
INVENTORY OF THE BREAD AND PUPPET THEATER ARCHIVES, 1962-1981, (bulk 1964-1975)

Collection number: D-136

Department of Special Collections
General Library
University of California, Davis
Davis, California

Contact Information:

- Ms. Daryl Morrison
- Department of Special Collections
- General Library
- 100 North West Quad
- University of California, Davis
- Davis, CA 95616-5292
- Phone: (530) 752-1621
- Fax: (530) 754-5758
- Email: dmorrison@ucdavis.edu

Processed by:

Lola Aguilar

Encoded by:

Melissa Tyler

Date completed:

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Bread and Puppet Theater Archives,

Date (inclusive): 1962-1981,

Date (bulk): (bulk 1964-1975)

Collection number: D-136

Creator: Bread and Puppet Theater

Extent: 3.3 linear feet

Repository: University of California, Davis. General Library. Dept. of Special Collections.

100 North West Quad Davis, California, 95616-5292

Abstract: Founded by Peter Schumann, the Bread and Puppet Theater emerged as one of the first alternative theater groups of the 1960s and 1970s. Schumann incorporated religion and morality into the central anti-war theme of the plays. The Bread and Puppet Theater offered bread, baked by the group, to the audience at the beginning of every performance. Schumann believed that theater was as basic to life as bread. The Bread and Puppet Theater Archives (1962-1981, bulk dates 1964-1975) includes scripts, programs, monographs, and serials of the experimental theater.

Physical location: Researchers should contact Special Collections to request collections, as many are stored offsite.

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research under regular Reading Room rules and copyright restrictions.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Bread and Puppet Theater Archives, D-136, Department of Special Collections, University of California Library, Davis, California.

Acquisition Information

In 1975, Peter Schumann donated this collection to the Library. Material was added in 1981.

Processing Information

Lola Aguilar processed this collection and created its finding aid. Melissa Tyler encoded the finding aid.

Administrative History

West German immigrant Peter Schumann (1934-) founded the Bread and Puppet Theater in New York in 1961. Influenced by the peace movement in New York, Schumann wrote radical anti-war plays for his puppet theater. He incorporated religion and morality into the central anti-war theme of the plays. The Bread and Puppet Theater offered bread, baked by the group, to the audience at the beginning of every performance. Schumann declared that theater was as basic to life as bread, hence the name. A street parade with masked puppeteers on stilts, oversized puppets up to twenty feet high, banners, and at times, over a hundred singing and dancing volunteers, preceded the plays. The plays contained little dialogue, usually spoken by a narrator. Schumann believed the plays' imagery communicated best in an outdoor setting, therefore most of the plays were performed outdoors. With only a small core of paid staff, the Bread and Puppet Theater relied on a fluctuating volunteer staff whose numbers changed according to each performance. Charging the audience a nominal fee, the group received most of its funds through grants and donations. The group performed in the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Australia.

The Bread and Puppet Theater expanded in 1970 when the group moved to Cate Farm in Plainfield, Vermont as theater-in-residence at Goddard College. They offered workshops in sculpture, mime, dance, story-making, puppet building and operation, music, and instrument making. The group also held workshops to produce Bread and Puppet publications. One of Schumann's plays, the *Domestic Resurrection Circus*, was first performed in 1971 at Plainfield as part of a two day festival. The festival became an annual event. Beginning in 1971, Universal Movement Theatre Repertory director Mark Amitin arranged performances for the Bread and Puppet Theater. After a cancelled series of performances for the North Jersey Cultural Council in 1973, Schumann severed his relationship with the booking agency. In 1974, Schumann moved the group to Glover, Vermont where the group opened a museum for their collection of Bread and Puppet Theater masks and puppets. The Bread and Puppet Theater continued to perform for national and international audiences.

Sources:

Bread and Puppet Theater 98, accessed 3 March 2004; available from <http://www.scenesofvermont.com/bread&puppet/bread.htm>

Bread and Puppet Theater, 1962-1985, accessed 13 February 2004; available from <http://bailey.uvm.edu:6336/dynaweb/findingaids/bredpupt/>

Brecht, Stephan. *The Bread and Puppet Theater*. New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc., 1988.

