



Guide to the *Montclair Dramatic Club*

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Summary of Collection

Montclair Dramatic Club donated the materials to the historical society in the late 1990s. The materials provide a cohesive history of the club from its first 121 years. The collection also shows the changing tastes of the community in relation to theater over that time period.

Creator(s):

Montclair Dramatic Club

Dates:

1871-1993

Location:

Clark House, 3rd Floor (upstairs Library)

Quantity:

6 boxes, 50 linear inches

Scope and Content

The collection provides an excellent overview of the activities of the Montclair Dramatic Club. The collection has been divided into nine series: Administrative Files (1919-1991), Publicity (1918-1990), Financial Records (1950-1987), Tagline (1945-1992), Junior Wing Division (1963-1986), Programs (1889-1991), Scripts (1871-1964), Sheet Music (1948-1971), Photographs (1897-1987). Prepared by Elizabeth Shepard, Volunteer, October 2015.

History of the Montclair Dramatic Club

The Montclair Dramatic Club was founded on April 17, 1889. The first play, Randall Thumb, performed as a benefit for the Children's Home at the Montclair Club on Church Street. The plays were performed at the Montclair Club until 1924. Then they were performed at the Montclair Theater on Bloomfield Avenue, 1924-1928; George Inness Junior High School, 1928-1930; Mt Hebron School, 1931-1970s, and Montclair Kimberly Academy, 1970s-1990s.

Each year plays were performed in the spring and fall. During World War I, there were special productions for the service men. After 1893, a professional director was hired to oversee the plays. The club members as well outside amateur actors performed in the plays. In the early years, formal dinners for the cast and crew were served after the performances. Later the club had a junior wing division for younger members and produced children plays. Some actors went on to have professional careers including Katherine Emory, Louise Houston, and Charles Mortimer. Models Patty Boyd and Margaret Duval also performed in plays. The club was the oldest continuing amateur theater in the United States when it disbanded in the 1990s.

Arrangement Note

The files in this collection are arranged by subject. The staff and volunteers responsible for the processing of this collection felt that this was the most sensible arrangement because the materials are intended for frequent access. This collection has been entered by file folder into the PastPerfect database. Corresponding accession numbers are listed on each folder.

Related Material

The Montclair Public Library has a small collection on this club.

Container List

This is an inventory of the collection. It includes box number, the folder title, and the folder contents. This collection is split into nine series.

Series I: Administrative Files, 1919-1991

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, contains board minutes, correspondence, membership materials, and rehearsal schedules.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Audience feedback/surveys, undated |
| 1 | 2 | Bicentennial Arts Committee, Montclair Performing Arts Center, 1975 |
| 1 | 3-4 | Board, Minutes, Lists, Correspondence, 1968-1991 |
| 1 | 5 | By-Laws, 1969-1983 |

| | | |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | 6 | Centennial, 1989 |
| 1 | 7 | Children's Theater, 1968-1974 |
| 1 | 8 | Dayton, Mrs. Paul, Correspondence, 1919-1920 |
| 1 | 9 | Donor, Patron, Members, Correspondence, 1944-1986 |
| 1 | 10 | History, 1914, undated |
| 1 | 11 | Membership, Certificates, undated |
| 1 | 12 | Membership, 1973 |
| 1 | 13 | Miscellaneous, Correspondence, 1963-1987 |
| 1 | 14 | Miscellaneous, Documents, 1923-1985 |
| 1 | 15 | Montclair Kimberly Academy, Partnership, 1970-1973 |
| 1 | 16 | New Jersey Historical Society, Deed of Gift, 1980 |
| 1 | 17 | Rehearsal Schedules, undated |
| 1 | 18 | Try Out Notices, 1971-1991 |
| 1 | 19 | Watchung Congregational Church, 1975-1976 |

