

Guthrie Theater Collection

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Creator	Guthrie Theater.
Title	Guthrie Theater Collection
Date	1959-2012
Extent	8.67 Linear feet
Language	English

History

The Guthrie Theater was started by the Irishman Sir Tyrone Guthrie who wanted to found a new theater in a community unexposed to professional theater, yet willing to support a company of its own. Many cities showed interest in the project, but it was Minneapolis that won them over. After significant funds were raised, ground broke on a site beside the Walker Arts Center, which was donated by the T.B. Walker Foundation. The theater, designed by architect Ralph Rapson, was complete by 1963. The space featured a 1,441 seat theater with a thrust stage, a seven sided asymmetrical platform raised three feet above the ground, which jutted into the audience, providing viewpoints from three sides. The Company presented its first offering, a highly controversial production of *Hamlet*, in May 1963.

Tyrone Guthrie served as artistic director from 1963 to 1965, at which point, his protégé, Douglas Campbell took over as artistic director of the Theater. When managing director Oliver Rea resigned in 1966, Peter Zeisler was left as the sole managing director. And when Campbell left only a year later, Zeisler hired two additional managing directors, leaving the company without an artistic director for three seasons. Mr. Guthrie would come a direct a play each year after he retired until his death in 1971.

In 1968, the Guthrie began presenting works on different stages, a tradition that has continued throughout the years. The first one took place in the spring of 1968 at the Crawford- Livingston Theater in St. Paul. In the late 1960s, the Guthrie decided it was time to expand. This provide the opportunity to add a set shop, rehearsal space, and administrative offices that were not there before because of the cut building costs for the original building. The Guthrie received one million dollars in the Walker/Guthrie fund drive, and when the remodeled theater opened in 1970, the two organizations shared an entrance and common lobby. In 1969, the theater began facing major financial problems. The original company had left and the funds from the Ford Company were gone, leaving the company with no plan in place to make up the losses.

Enter Michael Langham from Britain, the new artistic director who started in the midst of this finical crisis in 1971. Langham devised a plan and also instated some classic plays with new twists that the audience loved and through the 1970s the Guthrie prided itself in being debt free. Langham also improved the touring program, which expanded and grew all the way through the 1980s and provided extra income that the Guthrie needed. In 1972, the Guthrie received a grant from the Ford Foundation and this also helped secure its financial future. A second theater, the Guthrie 2, was started during this time, created to showcase aspiring new writers, directors, and actors. Guthrie 2 continued until 1978.

After Langham left in 1977, the board appointed the theater's first American artistic director, Alvin Epstein, in 1978. During his 18 month stay at the Guthrie, he introduced many new programs, ideas, and plays to the audience. He left in 1979. Liviu Ciulei was Epstein's successor in 1980, and Ciulei made many changes to the stage area itself. He modified the acting platform so the stage could be a different size and shape for each play if need be and he also opened up the backstage area to allow for greater depth. Ciulei was known for how he reinterpreted the classic plays of theater for new audiences.

In 1982 the Guthrie received a Tony Award for its outstanding contribution to the American theater. As the Guthrie got close to using up all of the Ford Foundation money, again, they came up with a plan to

strengthen their financial base by expanding the annual fundraising campaign. The amount of contributors grew from 3,000 in 1981 to 12,000 in 1986. After Ciulei resigned in 1985, the board decided that the new artistic director would also be C.E.O of the organization. After a worldwide search, Garland Wright was selected in 1986 to be the new artistic director. In 1987, the Board of Directors adopted a long range plan, and also launched a program of artistic development and the \$25 million Campaign for Artistic Excellence. The Plan has proven a reliable guide to the Guthrie's progress. Consistently high levels of productions, a resident acting company, and a loyal audience were the trademarks of this area in the Guthrie's history.

Wright also pushed for a second performance stage, which when created, was called the Laboratory, and which was primarily used to debut new plays and artists. Wright was also very active in getting school aged kids excited for plays. He encouraged them to attend and he also set up programs for high school students. In 1992, the Guthrie completed its 5 year Campaign for Artistic Excellence, receiving \$26,114,345 in pledges, which was a record for any American theater at that time. The following February, the Guthrie underwent much needed renovations, 3.5 million dollars' worth. Improvements included better acoustics, an expanded theater with more seats, a larger concessions stand, larger bathrooms, and many other renovations as well.

