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## Fairfield University Playhouse Collection

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The Fairfield University Playhouse was established in 1963 under the art direction of Robert G. Emerich as a theater for both the University and the local community. The first Playhouse production in April 1963 was *The Glass Menagerie*. In the early 1960s, Professor Emerich, who was director of the Drama Department, and the University constructed the theater on campus by converting a former garage located on the Round Hill Road side of the campus. From 1963 through 1983, the Playhouse presented more than 100 productions, both classic and contemporary, from established playwrights to experimental theater. In addition to acting, students had the opportunity to learn stagecraft – scenery construction, lighting, and costuming. Students were also involved with the business management of the Playhouse, serving as box office managers and assistants to the artistic director.

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### Recommended Citation

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Processed by Ann Munnelly, September 2019

**Creator:** Fairfield University Archives

**Title:** Fairfield University Playhouse Collection

**Dates:** Approximately 1960s – 1980s

**Quantity:** 4.6 linear feet; 6 boxes

**Origin:** Undetermined

**Repository:** Fairfield University Archives and Special Collections

### **Historical Note / Biographical Note**

The Fairfield University Playhouse was established in 1963 under the art direction of Robert G. Emerich as a theater for both the University and the local community. The first Playhouse production in April 1963 was *The Glass Menagerie*. In the early 1960s, Professor Emerich, who was director of the Drama Department, and the University constructed the theater on campus by converting a former garage located on the Round Hill Road side of the campus. From 1963 through 1983, the Playhouse presented more than 100 productions, both classic and contemporary, from established playwrights to experimental theater. In addition to acting, students had the opportunity to learn stagecraft – scenery construction, lighting, and costuming. Students were also involved with the business management of the Playhouse, serving as box office managers and assistants to the artistic director. In 1983, the Playhouse building underwent a renovation to modernize the space and update electrical and communication systems. In celebration of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1983, the Playhouse mounted a new production of *The Glass Menagerie*, under the direction of Professor Emerich. The Playhouse provided many graduates with theater experience that led to opportunity for careers in the performing arts.

Sources: Chapman, Judith, "Theater for Campus and Town," *Fairfield Citizen News*, January 30, 1980; Saft, Marcia B., "Celebrating the Playhouse," *Fairfield Now*, Spring 1983.

### **Scope and Content of Papers**

The predominance of the material in this collection are black & white photographs and photographic negatives of rehearsals and publicity stills for a small number of productions from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Many of the images are unmarked and undated. There is a representative collection of Playhouse production posters from the early 1960s though the late 1980s, the earliest of which is *Macbeth*, April 1964, and the latest is *The Day They Shot John Lennon*, April 1989. There is a select set of program flyers, most of which are for 1980 productions, that includes the program for the first Playhouse production of *The Glass Menagerie* in April 1963. There are also bookkeeping records for three seasons (1978 – 1981). The collection also contains these items of notes: (a) a set of photographs from the early 1960s of the Playhouse building before construction, as well as black & white photographs documenting the 1980s renovation of the Playhouse building; (b) a script for *Hamlet* from the 1961 Fairfield University Drama Society production (before the Playhouse was established); and (c) the program for the first Playhouse production of *The Glass Menagerie* in April 1963, as well as photographic negatives from the 1983 production.

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**BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	0	Finding Aid (Print Copy)
1	1	Photographic Negatives of the Playhouse - 1970s
1	2	Playhouse Building Renovation – Photographs and Negatives – 1980s
1	3	Miscellaneous Clippings, Ephemera - undated
1	4	Miscellaneous Newspaper Clippings – 1980s
1	5	“Fairfield News” Magazine - Spring 1983
1	6	<i>Hamlet</i> , Gonzaga Theater (Fairfield University Drama Society), April 1961 Production - Program
1	7	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> - April 1963 Production - Program
1	8	Miscellaneous Programs/Flyers - undated
1	9	Miscellaneous Programs/Flyers – 1971-1979
1	10	Miscellaneous Programs/Flyers – 1983 - 1984
1	11	Miscellaneous Programs/Flyers – 1984 - 1985
1	12	Miscellaneous Programs/Flyers – 1986, 1987, 1988
1	13	<i>The First Year, A Comedy</i> – Script - 1988
1	14	Twyla Tharp – Lighting Schematics - undated
1	15	The Dept. of Fine Arts/FAIDRA Programs - 1990-91, 1991-92
1	16	Miscellaneous Correspondence, Ephemera – 1970s
1	17	Budget/Bookkeeping Records – 1978-79
1	18	Bookkeeping Records – 1979 - 80
1	19	Bookkeeping Records – 1980 - 81
2	1	Planning Playhouse Building – 1960s - Photographs

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Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
2	2	Publicity – Events – 1960s - Photographs
2	3	Unidentified 1960s Production – Photographs
2	4	<i>Macbeth</i> – 1964 Production - Photographs
2	5	<i>The Caretaker</i> - 1965 Production - Photographs
2	6	<i>Greasepaint</i> - 1966 Production - Photographs
2	7	<i>The Visit</i> - 1967 Production - Photographs
2	8	<i>Philadelphia, Here I Come</i> – 1968 Production - Negatives
2	9	<i>The Incident at Vichy</i> – 1968 Production - Photographs
2	10	<i>Walking Happy</i> - 1968 Production - Negatives
2	11	<i>Medea</i> - 1968 Production - Photographs
2	12	<i>Pantagleize</i> – 1969 Production – Rehearsal - Negatives
2	13	<i>Pantagleize</i> – Undated Photographs
3	1	<i>Comedia '80</i> Production – Clippings, Undated Photographs, Negatives
3	2	<i>Jacques Brel is Alive &amp; Living in Paris</i> – 1980 Production – Clippings, Photographs
3	3	<i>The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd</i> – 1980 Production - Photographs
3	4	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> – 1983 Production – Negatives, Script
3	5	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> – 1984 Production – Rehearsal Photographs
3	6	<i>Born Yesterday</i> – 1985 Production – Photographs, Newspaper Articles
3	7	<i>Canterbury Tales</i> Production – Undated Photographs
3	8	<i>The Heiress</i> Production – Undated Photographs

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Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
3	9	<i>The Cocktail Party</i> Production – Undated Photographs
3	10	<i>The Prodigal</i> Production – Undated Photographs
3	11	<i>Philadelphia, Here I Come</i> Production – Undated Photographs
3	12	<i>110 in the Shade</i> Production – Undated Photographs
3	13	<i>Acadie</i> Production – Undated Photographs
3	14	Negatives – “V.C. Cogswell (M& F Bank) with Bob Tarcotle,” plus Unidentified
3	15	Photographs – circa 1980s, Undated, Unidentified
4	1	Photographs on Board 1960s (including <i>The Visit</i> and <i>The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd</i> Productions)
4	2	Photographs on Board, Unidentified and Undated
4	3	<i>1959 Pink Thunderbird</i> – 1988 Production – Oversized Photographs
4	4	<i>1940s Radio Hour</i> – 1988 Production – Oversized Photographs
4	5	<i>Orchards</i> – 1988 Production – Oversized Photographs
4	6	<i>The Rimers of Eldritch</i> – 1988 Production – Oversized Photographs
4	7	Miscellaneous Oversized Photographs, Unidentified and Undated
5	-	Nine 2 x 4 Inch Boxes Containing Color Slides of Productions: <i>Where’s Charlie?</i> <i>Lion in Winter</i> <i>The Heiress</i> <i>Mother Courage</i> <i>Half a Sixpence</i>
6	-	Playhouse Production Posters – from 1964 through 1983 not inclusive, 1988, 1989, undated (in chronological order with most recent on top)