Rochester Community Players Records

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Local History & Genealogy Division 115 South Ave. Rochester, New York, 14604 585-428-8370 lochistref@libraryweb.org

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Historical Note.	4
Scope and Content	5
<u>Arrangement</u>	5
Administrative Information	
Related Materials	
Controlled Access Headings	
Collection Inventory	
Legal records	
Reports.	
Printed material	
Minutes	
Graphic materials	
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Summary Information

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Repository Local History & Genealogy Division

Creator Rochester Community Players (Rochester, N.Y.).

Title Rochester Community Players Records

Date [bulk] Bulk, 1924-1987

Date [inclusive] 1923-1996

Extent 10.76 Cubic feet (10 boxes, 2 oversize boxes)

Language English

Abstract The Rochester Community Players (RCP) collection represents the records

of the oldest community theatre in New York State and one of the oldest continuously operated theater organizations in the United States. The collection includes almost nine cubic feet of photographs, negatives, and playbills from the majority of plays performed from 1925 to 1997, in addition to legal papers, reports, relocation proposals, printed material

including history, awards, schedules, newsletters, and drawings.

Citation

Rochester Community Players Records, Local History & Genealogy Division, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County N.Y.

Historical Note

The Rochester Community Players (RCP) collection represents the records of the oldest community theatre in New York State and one of the oldest continuously operated theater organizations in the United States. Founded in 1923 (and incorporated in 1924) with the purpose of providing an opportunity for the community to participate in all areas of the theatre arts, its first production, Wedding Bells, by playwright Salisbury Fields, opened January 19, 1925, at the Gregory Street Playhouse (the present-day German House in Rochester).

In 1926, the Players purchased their permanent theatre, the Community Playhouse located at 820 South Clinton Avenue in Rochester. Originally built in 1890 as the Pinnacle Baptist church, it was later converted into a machine shop before becoming a theatre. Captain Applejack was the first play presented at the Playhouse in November 1926. However, the search for a new theatre location was undertaken to make way for a projected new expressway. Theatre leaders investigated the possibility of adapting other church buildings and movie theatres as well as constructing a new theatre; however, these plans failed due to financial problems. Approximately 500 productions were staged at the Playhouse before the deteriorating building was sold in 1984. For a short period before it was finally sold, performances were held at the Harley School and Monroe Community College. From 1984 to 1992, RCP staged its productions at the Holiday Inn Downtown (currently known as the Radisson Hotel) at 120 East Main Street. Since that time, it has operated out of various temporary locations.

The first full-time professional director was Robert Stevens of New York City, who was hired in 1925 and served as director until his retirement in 1953. Harriet and George Warren were hired from the Jamestown Little Theatre to succeed him. George Warren acted as business manager and Harriet as artistic director until George died in 1972 and Hattie retired in 1973. Various full- and part-time managers operated the theatre until 1998. Since 1998, it has been managed entirely by volunteers.

In 1929, Studio C was begun as a community outreach program that presented plays that explored social issues. The children's theatre (later called Playhouse Junior) staged their first production in February 1933 and continued to operate for the next 37 years. Playhouse Junior was a precursor of the Brenda Fraser yoUTHeatre program, a summer series providing high school students with the opportunity to develop their theatre arts skills through acting and directing. The yoUTHeatre program received the New York State Council on the Arts Award in 1969. Another program was the MAD Troupers (Mature Adult Drama). During the Sixties, RCP produced the first non-professional productions of Gore Vidal's The Best Man and Robert Anderson's The Days Between.

The RCP produced a regular season of five subscription plays, a Rotary production, Playhouse Junior plays, yoUTHeatre summer productions, and classes.

Many well-known actors received their start in RCP productions, including Foster Brooks, Mimi Kennedy, Robert Forster, and Jerry Vogel.

Today, the RCP is the home organization for the Shakespeare Players of Rochester, the Irish Players of Rochester, and the regular RCP productions.