Wright announced his resignation in 1994 and his successor, Joe Dowling, renowned director from Ireland, was picked in 1995. As the Guthrie entered the new Millennium, it planned to open a new multi stage theater center on the banks of the Mississippi River. It would have 3 different stages, each focusing on a different type of theater. The building, designed by architect Jean Nouvel, was finished in 2006 and cost \$125 million. The three stages are the thrust stage, seating 1,100, a 700-seat proscenium stage, and a black-box studio with flexible seating. It also has a 178-foot cantilevered bridge (called the "Endless Bridge") which reaches out towards the Mississippi. The Guthrie Theater remains one of the preeminent theater companies nationally and internationally.

Artistic Directors: Tyrone Guthrie, 1963–1966 Douglas Campbell, 1966–1967 position not filled, 1968–1970 Michael Langham, 1971–1977 Alvin Epstein, 1978–1980 Liviu Ciulei, 1980–1985 Garland Wright, 1986–1995 Joe Dowling, 1995–present

Collection Description

The Guthrie Theater Collection consists of 10 boxes and 30 scrapbook volumes. Boxes 1 and 2 include news releases from 1963 to 1989. Boxes 3-6 consist of newspaper clippings, with general clippings arranged by date. Additional clippings are arranged by subject and include articles on the actors, staff, buildings, and projects such as Guthrie Two and Guthrie Lab. Boxes 7-8 include advertisements, mailers and other promotional material, season brochures, newsletters, annual reports, and resources on the building, costume designs, and general company history. Boxes 9 and 10 include a nearly complete set of performance programs. The scrapbooks date from 1959 to 1985 and include primarily newspaper clippings with some programs and ticket stubs.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Tyrone Guthrie Theater.

Personal Name(s)

- Guthrie, Tyrone, Sir, 1900-1971

Subject(s)

- Theater -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis -- History.

News Releases

Collection Inventory

News Releases		
	Box	Folder
Guthrie Theater News 1975-1976	1	1
Guthrie News 1977-1979	1	2
Guthrie Preview 1995-1999	1	3
Guthrie News Release 1963-1965	1	4
Guthrie News Release 1966	1	5
Guthrie News Release 1967	1	6
Guthrie News Release 1968	1	7
Guthrie News Release 1969	1	8
Guthrie News Release 1970	1	9
Guthrie News Release 1971	1	10
Guthrie News Release 1972	1	11

News Releases

Guthrie News Release 1973	1	12
Guthrie News Release 1974	1	13
Guthrie News Release 1975	1	14
Guthrie News Release 1976	2	1
Guthrie News Release 1977	2	2
Guthrie News Release 1978	2	3
Guthrie News Release 1979	2	4
Guthrie News Release 1980	2	5
Guthrie News Release 1981	2	6
Guthrie News Release 1982	2	7
Guthrie News Release 1983	2	8
Guthrie News Release 1985	2	9
Guthrie News Release 1986	2	10
Guthrie News Release 1987	2	11

Newspaper Clippings

Guthrie News Release 1989	2	12
Newspaper Clippings		
	Box	Folder
Clippings: General 1961	3	1
Clippings: General 1961-1966	3	2
Clippings: General 1962	3	3
Clippings: General 1962-1968	3	4
Clippings: General 1963	3	5
Clippings: General 1963	3	6
Clippings: General 1963-1964	3	7
Clippings: General 1964	3	8
Clippings: General 1965	3	9
Clippings: General 1966	3	10
Clippings: General 1967	3	11

Newspaper Clippings

Clippings: General 1967	3	12
Clippings: General 1968	3	13
Clippings: General 1969	3	14
Clippings: General 1970-1972	3	15
Clippings: General 1973-1974	4	1
Clippings: General 1972-1973	3	16
Clippings: General 1974	4	2
Clippings: General 1976	4	3
Clippings: General 1978	4	4
Clippings: General 1978-1979	4	5
Clippings: General 1978-1979	4	6
Clippings: General 1979	4	7
Clippings: General 1980	4	8
Clippings: General 1980-1981	4	9

Newspaper Clippings

Clippings: General 1981	4	10
Clippings: General 1982	4	11
Clippings: General 1983	4	12
Clippings: General 1984	4	13
Clippings: General 1985	4	14
Clippings: General 1986-1987	4	15
Clippings: General 1988	4	16
Clippings: General 1989	4	17
Clippings: General 1960s	5	1
Clippings: General 1970s	5	2
Clippings: General 1980s	5	3
Clippings: General January-July 1990	5	4
Clippings: General August-December 1990	5	5
Clippings: General January-September 1991	5	6

