
Finding aid for the John Edward Blankenchip papers 0356

Beth McDonald

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Title: John Edward Blankenchip papers

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Abstract: Papers of John Edward Blankenchip, professor emeritus of the USC School of Theatre. Blankenchip joined USC in 1955, just a decade after the drama department was founded by playwright and director William C. DeMille, and continued to teach classes in directing and experimental theatre at the school until a month before he died at the age of 89.

Biographical / Historical

John Edward Blankenchip joined USC in 1955, just a decade after the drama department was founded by playwright and director William C. DeMille, and continued to teach classes in directing and experimental theatre at the school until a month before he died at the age of 89. Born in Independence, Kan., in 1919, he earned a BFA in design and directing from Carnegie Mellon University in 1941. He immediately went to Yale University, attaining an MFA in design and directing in 1943. For the next three years, first as assistant to designer Harry Horner and then on his own, he designed scenery, costumes and lighting both on and off Broadway. From Broadway, Blankenchip moved to teaching. After eight years on the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College, he decided to spend his 1955 sabbatical working as a designer at USC. James H. Butler, then head of the drama department, offered him a teaching position. Blankenchip accepted and had been teaching at USC ever since. Blankenchip founded, produced and directed Festival Theatre USC-USA, a company comprised of USC students and alumni who were the first American artists to perform on the Fringe of the Edinburgh International Festival. From 1966 to 2005, the company mounted 23 seasons on the Fringe; performed in London, Amsterdam and Paris; and completed three tours for the AMERIKA houses in Germany for the U.S. State Department. He received Fringe First Awards for the British premieres of Buried Child and Follies. He directed the acclaimed production of Vivien at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, in London, off Broadway and in Los Angeles at the Tiffany Theatre. Blankenchip also designed at Tanglewood, the Guild Opera and the La Jolla Playhouse, and he directed and designed for the Ebony Showcase. He was Ray Bradbury's preferred designer at his Pandemonium Theatre Company. Blankenchip's professionalism manifested itself through former students who have gone on to successful careers both in and out of the theatre. He played a key role in developing the original BFA and MFA theatre programs at USC, and from nearly the beginning, has been vital to the School of Theatre's growing excellence. He died on April 1, 2009 after a brief illness.

Scope and Contents

Programs, photographs, and ephemera created and collected by John Edward Blankenchip, professor emeritus in the USC School of Theatre, circa 1900-2007. The papers document the long participation of Blankenchip and the School with the Festival Theatre USC-USA and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Also included are papers documenting Blankenchip's work with students at USC, and personal papers, including many photographs.

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Related Archival Materials

USC School of Dramatic Arts records, Collection no. 5287

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Theater -- California, Southern -- Archival resources

Correspondence

Photographs

Programs (documents)
Slides (photographs)
Blankenchip, John Edward
Blankenchip, John Edward -- Archives
University of Southern California. School of Dramatic Arts -- Archives

Festival Theatre 1966-2005

Scope and Contents

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Box 8, Folder 11	"Obediently yours, Orson Welles" by Richard France [Draft 3] n.d.
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Box 8, Folder 13	"Reservoir Dogs adapted for the stage by Patrick T. Gorman" n.d.
Box 8, Folder 14	"Stan Starbusrt...Beyond the Stratosphere" by Richard Nathan and Alan Hubbs n.d.
Box 8, Folder 15	Star Wars - Early Script circa 1995
Box 8, Folder 16	"Star Wars Trilogy in Thirty Minutes" by Patrick T. Gorman [Second Draft] 1995
Box 8, Folder 17	Star Wars Trilogy in 30 Minutes as performed in Edinburgh '96 1996
Box 8, Folder 19	"\$200 Titanic in Thirty Minutes" by Patrick T. Gorman 1998
Box 8, Folder 20	"Vivien" by Marcy Lafferty 7th Draft June 1997
Box 8, Folder 18	"Star Wars Trilogy in 30 Minutes" - 2002 Revision 2002
Box 10, Folder 4	Spring Awakening [never produced] 2007
Box 10, Folder 18	West Side Story n.d.
Box 10, Folder 19	One Atcs - "Hey Fever", "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf", "The Glass Menagerie", "Ballad of the Sad Cafe"
Box 10, Folder 41	Unidentified Photographs n.d.
Box 10, Folder 42	Battersea [Mike Moore] n.d.
Box 10, Folder 43	Unidentified Photographs n.d.
Box 13, envelope 8	The Red Peppers n.d.
Box 13, envelope 9	Blood Wedding n.d. (possibly late 50s)

Box 13,
envelope 13
Box 13,
envelope 15
Box 13,
envelope 19
Box 13,
envelope 23-33
Box 13, cd 46-48
Box 13, cd 49-51
Box 13, cd 52
Box 13, cd 53-55
Box 13, cd 56-58

Stage Door n.d.