Scope and Content

The Rochester Community Players (RCP) collection includes almost nine cubic feet of photographs, negatives, and playbills from the majority of plays performed from 1925 to 1997. It also includes one cubic foot of board minutes dating from 1923 to 1986. One cubic foot of other records from 1923 to 1996 include legal papers, reports, relocation proposals, printed material including history, awards, schedules, newsletters, and drawings.

Arrangement

The collection has been divided into six series: Series 1: Legal records, 1890-1980 (bulk 1924-1971); Series 2: Reports, 1924-1981; Series 3: Printed material, 1926-1996; Series 4: Minutes, 1925-1987; Series 5: Graphic material, 1925-1996.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Local History & Genealogy Division

Access

There are no known restrictions on the use of this collection.

Use

Permission to publish, reproduce, distribute, or use in any current or future manifestations must be obtained in writing from the Rochester Public Library Local History & Genealogy Division.

Custodial History

It is unknown when the collection was donated to the Rochester Public Library; however, because some files in the collection date to 1997, it is likely that the donation occurred after that date.

Processing Information

Processed by Mary Jo Gigliotti. This project was made possible in part by a grant from the Documentary Heritage Program of the New York State Archives, a program of the State Education Department.

Related Materials

Related Material

The Rochester Public Library's Local History & Genealogy Division holds additional material about the Rochester Community Players' history.

RVF Rochester–Authors–Atwood, M. V. and Croughton, Amy H. "Grace in Thine Eyes." Scrapbooks of clippings of a serial short story and its enactment by the Rochester Community Players for the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, 1935.

RVF2 Theater Groups—Rochester Community Players

RVF1 Drama—Amateur—Community Players

Rr792.0974 R676d Rochester Community Players. Directory. 1953-1960.

Rr792.0974R676p Rochester Community Players. Programs. 1924-1972.

Rrq792.0974 R676r Rochester Community Players. Scrapbooks. 1923-1984.

Rrq 792.0974 y83y Rochester Community Players. yoUTHeatre Scrapbooks. 1969-1971.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Community theater -- New York (State) -- Rochester
- Rochester Community Players -- yoUTHeatre
- Theater -- New York (State) -- Rochester
- Theater -- New York (State) -- Rochester -- History -- 20th century
- Theaters -- New York (State) -- Rochester

Collection Inventory

Legal records 1890-1980, bulk 1924-1971 (Bulk, 1924-1971)		
	Box	Folder
Certificate of incorporation 1924-1969	1	1
Constitution and by-laws 1924-1971	1	2
Constitution and by-laws (drafts) 1940	1	3
Deeds 1926-1966	1	4
Mortgages 1890-1926	1	5
Bonds 1926-1947	1	6
Internal Revenue Service tax exemptions 1951-1980	1	7
New York Department of Labor unemployment insurance decisions 1955-1956	1	8
Reports 1924-1981		
	Box	Folder

Directory (boards, staff, productions) 1924-1937	1	9
Directory (boards, staff, productions) 1938-1946	1	10
Directory (boards, staff, productions) 1947-1960		
	Box	Folder
Directory (boards, staff, productions) 1947-1960	1	11
Box office reports 1926-1954	1	12
Relocation proposals 1960-1980	1	13
Nelson Associates future locations report November 1967	1	14
Feasibility study February 1972	1	15
Capital fund drive for move to the Harley School 1976	1	16
Handler/Grosso construction specifications for 836 South Clinton Avenue 1981	1	17
Printed material 1926-1996		
	Box	Folder
History and purpose 1926-1982	1	18

Awards 1974-1996	1	19
Newsletters 1941, 1977-1993, bulk 1977-1987	1	20
Season schedules 1972/1973-1995/1996	1	21
Minutes 1925-1987		
	Box	Folder
Board minutes May 1925-April 1933	2	1
Board minutes May 1933-April 1940	2	2
Board minutes May 1941-May 1948	2	3
Board minutes June 1948-May 1953	2	4
Board minutes January 1956-December 1958	2	6
	Box	Folder
Board minutes June 1953-December 1955	2	5
Board minutes January 1959-December 1961	2	7
Board minutes January 1962-December 1964	2	8
Board minutes January 1965-December 1969	2	9