Newspaper Clippings

Clippings: General 1991-1992	5	7
Clippings: General 1993	5	8
Clippings: General January-September 1994	5	9
Clippings: General October 1994, January-December 1998	5	10
Clippings: General 1996-1997	5	11
Clippings: General 1999	5	12
Clippings: General 2000	5	13
Clippings: General 2001	5	14
Clippings: Actors and Actresses 1963-1968	6	1
Clippings: Actors and Actresses 1972-1978	6	2
Clippings: Actors and Actresses 1978-1982	6	3
Clippings: Staff 1963-1974	6	4
Clippings: Staff 1974-1981	6	5
Clippings: Staff 1982-1985	6	6

Newspaper Clippings

Clippings: Building 1963-1974	6	7
Clippings: Misc. Info 1966-1983	6	8
Clippings: Guthrie Two 1976-1978	6	9
Clippings: Guthrie Two 1978-1979	6	10
Clippings: New Building 2000-2001	6	11
Clippings: New Building (Planning) 1992-1999	6	12
Clippings: Embezzlement Case 1994	6	13
Clippings: Guthrie Lab 1997-1999	6	14
Clippings: Guthrie Lab 2000-2001	6	15
Clippings: Guthrie Repertory Theater 1973	6	16
Clippings: Guthrie Repertory Theater: Staff 1986, 1991-1993	6	17
Clippings: Stagehands Organization 1973	6	18
Clippings: Musical Program Reviews 1963-1970	6	19
Clippings: Images, Miscellaneous undated, 1965-2005	6	20

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous		
	Box	Folder
Advertising/Promotions	7	1
Advertising/Promotions	7	2
Advertising/Promotions	7	3
Building(s)	Box	Folder
	7	4
Callboard	7	5
Costumes	7	6
Fundraising/Foundation	7	7
History	7	8
Misc. Performances	7	9
Season Brochures 1964-1966, 1987-1995	7	10
Season Brochures 1996-2002	7	11
Newsletters 1993, 1997-1998, 2005-2006	8	1

Annual Reports

Student Papers 1992-1993	8	2
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Miscellaneous brochures, mailings, news releases 1963-2000, 2006	8	3
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Oversize

Christmas Carol coloring book 1973		1
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General note

Designed by Guthrie Theater stage designer.

Annual Reports

	Box	Folder
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Annual Reports 1980-1984	8	4
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Annual Reports 1999-2005	8	5
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Annual Reports: Guthrie Theater Foundation 1975-1979	8	6
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Programs

	Box	Folder
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Programs 1963-1964	9	1
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Programs 1965-1967	9	2
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Programs

Programs 1967-1969	9	3
Programs 1970	9	4
Programs 1971	9	5
Programs 1972	9	6
Programs 1973-1974	9	7
Programs 1973-1974	9	8
Programs 1974	9	9
Programs 1975	9	10
Programs 1976	9	11
Programs 1977	9	12
Programs 1978	9	13
Programs 1978	9	14
Programs 1979	9	15
Programs 1979	9	16

Programs

Programs 1980	9	17
Programs 1981	9	18
Programs 1982	9	19
Programs 1983	9	20
Programs 1984	10	1
Programs 1985	10	2
Programs 1986	10	3
Programs 1987	10	4
Programs 1988	10	5
Programs 1989	10	6
Programs 1990	10	7
Programs 1991	10	8
Programs 1992	10	9
Programs 1993	10	10

Scrapbooks

Programs 1994	10	11
Programs 1994	10	12
Programs 1995	10	13
Programs 1996	10	14
Programs 1997	10	15
Programs 1998	10	16
Programs 1999	10	17
Programs 2000	10	18
Programs 2001	10	19
Programs 2002	10	20
Programs 2003	10	21
Programs 2004-2009	10	22
Scrapbooks		

Volume

Scrapbooks

Sir Tyrone Guthrie	1
1959-1962	2
1963 - Large format 1963	29
1963 - Large format 1963	30
Jan 1963-May 4, 1963	3
Sept 1963-May 17, 1964	4
May 23, 1964-Dec 31, 1964	5
Jan 1965-Nov 21, 1965	6
Jan 1966-Dec 1966	7
Jan 1967-Nov 18, 1967	8
Dec 28, 1967	9
Jan 1968-Dec 1968	10
1969 St. Paul Season and General	11
1969 Season Plays	12

Scrapbooks

1970 St. Paul Season and General	13
1970 Season Plays	14
1971 Season Plays	15
1971 Season Plays	16
1972 Season Plays	17
1973 Season Plays	18
1974 Season Plays	19
1975 Season Plays	20
1976-1977 Season Plays	21
1977-1978 Season Plays	22
1978-1979 Season Plays	23
1979-1980 Season Plays	24
1980-1981 Season Plays	25
1982	26

Posters

1983-1984

27

1985

28

Posters Undated, 1964-1990**Oversize
Posters****Scope and Contents note**

31 posters