Overview of the Collection

Collection Title: San Diego Opera Office Records
Dates: 1968-2007
Identification: MS-0477
Creator: San Diego Opera Office
Physical Description: 12.68 linear ft
Language of Materials: EnglishFrenchGerman
Repository: Special Collections & University Archives
5500 Campanile Dr. MC 8050
San Diego, CA, 92182-8050
URL: http://library.sdsu.edu/scua
Email: scref@rohan.sdsu.edu
Phone: 619-594-6791

Biography/Organization History

Historical Note:
San Diego Opera, with roots back to the formation of the San Diego Opera Guild in 1950, took its present administrative form in 1974, with the creation of the San Diego Opera Association. The San Diego Opera Office's work focuses on the company's production and performance of opera both during the regular season and for special programs and series. In 1976, with the passing of founding Director Walter Herbert, the San Diego Opera Association hired Tito Capobianco, formerly of the New York City Opera, as General Director of the San Diego Opera. Capobianco's tenure saw the San Diego Opera gain international renown. He introduced an annual summer Verdi Festival, which usually featured two operas, one a late composition and the other from Verdi's "galley years." Capobianco also expanded the regular season to six productions, and brought such renowned opera superstars as Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, and Beverly Sills to San Diego opera audiences.

In 1983, the SDOA hired a new General Director, Ian Campbell, formerly of Opera Australia and the New York Metropolitan Opera. Campbell restored fiscal stability to the San Diego Opera, and has worked throughout his tenure to increase San Diego Opera's audience. While the Verdi Festival only continued through 1985, he expanded the regular season, and introduced a new concert program designed to bring internationally renowned opera stars to San Diego. His work with the North American Voices Project adds contemporary American operas to the traditional repertoire performed at San Diego Opera each year.

Notable artists who have performed with San Diego Opera include Luciano Pavarotti, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland, Richard Bonyngue, Richard Leech, Placido Domingo, and Renee Fleming. San Diego Opera has staged the World Premieres of numerous productions, including Myron Fink's The Conquistador, Gian Carlo Menotti's La Loca, and Alva Henderson's Medea. Also significant are the United States Premieres of such operas as Daniel Catan's Rapaccini's Daughter, Hanz Werner Henze's The Young Lord, Ricardo Zandonai's Giulietta e Romeo, and Emmanuel Chabrier's Gwendoline. Other notable performances include Beverly Sills' farewell performance opposite Joan Sutherland in Die Fledermaus, and the commissioned Zandra Rhodes productions of The Magic Flute and The Pearl Fishers.

San Diego Opera is ranked by OPERA America as one of the top 10 opera companies in the United States, and was recently honored as one of 13 "Cornerstone Arts Organizations" by the James Irvine Foundation. In addition, San Diego Opera is the only San Diego arts organization to receive an almost perfect ranking from both the California Arts Council and the City of San Diego Commission for Arts & Culture.

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Custodial History:
The San Diego Opera Office Collection was originally donated to the San Diego History Center from 1984 to 2008. In 2008 it was transferred by the San Diego History Center to San Diego State University Library and Information Access.

Accruals:
2008-029

Conditions Governing Use:
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Conditions Governing Access:
This collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation:
Identification of item, folder title, box number, San Diego Opera Office Records, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University.

Related Materials:
San Diego Opera Association Records (MS-0474)
San Diego Opera Guild Records (MS-0476)

Arrangement of Materials:
I. Administrative Files, 1968-2004
   a.) Correspondence, 1976-2004
   b.) General Files, 1975-2000
   c.) Rental Files, 1968-1996
II. Production Files, 1973-1995
   a.) Production Binders, 1973-1990
   b.) Production Photographs, 1974-1995
III. Publicity, 1980-2007