Board minutes January 1970-December 1972	2	10
Board minutes January 1973-December 1976	2	11
Board minutes January 1977-December 1979	2	12
Board minutes January 1980-December 1981	2	13
Board minutes January 1982-December 1984	2	14
Board minutes January 1985-January 12, 1987	2	15
Long Range Planning Committee minutes 1977-1978	2	16
Graphic materials 1925-1996		
	Box	Folder
Abie's Irish Rose (1943)	3	1
Absurd Person Singular (1978)	3	2
Adam and Eva (1942)	3	3
Aesop's Falables (1973)	3	4
	3	5

Ah, Wilderness (1963)	3	6
Aladdin (1941)	3	7
Aladdin (1970)	3	8
Alice in Wonderland (1930)	3	9
All About Eve (1966-1967)	3	10
All for Mary (1958)	3	11
All the Comforts of Home (1942)	3	12
All the Way Home (1984)	3	13
The Amorous Flea (1969)	3	14
Amphitryon 38 (1966-1967)	3	15
Andersonville Trial (1970)	3	16
Angel Street (1953)	3	17
Anna Christie (1974-1975)	3	18
Antigone (1962)	3	19

Anything Goes (1981)	3	20
Apple of his Eye (1947-1948)	3	21
Arsenic and Old Lace (1943)	3	22
Arsenic and Old Lace (1994)	3	23
As You Like It (1959)	3	24
Auntie Mame (1960)	3	25
Auntie Mame (1977)	3	26
Baby (1994)	3	27
The Bad Children (1971)	3	28
Barefoot in the Park (1967)	3	29
The Barretts of Wimpole Street (1955)	3	30
The Bat (1941)	3	31
The Bear and The Marriage Proposal (1995)	3	32
The Bedroom Farce (1987)	3	33

A Bell for Adano (1945)	3	34
Best of Friends (1988)	3	35
Belevedere (1949)	3	36
Best Man (1962)	3	37
Big Hearted Herbert (1935)	3	38
Best of Friends (1988)	3	39
The Bishop Misbehaves (1955)	3	40
Black Comedy (1969-1970)	3	41
Blazen (1932)	3	42
Blithe Spirit (1945)	3	43
Blithe Spirit (1959)	3	44
Born Yesterday (1952)	3	45
The Boyfriend (1961)	3	46
Breaking Legs (1995)	3	47

Broken Dishes (1950)	3	48
Brown Pelican (1973)	3	49
Bus Stop (1957)	3	50
Bus Stop (1982-1983)	3	51
But Not Goodbye (1944)	3	52
Butterflies Are Free (1974)	3	53
Cabaret (1989)	4	1
Cactus Flower (1970-1971)	4	2
Calculated Risk (1964-1965)	4	3
Call Him Louder (1963)	4	4
Candlelight (1940)	4	5
Canterbury Tales (1971)	4	6
Captain's Paradise (1962)	4	7
Carnival (1973)	4	8

Case of Libel (1966)	4	9
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1976-1977)	4	10
The Cave Dwellers (1981)	4	11
The Celebration and Watch It Gridley! (1988)	4	12
Celebration (1970)	4	13
Chapter Two (1981)	4	14
Charlie's Aunt (1943)	4	15
Charlie's Aunt (1977)	4	16
The Child Buyer (1983)	4	17
Christmas Carol (1972)	4	18
Cinderella (1967)	4	19
Claudia (1942)	4	20
A Clearing in the Woods (1972)	4	21
Come Back, Little Sheba (1961)	4	22

