

**Scrapbooks of the Circle Players, Inc. of Nashville, Tennessee,
ca. 1949-ca. 1974**

Collection Summary

Creator: Circle Players, Inc. (Nashville, Tenn.)

Eleanor G. Steinke

Title: Scrapbooks of the Circle Players, Inc. of Nashville, Tennessee

Inclusive Dates: 1949-ca. 1974

Summary/Abstract: A collection of fourteen scrapbooks pertaining to the Circle Players, Inc. theatrical organization of Nashville, Tennessee, spanning the dates circa 1949-ca. 1974.

Physical Description/Extent: 2.72 cu. ft. (14 scrapbooks)

Series: I. The Circle Players, Inc. Scrapbooks (hardbound); II. Scrapbooks compiled by Eleanor G. Steinke, Circle Players' librarian.

Accession Number: RT-206

Language: English

Stack Location: Closed stacks workroom range 5 section 7

Repository: Special Collections Division, Nashville Public Library, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Chronology

- 1949 Robert Goldman conceived the idea of establishing a theater-in-the round, or "circle theater" in Nashville, where the audience completely surrounds the stage during the performances. A young actor himself, he was instrumental in establishing the non-profit theatrical corporation with other charter members ca. 1949. The Circle Players, Inc. became incorporated through the State of Tennessee as a non-profit membership corporation with an address at 4102 Hillsboro Road, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee.
- 1949 The officers for the theatrical organization were Jim Reppert (president); Joseph E. Wright (vice-president); Billy House (secretary); Miss Delores Adams (treasurer); and Charles Mitchell, Robert E. Jones, Whitworth Stokes, and Robert Goldman (directors).
- Mar. 27, 1950 The Circle Players performed Arthur Laurents' play "Home of the Brave" in the Assembly Room of the Hermitage Hotel.
- Oct. 24, 1951 Eleanor G. Steinke, stage manager for several productions with the Circle Players played the part of Mrs. Debenham in "Rope," a play that opened at the Circle Theater, located at Fourth and Broadway.

- 1953 The theatrical group opened theatrical productions at a new air-conditioned theater-in-the round, situated first at 4200 Hillsboro Road and then 4102 Hillsboro Road.
- Feb. 17-27, 1954 The Circle Players present *Così fan tutte*, libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte, music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The cast in the singspiel include Bettye Brown, Frances Vanderen, Helen Hudson, John Carter, George Jones, Doyle Ross. Howard Pelham was President of the Circle Players Board of Directors; Carrie Silverthorne, Treasurer, and Irene Lewis, Secretary.
- June 22-July 2, 1955 Howard Pelham directs the Circle Players in a production of "Southern Exposure" by Owen Crump.
- 1958 The Circle Players merged with Nashville Community Playhouse to become Theatre Nashville for the period of a year, later reestablished as a separate entity for the opening of the 1959-60 season.
- July, 1960 Walter P. Sharp, honorary president of the Nashville Symphony Association and chairman of the department of fine arts, Vanderbilt University, was guest soloist in a July 22, 1960 performance of "A Singers and Dancers Holiday." Kitty Sharp produced the show, with Barbara Izard, directing and choreography under direction of Joy Zibart.
- March 1, 1962 Dame Judith Anderson arrived in Nashville to start a 44-city tour in "Medea," and "Macbeth." The Circle Players presented the Thomas Brock & Robert Carson Production of "Medea '62" by Robinson Jeffers and "Lady Macbeth," by William Shakespeare in performances at the War Memorial Auditorium on March 2, 1962.
- Sept. 1967 Remodeling and redecoration began on The Circle Players' headquarters at 4102 Hillsboro Road.
- April 14-24, 1971 Circle Players present "Your Own Thing," a new rock musical. Directed by Barbara Izard.
- Jan. 1973 The Circle Players 200th staged production was "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof."
- 1980 Circle Players was a resident company at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center and held plays there for many years.
- 2006 The Circle Players performed "The Music Man," at the opening of the 57th season of the theatrical organization, presented at the Z. Alexander Looby Theater.

Biographical/Historical Sketch

The Circle Players, Inc., of Nashville, Tennessee, was conceived by Robert Goldman, a young Nashville actor who was instrumental in establishing the non-profit theatrical corporation. The theatrical group performed in a "circle theater," where the audience completely surrounded the stage during each performance. Jim Reppert was the first president of the Circle Players, with a background in acting and radio. Other officers named in 1949 were Joseph E. Wright, director of the Vanderbilt University Theater, vice-president; Billy Houston, a director of the Community Playhouse, secretary; Miss Delores Adams, treasurer, and Charles Mitchell, Robert E. Jones, Whitworth Stokes, and Robert Goldman, directors. The 1949-50 season offered three theatrical productions, including Arthur Laurents' play "Home of the Brave," which opened in the Assembly Room of the Hermitage Hotel on March 27, 1950. For a brief duration, the theatrical group performed in the YMCA auditorium, then moved next to a building at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Broadway. In 1953, Circle Players performed at a new air-conditioned theater-in-the round, situated at 4200 Hillsboro Road and subsequently at 4102 Hillsboro Road. In 1958, The Circle Players briefly merged with Nashville Community Playhouse to become Theatre Nashville, later reestablished as a separate entity circa for the 1959-60 season. The Circle Players' librarian was Eleanor G. Steinke (1914-2002) who was active with the theatrical organization ca. 1950s-ca. 1974. During the decades, Miss Steinke acted in numerous capacities as stage manager, wardrobe designer, actress, and librarian with the Circle Players, Inc. Circle Players was a resident company at TPAC when it opened in 1980 and performed in this venue for many years. In 2006, the 57th season of the Circle Players the theatrical group opened "The Music Man," presented in the venue of the Z. Alexander Looby Center Theater.