Scope and Contents


The Administrative Files (1968-2004) include three subseries: Correspondence (1976-2004), General Files (1975-2000), and Rental Files (1968-1996). These files document SDO's general operations, activities and functions, interaction with the public, and the company's growth and development over several decades. The Correspondence (1976-2004) subseries documents some of SDO's interactions with the public. It primarily consists of letters sent to SDO from audience members and reviewers in response to performances, show selection, and other topics. Responses from San Diego Opera staff, especially Director Ian Campbell and Artistic Administrator Marianne Flettner are sometimes included. Letters sometimes include clippings, and the sub-series is filed chronologically. The General Files (1975-2000) document daily operations, work with various performers, and early production preparation. It includes clippings, brochures, receipts, internal correspondence, correspondence exchanged with performers and other opera companies both in the US and abroad, photos of former Director Tito Capobianco, performer head shots, and audition forms, and is filed alphabetically by file name. The Rental Files (1968-1996) document the San Diego Opera's Scenic Studios rental relationships with various opera and production companies around the US who have used sets designed and created by San Diego Opera in their own productions. It includes set rental forms, diagrams, photographs, slides, rental agreements, correspondence, and shipping forms, and is filed alphabetically by file name.

The Production Files (1973-1995) include two subseries: Production Binders (1973-1990) and Production Photographs (1974-1995). These files document the creation and performance of SDO's regular season productions. The Production Binders (1973-1990) include materials originally stored in large 3-ring binders, and document the complex and detailed processes necessary to stage an opera production. The subseries includes casting information, correspondence with principal performers, information on orchestral musicians, choruses, dancers, sets, props, contracts, costumes, technical staff, rehearsal schedules, rental documentation, handwritten notes, correspondence, set diagrams, and some photographs, and is filed chronologically. The Production Photographs (1974-1995) document finished opera performances as they were staged at SDO. The majority of photographs are from performances staged in the 1970s and 1980s, though some productions are undated. The subseries includes production stills only, and is filed chronologically.

The Publicity (1980-2007) series documents the SDO's coverage in various print media outlets, and consists primarily of published reviews of SDO performances. Clippings were gathered by the San Diego Clipping Service from various local and national publications including the San Diego Union, Evening Tribune, San Diego Daily Transcript, La Prensa, Seattle Post Intelligencer, Los Angeles Times, and numerous others. The series is filed chronologically.