Counselor-at-Law (1959-1960) 4 24 The Country Girl (1954) 4 25 Cradle Song (1931) 4 26 Critic's Choice (1964) 4 27 Cuckoos on the Hearth (1942) 4 28 Cyrano de Bergerac (1957) 4 29 Dames at Sea (1972) 4 30 Darm Yankees (1974) 4 31 Dark of the Moon (1956) 4 32 Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966) 4 36	Come Blow your Horn (1963)	4	23
The Country Girl (1954) 4 26 Cradle Song (1931) 4 27 Critic's Choice (1964) 4 28 Cuckoos on the Hearth (1942) 4 29 Dames at Sea (1972) 4 30 Damn Yankees (1974) 4 31 Dark of the Moon (1956) 4 32 Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966) 4 35	Counselor-at-Law (1959-1960)	4	24
Cradle Song (1931) 4 27 Cuckoos on the Hearth (1942) 4 28 Cyrano de Bergerac (1957) 4 29 Dames at Sea (1972) 4 30 Damn Yankees (1974) 4 31 Dark of the Moon (1956) 4 32 Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966) 4 35	The Country Girl (1954)	4	25
Critic's Choice (1964) Cuckoos on the Hearth (1942) Cyrano de Bergerac (1957) Dames at Sea (1972) Damn Yankees (1974) Dark of the Moon (1956) A Date with Judy (1948) The Days Between (1966) 4 28 29 4 30 4 31 4 31 4 32 4 32 5 4 33 4 33 4 34 The Days Between (1966)	Cradle Song (1931)	4	26
Cuckoos on the Hearth (1942) Cyrano de Bergerac (1957) Dames at Sea (1972) Damn Yankees (1974) Dark of the Moon (1956) Dark of the Moon (1962) A Date with Judy (1948) The Days Between (1966) 4 29 4 30 4 31 4 32 4 32 4 33 4 34 The Days Between (1966)	Critic's Choice (1964)	4	27
Cyrano de Bergerac (1957) 4 30 Dames at Sea (1972) 4 31 Damn Yankees (1974) 4 32 Dark of the Moon (1956) 4 33 Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966) 4 35	Cuckoos on the Hearth (1942)	4	28
Dames at Sea (1972) 4 31 Damn Yankees (1974) 4 32 Dark of the Moon (1956) 4 33 Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966) 4 35	Cyrano de Bergerac (1957)	4	29
Damn Yankees (1974) Dark of the Moon (1956) Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966)	Dames at Sea (1972)	4	30
Dark of the Moon (1956) Dark of the Moon (1962) 4 33 A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966)	Damn Yankees (1974)	4	31
Dark of the Moon (1962) A Date with Judy (1948) 4 34 The Days Between (1966) 4 35	Dark of the Moon (1956)	4	32
A Date with Judy (1948) The Days Between (1966) 4 35	Dark of the Moon (1962)	4	33
The Days Between (1966)	A Date with Judy (1948)	4	34
1 36	The Days Between (1966)	4	35
The Dead Sister's Secret (1937)	The Dead Sister's Secret (1937)	4	36

The Deadly Game (1962)	4	37
Dear Me, the Sky is Falling (1965)	4	38
Dear Ruth (1947)	4	39
Deathtrap (1986)	4	40
A Delicate Balance (1969)	4	41
Desire Under the Elms (1973)	4	42
The Desk Set (1957-1958)	4	43
Desperate Hours (1956)	4	44
Detective Story (1954)	4	45
The Devil's Disciple (1961)	4	46
Dial M for Murder (1980)	4	47
Don't Drink the Water (1970-1971)	4	48
Don't Start Without Me (1978)	4	49
Dracula (1972)	4	50

The Drunkard (1986-1988)	4	51
Emperor's Clothes (1975-1976)	5	1
Equus (1987)	5	2
Everybody Loves Opal (1964)	5	3
Excursion (1937)	5	4
Expressing Willie (1925)	5	5
Father Malachy's Miracle (1938)	5	6
Father of the Bride (1951)	5	7
Fifth Season (1962)	5	8
Finishing Touches (1975-1976)	5	9
First Year (1943)	5	10
A Flea in Her Ear	5	11
Flight to the West (1941)	5	12
The Flying Gerardos (1953-1954)	5	13