Series II: Publicity, 1918-1993

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, consists of clippings and press releases of plays and other club activities.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | 20 | Articles and Press Releases, 1976, undated |
| 1 | 21 | Clippings, 1918-1932 |
| 1 | 22 | Clippings, 1945-1979 |
| 1 | 23 | Clippings, 1980-1993 |
| 1 | 24 | Flyers, Tickets, undated |
| 1 | 25 | Invitations, 1980-1981 |
| 1 | 26 | Stingiest Man In Town, 1973 |

Series III: Financial Records, 1950-1987

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, includes account ledgers, grant scholarships, and ticket sales statistics.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 27 | Accounts, 1978-1984 |
| 1 | 28 | Grants, Scholarships, 1977 |
| 1 | 29 | Miscellaneous, 1984-1987 |
| 1 | 30 | Reports, 1976-1986 |

| | | |
|---|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | 31 | Royalties, 1950 |
| 1 | 32 | Ticket Sales, 1978-1986 |

Series IV: Tagline, 1945-1992

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, contains the club's newsletter, Tagline.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 33-46 | Tagline, 1945-1992 |

Series V: Junior Wing Division, 1983-1986

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, pertains to the Junior Wing Division activities including plays and membership.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 2 | 1 | Junior Wing, Casting and Production Information, 1970-1986 |
| 2 | 2 | Junior Wing, Contact Information, 1967-1970 |
| 2 | 3 | Junior Wing, Financial, 1966-1975 |
| 2 | 4 | Junior Wing, Members, 1973-1974 |
| 2 | 5 | Junior Wing, Miscellaneous, 1966-1984 |
| 2 | 6 | Junior Wing, Programs, Tickets, 1968-1975 |
| 2 | 7 | Junior Wing, Reports, 1963-1974 |
| 2 | 8 | Junior Wing, Schedules, 1967-1975 |
| 2 | 9 | Junior Wing, Workshops, 1974-1976 |

Series VI: Programs, 1889-1991

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, consists of programs from 1889-1991.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 | 10 | Programs, undated |
| 2 | 11 | Programs, 1889, 1893 |
| 2 | 12-20 | Programs, 1912-1991 |
| 2 | 21 | Programs, Workshops, 1950-1974 |

Series VII Scripts, 1871-1964

Description

This series, arranged alphabetically, contains scripts of mostly children plays. Included here is the script of the first play, Randall Thumb.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 2 | 22 | Aladdin and His Magic Lamp, undated |
| 2 | 23 | Beauty and the Beast, 1962 |
| 2 | 24 | Blue Bird, undated |
| 2 | 25 | Bridleboy, 1948 |
| 2 | 26 | Christmas Nightingale, undated |
| 2 | 27 | Golden Goose, 1955 |
| 2 | 28 | Hide and Seek, Laurence Michaels, 1956 |
| 2 | 29 | Hide and Seek, Philip Sheffield, 1959 |
| 2 | 30 | Magic Fish Bone, 1961 |
| 2 | 31 | Mysterious Boy, undated |
| 2 | 32 | Palm Tree in the Rose Garden, undated |
| 2 | 33 | Patchwork Girl of Oz, undated |
| 2 | 34 | Patriotic Private, undated |
| 2 | 35 | Piped Piper of Hamlin, undated |
| 2 | 36 | Raggedy Ann and Andy, undated |
| 2 | 37 | Randall Thumb, 1871 |
| 2 | 38 | Sound of Trumpets, undated |
| 2 | 39 | Tailors Apprentice, 1954 |
| 2 | 40 | Third Best Sport, 1954 |
| 2 | 41 | Witches Lullaby, 1964 |

Series VIII: Sheet Music, 1948-1971

Description

This series includes sheet music for various musicals.

| Box Number | Folder Number | Contents |
|------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 2 | 42 | Sheet Music, 1948-1971 |

Series IX: Photographs

Please contact the Montclair History Center staff for more information on this series. Email mail@montclairhistorical.org or call 973-744-1796.