Administrative Files 1968-2004

Correspondence 1976-2004

- Box 1, Folder 1: Composer Correspondence-Pasatier, Thomas 1976
- Box 1, Folder 2: Pavarotti, Public Response Letters 1980
- Box 1, Folder 3: Correspondences 1983-1984
- Box 1, Folder 4: Composer Correspondence-Kalman, Yvonne 1984-1986
- Box 1, Folder 5: Correspondence 1984
- Box 1, Folder 6: January-June, 1985
- Box 1, Folder 7: July-December, 1985
- Box 1, Folder 8: January-March, 1986
- Box 1, Folder 9: April-June, 1986
- Box 1, Folder 10: July-December, 1986
- Box 2, Folder 1: January-March 1987
- Box 2, Folder 2: April-June 1987
- Box 2, Folder 3: July-August 1987
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>Campbell, Ian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, 5</td>
<td>Completed Speeches-Ian 1989-1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, 6</td>
<td>January-June, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, 7</td>
<td>July-December, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, 8</td>
<td>January-March, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 1</td>
<td>April-June, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 2</td>
<td>July-December, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 3</td>
<td>January-March, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 5</td>
<td>July-August, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 6</td>
<td>September, 1995-December, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 7</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 1</td>
<td>1998-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 2</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 3</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 4</td>
<td>Adams, William</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 1</td>
<td>General Files 1975-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 2</td>
<td>Bergonzi, Carlo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 3</td>
<td>Berry, Walter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 4</td>
<td>Cassilly, Richard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 5</td>
<td>Corelli, Franco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>Cruz-Romo, Gilda</td>
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<tr>
<td>5, 7</td>
<td>Price, Leontyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 8</td>
<td>Quilico, Gino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 9</td>
<td>Serbo, Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 10</td>
<td>Verrett, Shirley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 11</td>
<td>Sutherland, Joan</td>
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<tr>
<td>5, 12</td>
<td>Capobianco, Tito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 13</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Capobianco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 14</td>
<td>Capobianco and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 15</td>
<td>Founders' Day, 1999-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 16</td>
<td>Herbert, Walter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 18</td>
<td>Keltner, Karen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 19</td>
<td>Reveles, Nicolas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 21</td>
<td>Opera Stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 22</td>
<td>Artists-Critics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 23</td>
<td>Campbell, Ian 2003</td>
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<td>6, 1</td>
<td>Rental Files 1968-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 2</td>
<td>Beverly Sills Contracts, 1975-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 3</td>
<td>Russell, Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 4</td>
<td>Ensemble, 1993-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 5</td>
<td>Education, 1997-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 6</td>
<td>City of San Diego Proclamations 30th Anniversary, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 8</td>
<td>Ticket Pricing, 1979-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 9</td>
<td>Zapata, 1981-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 10</td>
<td>Albert Herring, 1987-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 11</td>
<td>Attila, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 12</td>
<td>Carmen, 1968-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 13</td>
<td>Carmen, 1968-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 14</td>
<td>Cosi Fan Tutte</td>
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<td>Daughter of the Regiment, 1973-1996</td>
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<td>Daughter of the Regiment. 1973-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 2</td>
<td>Flying Dutchman, 1986-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 3</td>
<td>Flying Dutchman, 1986-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 4</td>
<td>Hamlet, 1978-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 5</td>
<td>Hamlet, 1978-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 6</td>
<td>The Lighthouse, 1985-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 7</td>
<td>Lucia di Lammermoor, 1984-1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 8</td>
<td>Lucia di Lammermoor, 1984-1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 9</td>
<td>Madama Butterfly, 1976-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 1</td>
<td>Merry Widow, 1977-1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 2</td>
<td>Merry Widow, 1977-1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 3</td>
<td>The Rape of Lucretia, 1988-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 4</td>
<td>Rappachini's Daughter, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 5</td>
<td>The Rape of Lucretia, 1988-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 6</td>
<td>Rusalka, 1975-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 7</td>
<td>La Traviata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 8</td>
<td>La Traviata, 1981-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 9</td>
<td>La Traviata, 1981-1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Production Files 1973-1995**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 9, Folder 1</th>
<th>Mefistofele, 1973</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 2</td>
<td>Mefistofele, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 3</td>
<td>Lucia di Lamamoor (Sutherland Debut), 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Lucia di Lamamoor (Sutherland Debut), 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 5</td>
<td>Rusalka, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 6</td>
<td>Rusalka, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 1</td>
<td>Village Romeo and Juliets, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 2</td>
<td>Village Romeo and Juliets, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 3</td>
<td>Norma, 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 4</td>
<td>Aida (Verdi Festival Prologue), 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 5</td>
<td>Aida (Verdi Festival Prologue), 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 6</td>
<td>Cinderella, 1977-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 10, Folder 7</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Box 11, Folder 2</td>
<td>Gotterdammerung, Ring Cycle Part IV, 1977</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gotterdammerung, Ring Cycle Part IV, 1977</td>
</tr>
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<td>Box 11, Folder 4</td>
<td>Gotterdammerung, 4th in Ring Cycle, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 6</td>
<td>Gotterdammerung, 4th in Ring Cycle, 1977</td>
</tr>
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<td>Box 12, Folder 1</td>
<td>The Medium, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 12, Folder 2</td>
<td>The Medium, (Education), 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 12, Folder 3</td>
<td>Hamlet Production Book, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 12, Folder 4</td>
<td>Hamlet Production Book, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 12, Folder 5</td>
<td>Hamlet, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 12, Folder 6</td>
<td>The Love for Three Oranges, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 13, Folder 1</td>
<td>La Loca, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 13, Folder 2</td>
<td>Manon Lescaut Vocal Score, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 13, Folder 3</td>
<td>Die Fledermaus, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 13, Folder 4</td>
<td>Die Fledermaus (Sills, Sutherland), 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 13, Folder 5</td>
<td>Die Fledermaus (Sills/Sutherland), 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 14, Folder 1</td>
<td>Giovanna d’Arco (Verdi Festival), 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 14, Folder 2</td>
<td>Giovanna d’Arco (Verdi Festival), 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 14, Folder 3</td>
<td>Andrea Chenier, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 14, Folder 4</td>
<td>Andrea Chenier, 1981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 14, Folder 5