The Fourposter (1962-1983) 5 15 A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1970) 5 16 A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1978) 5 17 The Gazebo (1960) 5 18 George M (1970) 5 19 George Washington Slept Here (1941) 5 20 The Gift (1964) 5 21
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1970) A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1978) 5 17 The Gazebo (1960) 5 18 George M (1970) 5 20 George Washington Slept Here (1941)
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1978) The Gazebo (1960) 5 18 George M (1970) 5 19 George Washington Slept Here (1941) 5 20
The Gazebo (1960) George M (1970) 5 19 George Washington Slept Here (1941) 5 20
George M (1970) 5 20 George Washington Slept Here (1941)
George Washington Slept Here (1941) 5 21
The Gift (1964) 5 21
Gingerbread Boy (1975-1976) 5 22
The Gingerbread Lady (1990) 5 23
Goldilocks (1959) 5 24
Goodbye My Fancy (1951) 5 25
Gramercy Ghost (1951) 5 26
Grand National Night (1952) 5 27

Great Cross Country Race (1970)	5	28
The Great Sebastians (1958)	5	29
The Guardsman (1940)	5	30
Guest in the House (1943)	5	31
Guys and Dolls (1958)	5	32
Hadrian VII (1974)	5	33
Hair of the Dog (1964)	5	34
Halfway Up the Tree (1972)	5	35
Hamlet (1965)	5	36
Hansel and Gretel (1968)	5	37
Happiest Millionaire (1959)	5	38
Happy Birthday (1955)	5	39
The Happy Time (1976)	5	40
Harvey (1951)	5	41

Harvey (1963)	5	42
The Hasty Heart (1946-1947)	5	43
Heaven Can Wait (1942)	5	44
Heidi (1969)	5	45
An Heir of Virtue (1962)	5	46
The Heiress (1950)	5	47
High Spirits (1982-1983)	5	48
Hope for the Best (1948)	5	49
A Hotline to Heaven (1983)	5	50
How the Other Half Loves (1973)	5	51
How the Other Half Loves (1985)	5	52
How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying (1987)	5	53
I Do, I Do (1980)	6	1
I Do, I Do (1992)	6	2

I Killed the Count (1940)	6	3
I Like it Here (1947)	6	4
I Remember Mama (1947)	6	5
Ice Bound (1927)	6	6
Ice Wolf (1975)	6	7
Idiot's Delight (1939)	6	8
Indian Captive: The Story of Mary Jemison (1972)	6	9
An Inspector Calls (1948)	6	10
It Pays to Advertise (1949)	6	11
Ivory Tower (1967)	6	12
Jack and the Beanstalk (1954)	6	13
Jack and the Beanstalk (1968)	6	14
Jake's Women (1996)	6	15
Jane Clegg (1928)	6	16

Janie (1944)	6	17
Jennie Kissed Me (1965)	6	18
Joan of Lorraine (1947)	6	19
John Loves Mary (1949)	6	20
Junior Miss (1944)	6	21
Kick In (1926)	6	22
Kind Lady (1955)	6	23
The King and I (1978)	6	24
Kiss and Tell (1945)	6	25
Kiss Me Kate (1980)	6	26
Ladies in Retirement (1944)	6	27
Ladies in Retirement (1982)	6	28
Lady Has a Heart (1939)	6	29
Lady in the Dark (1961)	6	30

