



BHC-MSS 0162

Guide to the Select Records of the Klein Memorial Auditorium

By Meg Rinn

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Klein Memorial Auditorium

Title: Select Records of the Klein Memorial Auditorium

Dates: 1933-2004

Quantity: 5 manuscript boxes, 2 oversize/3 linear feet

Abstract: The Klein Memorial Auditorium is a 1,447 seat theater with a Broadway sized stage that currently houses four resident companies. Since it was completed in 1940, the Klein Memorial Auditorium has hosted orchestras, speakers like Martin Luther King, Jr., public events, rentals, and many, many more performances. This collection represents a very small portion of the Klein's history.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

The Klein Memorial Auditorium is a 1,447 seat theater with a Broadway sized stage that currently houses four resident companies. Designed by local architect Leonard Asheim, the Klein was created from the bequest of Bridgeport lawyer Jakob B. Klein. At this time of his death in 1932, and following the death of Klein's wife Ray Rosenfield in 1933, the Kleins gave the City of Bridgeport half a million dollars, insisting the money be used for the advancement of building a theater and enhancing the art, culture, and music of the city. This bequest was the largest the city received at the time. Klein also stipulated that the Bridgeport Public Library should attend to the auditorium rather than other departments of the City of Bridgeport. The Bridgeport Public Library no longer has this particular responsibility.

Since it was completed in 1940, the Klein Memorial Auditorium has hosted orchestras, speakers like Martin Luther King, Jr., public events, rentals, and many, many more performances. This collection represents a very small portion of the Klein's history, and those seeking more should contact the auditorium directly.

The Klein sits on the original site of P.T. Barnum's lavish mansion, Iranistan, which burnt to the ground in the mid-1800s.

Scope and Content note:

Most of the material comes from the 2002.02 accession and is material removed from the offices of the Klein Memorial Auditorium during 1999-2000 renovations. Most of the material represents programs and posters, although there are some scrapbooks along with publicity photographs. Also included are signs for seating sections, along with posters. A 2004 binder with Board of Directors

minutes is also present in the collection, providing insight into management of the performance space.

Arrangement Note:

The Select Records of the Klein Memorial Auditorium is an artificial collection, due to a previous practice to combine like records. Material has been placed in three series. Series I, management, addresses the executive level material, cash flow, and other elements that kept the auditorium up and running. Note that all material from 1999-2004 was housed together in a single binder and has been kept in original order. It is a separate accession from the majority of the material. Series II, programs, has been divided into four subseries: distinct performance groups, school uses of the Klein, other uses by organizations, and other performances. Series III, contains magician magazines that were found in the collection as well as sheet music. These series are arranged alphabetically.

Series IV

Administrative information:

Provenance: 2002.02; 2008.09; material found in collection; 2022 accrual includes material from Betty Falango, Ed Trotter's daughter

Preferred Citation:

Select Records of the Klein Memorial Auditorium (BHC-MSS 0162), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Klein, Jacob B.

Klein, Ray

Corporate names

Klein Memorial Auditorium

Subject tracings

Theaters

Theater programs

Performances

Orchestras

Detailed box/folder listing

Box 1

Series I, Management (1-20 were in same binder; original order)

1. Daybook, 1945
2. Agenda, board meetings, 2003-2004
3. Minutes, 2003-2004
4. Budgets and financial transactions/analysis, 2002-2004
5. Schedules/tentative schedules, 2003-2004

6. Correspondence, 2003
7. Accountants, 2003
8. Memorandum of understanding, Artsport, 2002-2003
9. Unpaid bills, 2003
10. By-Laws, 1997, 2004
11. A/P aging summary, 2003-2004
12. Profit and loss by class, 2003-2004
13. Profit and loss, 2003-2004
14. Balance sheet, 2003-2004
15. Press/articles, undated
16. Programs/flyers, 2003-2004
17. Agenda, board meetings, 2000-2003
18. Agenda, board meetings, 1999-2003
19. Agenda, board meetings, 2000-2003
20. Agenda, board meetings, 1999-2000

Box 2

Series II – Programs

Subseries 1, Distinct performance groups

1. Bernadette Associates, Wide World of Polkas, 1982
2. Boston Pops Tour Orchestra, 1954-1955
3. Bridgeport Police Athletic League, 1970-1971
4. Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, 1949-1955
5. The Mask and Wig Club, 1948, 1952
6. Obeh grotto, 1950-1955
7. Sterling Ski Club, 1949-1953
8. Wednesday Afternoon Musical Club, 1898-1955

Subseries 2 – School uses of Klein

9. Graduation exercises, 1951-1954
 - a. Bassick High School, 1953
 - b. Fairfield University, 1955
 - c. University School, 1951, 1955
 - d. University of Bridgeport, 1949, 1955
 - e. Bridgeport Hospital Nursing School, 1952, 1954

Box 3

1. Fairfield Prep productions, 1950s
2. Fairfield University Glee Club, 1952-1953
3. Father's Club of Hallen School, 1952-1955
4. Stratford High School annual band concert, 1952-1953
5. University of Bridgeport
 - a. Campus Thunder Productions, 1947-1958
 - b. Dedication of Engineering Technology Building, 1950

Subseries 3, Other uses

6. Children's dance recitals
 - a. Mrs. Capron's, 1953-1955
 - b. Ms. Christine's, 1953-1955
 - c. Ms. Comer, 1952-1955
 - d. Murial Howe, 1951
 - e. Marge Hull, 1951-1955
 - f. Jean Sturrock, 1950-1952
 - g. McCoy Ferron, 1953
 - h. Bessie Marie Rielley, 1950
7. Bridgeport Firemen's Sick-Benefit Association, 1952-1953
8. Police charities, 1952-1954
9. Misc. Charities and Functions, 1949-1955
10. Misc. Charities and Functions, 1952-1955

Subseries 4, Other performances

Box 4

1. Piano and accordion recitals, 1949-1955
2. Programs, 1949
3. Programs, 1950
4. Programs, 1951
5. Programs, 1952
6. Programs, 1953
7. Programs, 1954
8. Programs, 1955
9. Programs, 1980s
10. Songs and hymns, undated
11. Adlai Stevenson memorial/brochure, 1951

Series III, Other publications

12. Genii magazine, 1941-1948

Box 5

1. Genii magazine, 1941-1948
2. The Sphinx, 1939-1945
3. The Sphinx, 1939-1945
4. The Sphinx, 1939-1945
5. The Sphinx, 1939-1945
6. Sheet music, undated
7. Sheet music, undated
8. Sheet music, undated
9. Sheet music, undated

Box 6

1. Posters, 1960s, undated

2. Posters, 1980s, undated
3. Posters, undated
4. Posters, undated
5. Seat signs, undated
6. Photographs, performer headshots, undated
7. Ledger of performances, 1950-1987

Box 7

Scrapbook, 1940-1941

Box 8

1. Photographs of performers, undated
2. Photographs of performers, undated
3. Photographs of performers, undated
4. Photographs of performers, undated
5. Photographs of performers, undated
6. Photographs of performers, undated
7. Photographs of performers, undated
8. Photographs of performers, undated
9. Photographs of performers, undated
10. Photographs of performers, undated

Accrual 2022

Series IV, Photographs

Slide film box 7, carriers 22-24, slide film, undated

Box 9

1. Programs, 1950s
2. Programs, 1980s
3. Christmas cards from Mayor Jasper McLevy, undated
4. Notes, 1969; 1984
5. Photographs, undated
6. Clippings, 1970s