Andrea Chenier, 1981

Andrea Chenier Production Score, 1981

Box 15, Folder 1

Andrea Chenier Production Score, 1981

Nabucco (Verdi Festival), 1981

Nabucco (Verdi Festival), 1981

Susannah, 1981

Susannah, 1981

Box 16, Folder 1

Corsano (Verdi Festival), 1982

Corsano (Verdi Festival), 1982

Gwendoline, American Premiere, 1982

Gwendoline, American Premiere, 1982

Henry VIII, 1983

Box 16, Folder 6

Henry VIII, 1983

Oberto, 1985

Oberto, 1985

Oberto, 1985

Albert, Herring, 1988

Box 17, Folder 5

Boris Gudonov (Russian Festival), 1989

Boris Gudonov (Russian Festival), 1989

Dialogues of the Carmelites, 1990

Dialogues of the Carmelites, 1990

La Bohème, 1974-1975

Lucia di Lamamoor, 1974-1975

Manon, 1974-1975

Die Valkyrie, 1974-1975

Rusalka, 1975

Norma, 1975-1976

Götterdämmerung, 1976-1977

Saint of Bleecker Street, 1976-1977

Cinderella, 1977

La Traviata, 1976-1977

The Medium, 1977

Don Giovanni, 1977-1978

Falstaff, 1970

Hamlet, 1978-1979

Madame Butterfly, 1977-1978

Love for the Three, 1977-1978

Abduction from the Seraglio, 1979

Don Carlo, 1979-1980

Fanfare, 1979

La Loca, 1978-1979

La Serva Padrona, 1979

Verdi Festival, 1979-1982

La Bohème, 1979-1980

Ballo in Maschera, 1980-1981

Elektra, 1980-1981

Die Fledermaus, 1980

Hansel and Gretel

Medium, 1980

The Secret of Suz Anne, 1980

The Telephone, 1980

Technival Set-ups, Makeup, etc., 1980

Prodigal, Betsy, Game of Chance

La Travatore, 1980

Dr. Miracle
Box 20, Folder 5 Flastaff, 1981
Box 20, Folder 6 Barber of Seville, 1982
Box 20, Folder 7 Guilietta e Romeo, 1982
Box 20, Folder 8 Otello, 1982
Box 20, Folder 9 La Perichole, 1982
Box 20, Folder 10 Der Rosenkavalier, circa. 1982
Box 20, Folder 11 Shirley Verrett, 1982
Box 20, Folder 12 Tulipatan, Nancy Patrick, 1982
Box 20, Folder 13 Adriana Lecoverir, 1983
Box 20, Folder 14 Hamlet, 1983
Box 20, Folder 15 Henry VIII, 1983
Box 20, Folder 16 Lohengrin, 1983
Box 20, Folder 17 Anna Bolena
Box 20, Folder 18 Carmen, 1984
Box 20, Folder 19 Don Giovanni, 1984
Box 20, Folder 20 Hansel and Gretly, 1984
Box 20, Folder 21 I Masnadieri, 1984
Box 20, Folder 22 Richard Cassilly, 1984
Box 21, Folder 1 Student Performance
Box 21, Folder 2 La Traviata, 1984
Box 21, Folder 3 Eugene Onegin, 1985
Box 21, Folder 4 Pavarotti, 1985
Box 21, Folder 5 Fidelio, 1989
Box 21, Folder 6 Lucia, 1989
Box 21, Folder 7 Rusalka, 1995
Box 21, Folder 8 Boccanegra, Simone
Box 21, Folder 9 Puritani, n.d.
Box 21, Folder 10 The Medium, 1977
Box 21, Folder 11 Lohengrin
Box 21, Folder 12 Mefistofele, n.d.
Box 21, Folder 13 Unidentified Photos, n.d.
Box 27 Faust, February, February, 1987-1988
Actors: Ferruccio Furlanetto

Box 27 La Boheme, 1965
Actors: Maralan Niska, Nicholas Di Virgilio

Box 27 Carmen, 1992
Actors: Adria Firestone

Box 27 Marry Widows, 1992
Actors: Glennys Fowles

Box 27 Count in Figaro, 1992
Actors: David [not legible]

Box 27 Salome, 1967
Actors: Felicia Weathers

Box 27 La Nazze di Firgaro

Box 27, Folder 8 Act III, Boris Godunov, 1989

Box 27 Russian Festival, 1989
Actors: Boris Godunov

Box 27 Act III, Opening Scence, 1989
Actors: Boris Godunov
Box 27  
**Otello, 1986-1987**  
Actors: Giuseppe Giacomim, Silvado Carohl  