Scope and Contents of the Collection

The collection consists of fourteen documentary scrapbook volumes pertaining to the history of The Circle Players, Inc., spanning the dates ca. 1949-ca. 1974. Includes newspaper clippings, theatrical programs, photographs, telegrams, primary sources, and ephemera, documenting each season's theatrical productions, directors and cast members, and the history of the organization. Includes the 1949 by-laws of the theatrical organization, as well as the 1955 resolution for consolidation of the Circle Players and the Nashville Community Playhouse during the 1958-1959 when two theatrical organizations merged into "Theatre Nashville," presenting a unified season of eight plays. The scrapbook collection documents the reestablishment of Circle Players as a unique theatrical organization, spotlighting theatrical productions through the 1973-74 season. Present in the collection is the music manuscript for "The Popcorn Song" by Lucy Stokes.

Organization/Arrangement of Materials

The collection of scrapbooks is composed of two series, based on the distinction of two probable sources of original provenance: The Circle Players, Inc. (bound volumes) and

those they were probably compiled by Circle Players' librarian Eleanor G. Steinke, who donated the entire collection.

Organization/Arrangement of Materials

Series I. The Circle Players, Inc. Scrapbooks (hardbound)

Series II. Scrapbooks compiled by Eleanor G. Steinke, Circle Players' librarian.

Arrangement:

Each series is arranged chronologically, with the exception of one scrapbook volume of the early 1960s that includes some materials spanning ca. 1972-ca. 1974.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: In library use only. Available by appointment.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction: This material may be protected by copyright (Title 17 U.S. Code).

Index Terms

Personal Names:

Goldman, Robert

Steinke, Eleanor G.

Anderson, Judith, Dame, 1898-1992

Stokes, Lucy

Corporate Names/Organizations:

Circle Players, Nashville--History--Sources

Theatre Nashville--History--Sources

Subjects:

Community theater--Tennessee--Nashville

Drama

Performing arts--Tennessee--Nashville

Theater--Tennessee--Nashville

Theatrical companies--Tennessee--Nashville

Theaters--Tennessee--Nashville

Women in the theater--Tennessee--Nashville

Theatrical productions--Tennessee--Nashville

Places:

Nashville (Tenn.)--History--Sources

Nashville (Tenn.)--Social life and customs

Genre/Document Types:

Scrapbooks

Clippings

Photographs

Ephemera

Programs

Bylaws (administrative records)

Signature (names)

Telegrams

Sheet music

Occupations:

Actors--Tennessee--Nashville

Entertainers--Tennessee--Nashville

Associated and Related Material

Related materials includes the Nashville Community Playhouse and Theatre Nashville Records (Acc. 2004.032)

Administrative Information

Copyright: This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code).

Preferred Citation: Scrapbooks of the Circle Players, Inc. of Nashville, Tennessee, Special Collections Division, Nashville Public Library.

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Donated to the Special Collections Division, Nashville Public Library by Eleanor Steinke in August, 1989.

Ownership and Custodial History: The two hardbound scrapbook volumes with the name of the theatrical organization "Circle Players, Inc." printed on the front covers and the twelve other scrapbooks that were probably compiled by Eleanor G. Steinke were all donated by Miss Steinke, who was associated with the Circle Players as stage manager, wardrobe designer, actress, and librarian.

Processing Information: Processed by Leanne Garland in December, 2006.

Accruals: No further accruals are expected.

References to Works by or about Collection Creator/Topic

The Circle Players, Inc. maintains an Internet website (<http://www.circleplayers.net>) that provides additional information about the theatrical organization.

Related book: Ingram, Martha Rivers. *Apollo's Struggle: A Performing Arts Odyssey in*

the Athens of the South, Nashville, Tennessee. Franklin, Tenn.: Hillsboro Press, 2004. Call nr. 792.0976855 I542a, Nashville Rm., Tenn.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. The Circle Players, Inc. Scrapbooks, 1951-52; 1953-54, 2 vols.

Series Abstract/Description

This series consists of two volumes documenting two distinct seasons of theatrical productions of The Circle Players, Inc. theatrical group. The two hardbound scrapbooks display the official name of the organization that is published on the front covers. The specific volumes are the following: 1) The Circle Players, Inc. Scrapbook, 1951-52 (Vol. 2); and 1953-54 (Vol. 4).

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

Container List

Box 1 of 1

The Circle Players, Inc. Scrapbook, 1951-52 (Vol. 2)

The Circle Players, Inc. Scrapbook, 1953-54 (Vol. 4)

Series II. Scrapbooks, Circle Players, ca. 1949-ca. 1974, 12 vols.

Series Abstract/Description

This series was probably compiled by Eleanor G. Steinke, the Circle Players' librarian, stage manager, wardrobe designer, and occasional actress with the theatrical group. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, photographs, theatrical programs, telegrams, and a few administrative records (by-laws, ca. 1949 and a resolution, ca. 1958).

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically, except for one scrapbook volume of the early 1960s that includes materials spanning ca. 1972-ca. 1974.

Container List

Box 1 of 4

Scrapbook, ca. 1949-ca. 1952

Scrapbook, ca. 1952-ca. 1955

Scrapbook, ca. 1955-ca. 1958

Box 2 of 4

Scrapbook, ca. 1958-ca. 1961

Scrapbook, ca. 1961-ca. 1963; 1972-ca. 1974

Scrapbook, ca. 1963-ca. 1965

Box 3 of 4

Scrapbook, ca. 1965-ca. 1966

Scrapbook, ca. 1966-ca. 1967

Scrapbook, ca. 1967-ca. 1968

Box 4 of 4

Scrapbook, ca. 1968-ca. 1970

Scrapbook, ca. 1970-ca. 1972

Scrapbook, ca. 1972-ca. 1974