Lady on the Rocks (1968)	6	31
The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia (1979)	6	32
Last of the Red Hot Lovers (1974)	6	33
Last of the Red Hot Lovers (1986)	6	34
The Last Sweet Days of Isaac (1972)	6	35
The Late George Apley (1946)	6	36
Libel (1936)	6	37
Life with Father (1948)	6	38
Life with Father (1977)	6	39
Life with Mother (1950)	6	40
Light up the Sky (1950)	6	41
Lion in Winter (1969)	6	42
Lips Together Teeth Apart (1994)	6	43
Little Foxes (1975-1976)	6	44

Little Me (1969)	6	45
Little Old New York (1932)	6	46
Little Princess (1969)	6	47
Little Red Riding Hood (1974-1975)	6	48
Love Letters (1993)	6	49
Lovers and Other Strangers (1985)	6	50
The Mad Show (1975)	7	1
A Majority of One (1963)	7	2
Make Mine Mink (1965)	7	3
The Male Animal (1941)	7	4
The Man Who Came to Dinner (1949)	7	5
The Man Who Came to Dinner (1968)	7	6
Margin for Error (1941)	7	7
The Marriage-Go-Round (1961)	7	8

Mary Jane Ain't the Same (1972)	7	9
Mary, Mary (1966)	7	10
Mary the Third (1930)	7	11
Membership drive/campaign opening (1972)	7	12
Men in White (1970-1971)	7	13
Minick (1942)	7	14
Mornings at Seven (1959-1960)	7	15
Mozart (1968)	7	16
Mr. and Mrs. North (1942)	7	17
Mr. Roberts (1961)	7	18
The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 (1990)	7	19
My China Doll (1940)	7	20
My Fair Lady (1979)	7	21
My Friend the Fox (1965)	7	22

My Sister Eileen (1943)	7	23
My Sister Eileen (1946)	7	24
The Nerd (1988)	7	25
The Nervous Wreck (1932)	7	26
Never Too Late (1965)	7	27
The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail (1971)	7	28
Night Watch (1974-1975)	7	29
No Sex Please, We're British (1980)	7	30
Not Now Darling (1977)	7	31
Nuts (1989)	7	32
The Odd Couple (1968)	7	33
The Odd Couple (1988)	7	34
Of Mice and Men (1969)	7	35
Oh Dad (1964-1965)	7	36

The Old Lady Shows Her Medals and The Twelve-Pound Look (1964)	7	37
Oliver (1976-1977)	7	38
Once Upon a Mattress (1971)	7	39
Once Upon a Mattress (1978)	7	40
Once Upon a Mattress (1978)	7	41
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1971)	7	42
Our Town (1939)	7	43
Our Town (1975)	7	44
Over Twenty-One (1945)	7	45
Pals First (1927)	7	46
Papa is All (1943)	7	47
Papa is All (1956)	7	48
The Patsy (1932)	7	49
People's Festival – Arts Day (1972)	7	50

Peter Pan (1969)	7	51
The Petrified Forest (1975)	8	1
Philadelphia Here I Come! (1969)	8	2
Pied Piper (1972)	8	3
Pinocchio (1951)	8	4
Pippin (1986)	8	5
Playhouse photographs	8	6
Point of No Return (1954)	8	7
Power and the Glory (1972)	8	8
Present Laughter (1969)	8	9
Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1970-1971)	8	10
The Prince and the Pauper (1973)	8	11
The Princess and the Goblin (1956)	8	12
Private Lives (1956)	8	13

Pure as the Driven Snow (1940)	8	14
Racketty-Packetty House (1966)	8	15
The Rainmaker (1955)	8	16
The Rainmaker (July 1974)	8	17
The Rainmaker (October 1974)	8	18
Ramshackle Inn (1946)	8	19
Rapunzel (1974)	8	20
Rashomon (1985)	8	21
Ready Money (1948)	8	22
Reclining Figure (1957)	8	23
Red Shoes (1968)	8	24
Relatively Speaking (1981)	8	25
Remains to be Seen (1953)	8	26
The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker (1956)	8	27