The Country Girl n.d.

Popping the Question n.d.

Unidentified photographs n.d.

American Gothic n.d.

Five and Dime n.d.

John Blankenchip Photos n.d.

Subway n.d.

David Ackles n.d.

Personal papers 1900-2009, undated

Scope and Contents

Personal materials, including theatrical productions outside of the United States in which Blankenchip took part.

Box 4, Folder 18
Box 4, Folder 19
Box 4, Folder 20
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Box 4, Folder 22
Box 4, Folder 23
Box 4, Folder 24
Box 4, Folder 25
Box 4, Folder 26
Box 4, Folder 27
Box 10, Folder 23
Box 4, Folder 28
Box 4, Folder 29
Box 7, Folder 1
Box 10, Folder 25
Box 7, Folder 2
Box 7, Folder 3
Box 7, Folder 4
Box 7, Folder 6
Box 7, Folder 5
Box 7, Folder 7
Box 7, Folder 8
Box 7, Folder 9
Box 10, Folder 27
Box 7, Folder 10
Box 7, Folder 11
Box 7, Folder 12
Box 7, Folder 13
Box 7, Folder 14
Box 7, Folder 15
Box 7, Folder 16
Box 7, Folder 17
Box 7, Folder 18
Box 7, Folder 19
Box 7, Folder 20
Box 7, Folder 21
Box 7, Folder 22
Box 10, Folder 22
Box 7, Folder 23
Box 7, Folder 24

[Hazel Beamer Blankenchip] c.1900s - 1950s

[Hazel Beamer Blankenchip - Correspondence] 1911-1963, undated

[Childhood] 1919-1936

[Primary & Secondary Schools] circa 1920s - 1937

[Family Photographs] c.1920s - 1950s

[Portraits] c.1920s - 2000s

[Correspondence] 1934-1971

[Carnegie Institute of Technology] (Carnegie Mellon) 1937-1941

[Photographs] c.1940s - 2000s

[Yale University] 1941-1943

[Costume Design for "The Beaux Stratagem"] 1942

[Application to the Army Air Forces] February-March 1943

[A Street car Named Desire-Books] 1947

[Wedding to Penelope Coker] 12 June 1953

[Penelope Coker] 1953

[Penelope Coker] circa 1953 - 1972

Sabbatical '61 1961

[Edinburgh Festival Theatre Programs] 1979-1994

[Tribute to John E. Blankenchip & William C. White] 13 April 1986

[London Theatre Programs] 1994

[New York Theatre Programs] June 1994

[New York Theatre Programs] December 1994

[New York Theatre Programs] December 1995

Photograph of John E. Blankenchip and William C. White circa 1995

[London Theatre Programs] 1996

[New York Theatre Programs] 1996

[London Theatre Programs] 1997

Chekhov Trip [Yalta] circa 1998

[New York Theatre Programs] 1998

Vivien [Los Angeles and New York Productions] 1998-2002

[Los Angeles Theatre Programs] circa 1999

N.B.A.A. Show [Ground Plan] 1999

[New York Theatre Programs] March-April 1999

Theatre Programs 1999-2000

[London Theatre Programs] 1999-2000

[New York Theatre Programs] June 2000

[New York Theatre Programs] April 2001

[London Theatre Program] 2005

[Living History Interview] 2006

[Obituaries and Memorial] 2009

Box 4, Folder 14	"Archy and Mehitabel" [Script] n.d.
Box 11, Folder 2	Folk Art Collage made for J.B. by his students n.d.
Box 10, Folder 24	[Klimt print "Water Serpents I"] n.d.
Box 13, envelope 40-45	La Jolla n.d.
Box 10, Folder 28	Libretto for the Opera "Yerma", commissioned by J.B. from Federico Garcia Lorca n.d.
Box 4, Folder 15	[Photo Postcards and Holiday Cards] n.d.
Box 10, Folder 26	[Print of Ray Bradbury's "Mr. Marionetti's Shop"] n.d.
Box 4, Folder 16	[Resume and Teaching Records] n.d.
Box 4, Folder 17	[Theatrical Productions outside U.S.C.] n.d.