

**PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Rhode Island Collection**  
**002-02-02**  
**Rhode Island Theatre Collection**  
**1855-2006**

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Number: 002-02-02

Title: Rhode Island Theatre Collection

Creator: Unknown

Dates: 1855-2006

Quantity: 13 boxes (5.8 linear feet)

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Acquisition: Unknown.

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: The custody of the majority of the collection is unknown. Collection of a portion of the Albee Theatre materials is attributed to G. Burns.

Processed by: Processed by Jessica Lemieux and Kate Wells, 2013.

Conservation: None.

Language: Materials are in English.

**RIGHTS AND ACCESS**

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Rhode Island Collection department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format: *[item number], [item title], Rhode Island Theatre Collection, Rhode Island Collection, Providence Public Library*

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**INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS**

Separated material None

Published descriptions	Not applicable.
Location of originals	Not applicable.
Location of copies	Not applicable.
Publication note	Not applicable.
Subject headings	Theatres – Rhode Island. Performing arts – Rhode Island. Concert programs. Opera programs. Theatre programs.

**SEE ALSO**

Not applicable.

**HISTORICAL NOTE**

The first dramatic performance in Rhode Island was performed in Newport in 1761 by a comedic troupe lead by David Douglass. However, after a single performance by the company in Providence in 1762, the colony passed legislation making the staging of plays illegal – a law which applied until the 1790s. The popular era of theatre began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was not until the 1870s that Rhode Island, specifically Providence, experienced a truly robust theatre scene. The heyday of Providence theatre, from the 1870s to 1940s, mirrored the popularity of theatre nationally. Providence became the center for performances and was home to a large number of theatres, music halls and theatre companies showing plays, musicals, vaudeville, burlesque and music concerts. While a number of venues closed in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or were repurposed as movie theaters, Rhode Island has maintained a thriving and popular theatre and performance community.

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

The Rhode Island Theatre Collection contains handbill, performance programs, newspapers clippings, and personal notes related to theatres and theatre companies in Rhode Island from 1855-2006. It includes materials from theatres and performance venues from across Rhode Island, but predominantly in Providence. Many well known theatres such as the Providence Opera House, Metropolitan Theatre, Modern Theatre, Providence Performing Art Center and Trinity Repertory Company are represented.

The largest portion of the collection includes materials from Trinity Repertory Company in Providence and includes performance programs, materials associated with their Humanities programs, clippings and ephemera. The remainder of the collection holds programs and corresponding newspaper clippings, photographs and notes from theatres and musical performances throughout Rhode Island.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION**

The Rhode Island Theatre Collection is arranged into three Series. Series 1 is Trinity Repertory Company materials and includes programs, ephemera and Humanities program materials. All material is arranged chronologically. Series 2 includes all other theatres and includes programs, clippings, handbills, photographs and notes. Materials are organized alphabetically by theatre/theatre company and then chronologically. Series 3 is a collection of programs from RI musical performances. These are arranged alphabetically by organization or performance hall.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION****DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION****Series 1: Trinity Repertoire Company**

This series includes programs from 1965-2006, miscellaneous ephemera, materials from the Trinity Humanities Program, 1980-1991 and Project Discovery folders 1966-1981.

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Theatre programs, 1975-1977	1	5
Theatre programs, 1977-1978	1	6
Theatre programs, 1978-1979	1	7
Theatre programs, 1979	2	8
Theatre programs, 1980	2	9
Theatre programs, 1980-1981	2	10
Theatre programs, 1981-1982	2	11
Theatre programs, 1982	2	12
Theatre programs, 1983	2	13
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Project Discovery, 1966-1968	6	40-59
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## Series 2: Theatres

This series includes programs, handbills, photographs, newspaper clippings, and notes from theatres throughout Rhode Island. Items are first arranged alphabetically by theatre and secondly chronologically within each theatre's material.

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Forbes Theatre handbills, 1855-1856	13	147
H-Ice programs, 1929-2000 (Gamm Theatre, Girl's City Club of Providence, Hummock's Circle Theatre, Hyde Dramatic Club, Ice Follies)	9	113
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Junior League, Keith's Theatre & Lederer Theatre, 1903-ca.1980	9	115
Low's Grand Opera House programs, 1879-1880	13	148
Metropolitan Theatre programs and clippings, 1934-1938	9	116
Metropolitan Theatre programs and clippings, 1938-1942	9	117
Metropolitan Theatre programs and clippings, 1943-1944	9	118
Metropolitan Theatre programs and clippings, 1945-1960	10	119
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P-S Theatres, 1881-1994 (Providence Public Library, Reform Club Hall, Rhode Island College, RISD, Roger Williams University, Sakonnet Golf Club, Swedish Workingmen's Hall, Script Players)	12	141
Schubert's Majestic Theatre programs, 1881-1947	12	142
Theatre Comique programs, 1875	13	155
S-W Theatres, 1877-1968 (San Souci Garden, St. Paul's, Talma Theatre, Theatre by-the-sea, Theatre Guild, Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, Victory Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, Warwick Musical Theatre)	12	143
Miscellaneous performances, 1870s-1948	12	144
Miscellaneous theatres (oversized), 1872-1905 (Dyer's Opera House – Olneyville, Harrington's Opera House, Imperial Theatre, Opinions of the Press on Maggie Mitchell, Rhode Island College)	13	156

### Series 3: Musical Performances

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