The Right Honorable Gentleman (1971) 8 29 The Rimers of Eldritch (1972) 8 30 Ring Around Elizabeth (1946) 8 31 The Robber Bridegroom (1988) 8 32 Romantic Comedy (1986) 8 33 Room Service (1953) 8 34 Room Service (1972) 8 35 Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) 8 37 The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993) 8 40 Rumpelstiltskin (1940) 8 41	The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker (1969)	8	28
The Rimers of Eldritch (1972) 8 31 The Robber Bridegroom (1988) 8 32 Romantic Comedy (1986) 8 33 Room Service (1953) 8 34 Room Service (1972) 8 35 Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) 8 37 The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993) 8 40	The Right Honorable Gentleman (1971)	8	29
Ring Around Elizabeth (1946) 8 32 The Robber Bridegroom (1988) 8 33 Room Service (1953) 8 34 Room Service (1972) 8 35 Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) 8 37 The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993) 8 40	The Rimers of Eldritch (1972)	8	30
The Robber Bridegroom (1988) 8 33 Room Service (1953) 8 34 Room Service (1972) 8 35 Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) 8 37 The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993) 8 40	Ring Around Elizabeth (1946)	8	31
Romantic Comedy (1986) Room Service (1953) Room Service (1972) 8 35 Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) Rumors (1993) 8 41	The Robber Bridegroom (1988)	8	32
Room Service (1953) Room Service (1972) 8 35 Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) 8 37 The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 40 Rumors (1993)	Romantic Comedy (1986)	8	33
Room Service (1972) Room Service (1977) 8 36 The Rope Dancers (1974) 8 37 The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) Rumors (1993) 8 40	Room Service (1953)	8	34
The Rope Dancers (1974) The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993)	Room Service (1972)	8	35
The Rope Dancers (1974) The Rope Dancers (1988) 8 38 The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993) 8 40	Room Service (1977)	8	36
The Rope Dancers (1988) The Royal Family (1973) 8 39 Rumors (1993) 8 40	The Rope Dancers (1974)	8	37
The Royal Family (1973) 8 40 8 41	The Rope Dancers (1988)	8	38
Rumors (1993)	The Royal Family (1973)	8	39
Rumpelstiltskin (1940) 8 41	Rumors (1993)	8	40
	Rumpelstiltskin (1940)	8	41

Rumpelstiltskin (1967)	8	42
Rumpelstiltskin (1978)	8	43
Sea Marks (1986)	8	44
The Secret Affairs of Mildred Wild (1979)	8	45
The Secretary Bird (1975-1976)	8	46
See How They Run (1949)	8	47
See Naples and Die (1951)	8	48
Send Me No Flowers (1966)	8	49
Separate Tables (1972)	8	50
The Serpent (1972)	8	51
Seven Keys to Baldpate (1973-1974)	8	52
1776 (1995)	8	53
The Shadow Box (1990)	9	1
The Shannons of Broadway (1932)	9	2

Sheep on the Runway (1971)	9	3
Sherlock Holmes – A New Adventure (1976-1977)	9	4
A Shot in the Dark (1971)	9	5
Sibley's Salute to the Arts (1968)	9	6
Side by Side by Sondheim (1992-1993)	9	7
The Silver Whistle (1950)	9	8
Simple Simon (1958)	9	9
6 Rms Riv Vu (1975)	9	10
Sixteen in August (1942)	9	11
Skidding (1931)	9	12
Skylark (1941)	9	13
Sleeping Beauty (1995)	9	14
Sly Fox (1979-1980)	9	15
Smilin' Through (1927)	9	16

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1957)	9	17
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1967)	9	18
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1974)	9	19
Soldier's Wife (1946)	9	20
Solid Gold Cadillac (1956-1957)	9	21
Solid Gold Cadillac (1982)	9	22
Some Enchanted Evening (1994)	9	23
The Spider (1945)	9	24
Spider's Web (1960)	9	25
Spoon River Anthology (1984)	9	26
Spring Again (1944)	9	27
Staff and volunteer photographs	9	28
Stage Door (1954)	9	29
Star-Spangled Girl (1969-1970) (1969-1970)	9	30