Box 27  
**Boris Godunov, 1989**  
Publicity 1980-2007  

Box 21, Folder 14  
Clippings, 1980-1981  
Box 21, Folder 15  
Clippings, 1982  
Box 21, Folder 16  
Clippings, 1983  
Box 21, Folder 17  
Clippings, 1983  
Box 21, Folder 18  
Clippings, 1984  
Box 21, Folder 19  
January-March, 1986  
Box 21, Folder 20  
August-December, 1986  
Box 21, Folder 21  
January, 1987  
Box 21, Folder 22  
February, 1987  
Box 21, Folder 23  
March, 1978  
Box 22, Folder 1  
April, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 2  
May, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 3  
June, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 4  
July, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 5  
August, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 6  
September, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 7  
October, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 8  
October 15-30, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 9  
November, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 10  
December, 1987  
Box 22, Folder 11  
January, 1988  
Box 22, Folder 12  
1988-1989  
Box 22, Folder 13  
1988-1989  
Box 22, Folder 14  
March-April, 1989  
Box 22, Folder 15  
May, June, 1989  
Box 23, Folder 1  
July-October, 1989  
Box 23, Folder 2  
25th Opera Season, Programs and Brochures, 1989-1990  
Box 23, Folder 3  
Box 23, Folder 4  
February-May, 1990  
Box 23, Folder 5  
August-October, 1991  
Box 23, Folder 6  
November, 1991  
Box 23, Folder 7  
December, 1991  
Box 23, Folder 8  
January, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 9  
February, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 10  
March, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 11  
April, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 12  
May, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 13  
June, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 14  
June, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 15  
July, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 16  
August, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 17  
September, 1992  
Box 23, Folder 18  
October, 1992  
Box 24, Folder 1  
November, 1992  
Box 24, Folder 2  
December, 1992  
Box 24, Folder 3  
January-February, 1993  
Box 24, Folder 4  
March-December, 1993  
Box 24, Folder 5  
January-February, 1994  
Box 24, Folder 6  
SDO Publicity March-June, 1994  
Box 24, Folder 7  
SDO Publicity July-December, 1994  
Box 24, Folder 8  
SDO Publicity September 1994-July 1995
Box 25, Folder 1  
**SDO Publicity September 1994-July 1995**

Box 25, Folder 2  
**SDO Publicity January-March, 1995**

Box 25, Folder 3  
**Publicity October 1995-March 1996**

Box 25, Folder 4  
**Publicity April 1996-December 1996**

Box 25, Folder 5  
**Publicity-January, 1997**

Box 26, Folder 1  
**Publicity, February, 1997**

Box 26, Folder 2  
**Publicity, March, 1997**

Box 26, Folder 3  
**Publicity, April-December, 1997**

Box 26, Folder 4  
**Publicity, 2000-2005**

Box 26, Folder 5  
**Publicity, 2006-2007**

Box 29, Folder 1  
**News Clippings, 1991**

Box 30, Folder 1  
**News Clippings, 1990-1991**

Box 28  
**Passion of Jonathan Wade, April 1991**

Box 28  
**Recital 1992**

  Actors: Herman Prey

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Box 28  
**Faust, 1989-1988**

  Actors: David Malis, Jane Bunnehh

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Box 28  
**Rope of Lucretia**

  Actors: Louis Otey as Tarquinius

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Box 28  
**The Merry Widow, 1977**

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Box 28  
**The Barber of Seville**

  Actors: Rodney Gilfry

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Box 28  
**Rosenkavalier, 1992**

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Box 28  
**Faust, 1988**

  Actors: David Malis

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Box 28  
**Faust, 1987-1988**

  Actors: David Malis

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Box 28  
**Der Rosenkavalier**

  Actors: Ashley Putnam

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Box 28  
**H Travatore, 1987-1988**

  Actors: Dolora Zajick, Jonathan Summers

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Box 28  
**Carmen, 1992**

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Box 28  
**Der Rosenkavalier, 1992**

  Actors: Ashley Putnam

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Box 28  
**Der Rosenkavalier, 1992**

  Actors: Ashley Putnam