical Description: 3.0 boxes (3.75 linear feet)
Date (inclusive): 1900-1988 (bulk 1950-1957)

Abstract: The San José State University Theater Arts Collection, 1900-1988 (bulk 1950-1957) documents theatrical plays and ballets arranged and presented by the university's Speech and Drama Department. The collection consists of department theater programs, photographs, magazines, souvenir ballet programs, mailers, fliers, and various other print materials. In addition, the collection includes materials from national and international theater productions, such as theatrical programs, magazines, and souvenir ballet programs. This collection is arranged into two series: Series I. Speech and Drama Department Production Materials, 1937-1988 (bulk 1950-1955); and Series II. National and International Theater Production Materials, 1900-1969 (bulk 1950-1957).

Access
The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
San José State University Theater Arts Collection, MSS-2009-09-01, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Silke Higgins. Finding aid EAD encoded by Silke Higgins. Reviewed by Danelle Moon and Erin Louthen. Accruals were added to Series I, and collection housing was consolidated, by Stephanie Watson, June 2016.

Project Information
This finding aid was created as part of the Survey and Cataloging Project, a two-year San José State University Library grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project began in 2008. The Project Director is Danelle Moon. The Project Archivist is Erin Louthen.

Organizational History
In 1857 the San Francisco Board of Education established Minns' Evening Normal School for current and prospective teachers in the city. Named after its principal, George W. Minns, the institution was formally established as the first California State Normal School by the State Legislature in 1862. A decade later, the Legislature voted to move the Normal School to San José, and the school relocated to its new home on Washington Square prior to the fall term of 1872. After a fire destroyed the Normal School building in 1880, the Legislature authorized $200,000 to construct a new building on the same site. Completed in 1881, the building was commonly referred to as the Second State Normal School. After several names and curriculum changes, Minns' Normal School is now San José State University, offering more than 134 bachelor's and master's degrees with 110 concentrations, and is recognized as one of the top public universities granting such degrees in the West.

The history of the San José State University Theater Arts Department is well documented by former professors Hugh Gillis and Robert Jenkins. According to Gillis and Jenkins, while some of the first main stage plays on campus can be traced to the years 1898 and 1899, it was not until 1927 that the Speech Arts Department was formally founded by Dr. Thomas MacQuarrie, the sixteenth president of the college. Initially chaired by Virginia Sanderson, the small department rapidly evolved. In 1936, the Speech Arts Department, at that time headed by Elizabeth Jenks, was divided into two separate areas of speech and drama, which resulted in growing enrollment numbers, especially after an upper division course for Radio Speaking was added to the curriculum. After World War II, the Speech and Drama Department reached new heights with professionally arranged main stage plays, which were sold to the public as an entire season. In the late 1940s a curriculum for Radio and Television was added, and the 1950s saw the addition of a Master of Arts degree in Drama. The department is now known as the San José State University TV-Radio-Film-Theatre Department, offering students a skilled learning environment that consistently arranges well-received productions, as well as providing news and entertainment via its own...
Scope and Content of Collection

The San José State University Theater Arts Collection, 1900-1988 (bulk 1950-1957) documents theatrical plays and ballets arranged and presented by the university's Speech and Drama Department. The collection consists of department theater programs, photographs, magazines, souvenir ballet programs, mailers, fliers, and various other print materials. In addition, the collection includes materials from national and international theater productions, such as theatrical programs, magazines, and souvenir ballet programs.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into two series: Series I. Speech and Drama Department Production Materials, 1937-1988; and Series II. National and International Theater Production Materials, 1900-1969.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

- Ballet Programs
- Theater Periodicals
- College theater -- California -- San Jose
- Education -- California -- San Jose
- Education, Higher -- California -- San Jose
- Theater Programs
- Drama
- San José State University -- History
- San José State Teachers College -- History
- San José State University
- San José State University -- Speech and Drama Dept
- California State University, San José -- History
- San José State Normal School -- History
- San José State College -- History


Series Scope and Content Summary

The materials in this series document stage plays arranged and presented by the Speech and Drama Department produced over a fifty-year time period. The files consist primarily of theater programs and photographs, but also include select musical scores and scripts for the San José Spartan Revelries, as well as several newsletters and festivity announcement fliers. Researchers interested in stage productions of the Speech and Drama Department will find in this series a wealth of information about the plays, actors, productions, and main stage settings. Of special value are the high-quality photographs documenting the productions, which beautifully enhance the printed materials.

Arrangement

The majority of the materials in this series are arranged chronologically by year.

Box 1

Theater Programs & Photographs 1938-1964
National & International Theater Production Materials Series II: 1900-1969 (bulk 1950-1957)

Series Scope and Content Summary


Theater and ballet aficionados will find this series a valuable discovery. The theater programs include productions with stars such as Audrey Hepburn, the souvenir ballet programs include autographed copies, and the theater magazines provide detailed insight into the theater scene of the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1960s.

Arrangement

The majority of the materials in this series are undated.

Box 2
Theater & Ballet Programs & Magazines 1900-1969

Box 3
Souvenir Ballet Programs & Theater Programs 1936-1961