The Star Wagon (1939)	9	31
State of the Union (1948)	9	32
Status Quo Vadis (1979)	9	33
Steel Magnolias (1992)	9	34
Stop the World, I Want to Get Off (1971)	9	35
Streetcar Named Desire (1970)	9	36
Studio C productions (ca. 1972-1974)	9	37
Studio C script: Eye of the Hurricane (1969)	9	38
The Subject Was Roses (1967-1968)	9	39
Summertree (1968)	9	40
Sunday in New York (1967)	9	41
Sunday in New York (1972)	9	42
Sunrise at Campobello (1965)	9	43
The Sunshine Boys (1975)	9	44

The Sunshine Boys (1991)	9	45
Susan and God (1939)	9	46
Take Her She's Mine (1963)	9	47
Taming of the Shrew (1964)	9	48
Tartuffe (1966)	9	49
Tarzan (1971)	9	50
Teahouse of the August Moon (1962)	10	1
Ten Little Indians (1946-1947)	10	2
That Championship Season (1982)	10	3
The Thirteenth Chair (1949)	10	4
A Thousand Clowns (1967)	10	5
The Three Bears (1964)	10	6
The Three Bears (1965)	10	7
Three For the Show (1958)	10	8

Three Little Pigs (1966)	10	9
Three Men on a Horse (1951)	10	10
Three Men on a Horse (1962)	10	11
Three's a Family (1945)	10	12
Time Out for Ginger (1955)	10	13
Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt (1965)	10	14
Tonight at 8:30 – Ways and Means, Still Life, Family Album (1939)	10	15
Tonight at 8:30 – Ways and Means, Hands Across the Sea, We Were Dancing (1973)	10	16
Too Many Husbands (1954)	10	17
Tovarich (1938)	10	18
Towards Zero (1991)	10	19
Toys in the Attic (1983)	10	20
Trap for a Lonely Man (1966)	10	21

Twelfth Night (1936)	10	22
Two Blind Mice (1950)	10	23
Two on an Island (1940)	10	24
Uncle Harry (1944)	10	25
Under the Gaslights (1934-1935)	10	26
Unidentified photographs	10	27
Unsinkable Molly Brown (1979)	10	28
Veronica's Room (1981)	10	29
Village Green (1945)	10	30
The Visit (1963)	10	31
Visit to a Small Planet (1958-1959)	10	32
A Voice in the Dark (1930)	10	33
Wait Until Dark (1990)	10	34
West Side Story (1976)	10	35

What a Life (1951)	10	36
When We are Married (1941)	10	37
The White Steed (1940)	10	38
Who Was the Lady I Saw You With (1959-1960)	10	39
Whodunnit (1985)	10	40
The Whole Town is Talking (1927)	10	41
Whose Life Is it Anyway (1986)	10	42
Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter (1957)	10	43
The Winslow Boy (1949)	10	44
Wish I had a Nickel (1967-1968)	10	45
Witness for the Prosecution (1957)	10	46
Wizard of Oz (1962)	10	47
Wizard of Oz (1964)	10	48
The World Goes Round (1995-1996)	10	49

Write Me a Murder (1962)	10	50
Years Ago (1947)	10	51
You Can't Take It With You (1944)	10	52
You Can't Take It With You (1973)	10	53
Young April (1941)	10	54
You're a Good Man Charlie Brown (1974)	10	55
Set designs by Tom Vawter [Lovers and Other Strangers] (1985)	OS-RCP1	1
Little Me (1969)	OS-RCP1	2
Little Me (1969)	OS-RCP1	3
Relocation proposal drawings (1980)	OS-RCP1	4
Identified photographs (1927-1971)	OS-RCP2	1
The Playhouse	OS-RCP2	2
Staff and volunteer photograph	OS-RCP2	3
Unidentified photographs	OS-RCP2	4