
Finding aid for the San Francisco theatre scrapbook 6145

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USC Libraries Special Collections

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Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: USC Libraries Special Collections

Title: San Francisco theatre scrapbook

Identifier/Call Number: 6145

Physical Description: 0.7 Linear Feet1 box

Date (inclusive): 1859-1872

Abstract: Scrapbook of theatre listings from San Francisco theaters, primarily the Bella Union and the New Bella Union Theatres, but also including the Alhambra and Pacific Theatres (San Francisco) and the Theater Comique in Sacramento. Most of the items are titles clipped from programs, but some also list casts and descriptions. Scattered throughout the scrapbook are penciled annotations. The Bella Union Theatre, located on Washington Street in San Francisco, originally opened in 1849 as a gambling house, and then presented the first minstrel show in San Francisco later that same year. Although it occasionally presented theatrical performances, it remained a gambling house until 1856 when gambling was abolished, and the proprietor, Samuel Tetlow, turned it into a melodeon, or a variety hall/theater. The building was burned numerous times (and the scrapbook makes reference to an out of town performance "while the New Bella Union was getting furnished"). It remained an active theater until 1895 when it was turned into a museum; the building was ultimately destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906.

Storage Unit: 1

Historical note

The Bella Union Theatre, located on Washington Street in San Francisco, originally opened in 1849 as a gambling house, and then presented the first minstrel show in San Francisco later that same year. Although it occasionally presented theatrical performances, it remained a gambling house until 1856 when gambling was abolished, and the proprietor, Samuel Tetlow, turned it into a melodeon, or a variety hall/theater. The building was burned numerous times (and the scrapbook makes reference to an out of town performance "while the New Bella Union was getting furnished"). It remained an active theater until 1895 when it was turned into a museum; the building was ultimately destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906.

Scope and Contents

Scrapbook of theatre listings from San Francisco theaters, primarily the Bella Union and the New Bella Union Theatres, but also including the Alhambra and Pacific Theatres (San Francisco) and the Theater Comique in Sacramento. Most of the items are titles clipped from programs, but some also list casts and descriptions. Scattered throughout the scrapbook are penciled annotations, one of which suggests that the scrapbook was put together by a member of the Bella Union Troupe. Another, signed "Ned Buckley" also suggests that Buckley was that troupe member. Also included is a single sheet of paper with the words to "Summer of Love".

Conditions Governing Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. Advance notice required for access.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

[Box/folder no. or item name], San Francisco theatre scrapbook, Collection no. 6145, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Scrapbooks

Theater -- California -- San Francisco -- 19th century -- Archival resources

San Francisco (Calif.) -- History -- Archival resources

Bella Union Theatre (San Francisco, Calif.) -- Archives
