

Commedia Theater Company Records

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection number: B569, Accession #2005.501.0001-2005.501.0005

Collection repository: Hennepin History Museum
2303 Third Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Collection title: Commedia Records

Dates: 1975-1991

Extent: 4.56 linear ft. (1 record storage carton, 1 legal document box, 1 oversize flat box, 2 rolled poster boxes)

Creator: Commedia Theater Company

Language of the Material: English

Processed by: Jennie Walker Knoot, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Commedia Theater Company was a professional, improvisational touring theater from 1975 until the early-1990s. It specialized in outdoor park performances and toured across 7 states within the Midwest and Canada. Former members of Shakespeare in the Streets Company created Commedia after their original company disbanded in 1974. The company produced and performed classic and original improvisational comedies, theater in the parks and dinner theater and provided workshops and educational services. Commedia's approach to theater emphasized the relationship between actor and audience; plays were performed without a stage or microphones and actors spoke directly to the audience.

Commedia offered a regional residency program in which the troupe would be engaged by a sponsor and based in a city central to the region being served. During the period of the residency, the actors would travel within a 50-mile radius to various communities and schools in order to provide performances and educational services.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The material in this collection was donated by Rudd Rayfield, who served as actor, scenario director, and services coordinator for the Commedia Theater Company. The collection includes administrative materials including

- a. background information on the organization,
- b. agendas and meeting minutes,
- c. funding information,
- d. resumes, headshots, and audition notes of many Commedia actors.

In addition, the collection includes performance and marketing materials such as original performance posters, master layouts and final versions of brochures, performance programs, posters, and newspaper clippings. It contains many photographs of performances and Commedia members, materials related to several regional residencies, policies and best practices, and press kits.

The collection is arranged in 3 series with no sub-series. The series includes:

- Series 1: Administrative Information
- Series 2: Performance & Marketing Materials
- Series 3: Photographs

ACCESS

The collection is open for researchers and has no restrictions.

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ACQUISITION

Material in this collection was donated by Rudd Rayfield, actor, scenario director, and services coordinator for the Commedia Theater Company.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

Series 1: Administrative Information

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	1	Background information, 1977-1983
1	2	Major portfolio, master layout and office copy, 1980
1	3	Children's programming, undated
1	4	Courses and workshop offerings, 1978-1983
1	5	Sponsor information, 1979-1988
1	6	Sponsor support program, 1980-1981
1	7	Correspondence, outgoing, 1976-1985
1	24	Agendas and meeting minutes, 1981
1	25	Correspondence, 1976-1980
1	26	Audience response forms, undated
1	27	Resumes and auditions, 1976-1981
1	28	Resumes and auditions, 1976, undated
1	34	Policies and best practices, Arts Publicity Guide, undated
1	35	Policies and best practices, artistic policy, 1978

1	36	Policies and best practices, planning a Commedia visit, undated
1	37	Policies and best practices, job description manual, undated
1	38	Policies and best practices, bylaws, 1980
1	39	Policies and best practices, booking calls guide, undated
1	40	Policies and best practices, guide to publicity, undated
1	41	1982 company, 1982
1	42	Board of Directors, agendas and meeting minutes, 1980
1	43	Board of Directors, agendas and meeting minutes, 1981-1982
1	44	Board of Directors, correspondence, 1980-1982
1	45	Board of Directors, policy, guidelines, and bylaws, undated
1	46	Board of Directors, financials and budgets, 1975-1982
1	47	Stationery, 1975-1977
1	48	Funding, Bremer Foundation, 1980-1982
1	49	Funding, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, 1979-1982
1	50	Funding, MN Alliance for Education, 1978-1981
1	51	Ledger, 1987
1	52	Marketing plans and booking log, 1980-1981
1	53	Press releases, 1976-1988
1	54	Public relations, marketing and office master layouts, 1980-1982
1	55	Publicity, public relations kit, 1976
1	56	Publicity, public relations kit, 1977
1	57	Publicity, public relations kit, 1978
1	58	Publicity, contracts, undated
1	59	Publicity, public relations kit, 1980
1	60	Publicity, newspaper clippings, 1977-1978
1	61	Publicity, newspaper clippings, 1979-1988
1	62	Blank letters of agreement, undated
2	70	Handwritten notes, internal communications, undated

Series 2: Performance & Marketing Materials

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	8	Theater in the Parks, background, 1978
1	9	Theater in the Parks, contracts and policies, 1976-1979
1	10	Theater in the Parks, correspondence, 1976-1978
1	11	Theater in the Parks, proposal to Loring Park, 1977
1	12	Programs and brochures, Theater in the Parks
1	13	Programs and brochures, collaborations, 1979-1989
1	14	Programs and brochures, performances, 1976
1	15	Programs and brochures, performances, 1977-1987
1	16	Programs and brochures, Creating a Unique Regional Resource, undated
1	17	Programs and brochures, annual plays and services, 1978-1989
1	18	Programs and brochures, 1980 program layouts, 1980
1	19	Performances, Arts Alliance, 1975-1976

1	20	Performances, Renaissance Festival and Pioneer Fair, 1976
1	21	Performances, Mesabi Community College (includes photographs), 1978-1980
1	22	Performances, notes for the Taming of the Shrew, 1976
1	23	Performances, Zadig first draft music outline, undated
1	29	Regional residency master layout, undated
1	30	Regional residency, sponsor sheets and contracts, 1980
1	31	Regional residency pamphlets, 1980
1	32	Regional residency, 1990-1991 plans, 1990-1991
1	33	Regional residency, Illinois, 1980
2	71	Programs and brochures, drafts, 1975-1976
2	72	Programs and brochures, drafts, 1976-1988
2	73	Programs and brochures, drafts, undated
2	74	Regional residency, Grand Rapids, 1980
2	75	Performances, Ampleforth Sword Dance, 1975
3	X	Commedia '77, That Scoundrel Scapin Theater in the Parks poster, 1977
3	X	Commedia '77, Theater in the Parks poster, 1977
3	X	Oversized handwritten calendar chart, undated
3	76	Small clipping for creating posters, undated
3	77	Theater in the Parks poster, undated
3	78	Colored pencil sketches, undated
3	79	Performance calendars, 1977
3	80	Newspaper clippings, undated
3	81	Newspaper clippings, 1977-1985
3	82	Transparency sheets I, 1980
3	83	Transparency sheets II, 1976-1977
3	85	Posters, 1975-1981
3	86	Poster & brochure drafts, 1976-1979
3	87	Poster drafts, 1976-1978
4	X	Set decoration for play "The Servant of Two Masters," 1978
4	X	Set decorations for play "The Servant of Two Masters," - Roast Rump Room & Sweet Meat Suite, 1978
5	X	Set decorations for "The Servant of Two Masters" & "Brighella's Golden Goose Inn," 1978

Series 3: Photographs

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	63	Photographs, 1975-1976
2	64	Photographs, 1977
2	65	Photographs, 1978
2	66	Photographs, 1979

2	67	Photographs, 1980
2	68	Photographs, 1981
2	69	Photographs, ca. 1984
3	84	Oversized photographs of performances and headshots, 1987-1988



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