Shank, Theodore. *American Alternative Theater*. New York: Grove Press, 1982.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Bread and Puppet Theater Archives is arranged in seven series: 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 2. Business Records, 3. Reviews, 4. Ephemera, 5. Photographic Materials, 6. Realia, and 7. Added Materials. Items span the years 1962 to 1981, but the bulk of the collection dates from 1964 to 1975. The collection contains published and unpublished works by the Bread and Puppet Theater and its founder and director Peter Schumann. The Theater's scripts, programs, monographs, and serials are mainly pictorial. The collection contains audiotape recordings of "Bread and Puppet Theater Rehearsal" and two video recordings: "Bread and Puppet Theater" and "The Meadow's Green." Also included in the collection are reviews, fliers, posters, photographic prints, and other ephemera related to the Bread and Puppet Theater's performances. Realia from the Bread and Puppet Theater's anti-bicentennial performance of *A Monument for Ishi* at the University of California, Davis campus in 1975, includes two banners, a mask, a sign, and a deer puppet. Business records are primarily limited to correspondence, press releases, contracts, site information, and clippings concerning arrangements made by Universal Movement Theatre Repertory Director Mark Amitin and the North Jersey Cultural Council in 1972 and 1973.

Related Collections

Other materials related to the Bread and Puppet Theater may be found in the following collections at Special Collections:

D-145: Universal Movement Theatre Repertory Archives

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online public access catalog:

Subjects

Bread and Puppet Theater

Schumann, Peter, 1934-

American drama--20th century

Experimental theater--United States

Puppet theater

Street theater

Masks

Theater--Moral and ethical aspects

Theater--Political aspects

Theater--Religious aspects

Series 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 1964-1975

Physical Description: 28 folders

Scope and Content Note

Divided into six subseries: Scripts, Programs, Monographs, Serials, Interview Transcripts, and Contributions to Serials.

Subseries 1.1. Scripts, 1965-1975

Physical Description: 24 scripts

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by title.

Box 1:1

Attica- Fire.

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:2

Harvey McLeod- White Washing of the Dirty Sheets.

Physical Description:

Note

Folio 4:1

Perez and Martina.

Physical Description:

Note

[oversize handwritten fragment]

Subseries 1.2. Programs, 1964-1972

Physical Description: 15 programs

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by title.

Box 1:3

Christmas Story- Nativity.

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:4

Stations of the Cross- Three Short Pieces.

Physical Description:

Note

Subseries 1.3. Monographs, 1967-1974

Physical Description: 8 volumes

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by title

- Box 1:5 *Crash into the Grass*, n.d.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:6 *Incredible Rain*, 1973.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:7 *Lament of the Frontier Guard*, 1967.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:8 *Mr. Miller Stories, No. 3*, 1967.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:9 *Parable of the Burning House*, 1970.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:10 *Puppen und Masken: Das Bread and Puppet Theater*, 1973.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:11 *Sauerkraut*, 1973.
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:12 *Stations of the Cross*, 1974.
Physical Description:
Note
-

Subseries 1.4. Serials, 1966-1974.

Physical Description: 34 items

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by title.

- Box 1:13-14 ***Bread and News*, Sept. 1970, Autumn 1970.**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:15 ***Bread and Puppet Comics and Lyrics*, no. 1-3, 1973.**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:16 ***Bread and Puppet News: Two Fables*, Feb. 16, 1970.**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:17-18 ***Bread and Puppet Newspaper*, Dec. 1966-Jan. 1967, 1968, n.d.**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:19 ***Bread and Puppet Theater Workshop*, 1968-1969.**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:20 ***Bread and Puppets and News*, March 29, 1970.**
Physical Description:
Note
[manuscript newsletter]
- Box 1:21 ***Bread and Rosebuds*; April 25, 1970; Nov. 1972.**
Physical Description:
Note
[newsletter]
- Box 1:22 ***Sugar*, no. 1, 3-5, 1974.**
Physical Description:
Note
-

Subseries 1.5. **Interview Transcripts, 1968**

Physical Description: 4 items

Scope and Content Note

Manuscripts.

Box 1:23 " *Peter Schumann Talking to Juris Svendsen about Story*," Sept. 1968.

Physical Description:

Note

Subseries 1.6. Contributions to Serials, 1965-1972.

Physical Description: 8 items

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by title.

Box 1:24 " *[Article on Puppet Theater]*." *Motive*(Feb. 1965): 29-35.

Physical Description:

Note

Folio 4:2 " *Bread and Puppet Theater*." *Silo*(1972): 3.

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:25 " *Christmas Story*." *Sing Out!* 18, no. 5 (Dec. 1968/Jan. 1969): 18-26.

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:26 " *God Himself: Problems Concerning Puppetry and Folkmusic and Folkart in the Light of God and MacNamara* [sic]." *Sing Out!* 17, no. 1 (Feb./March 1967).

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:27 " *Love and Marriage of the River Winooski and Lake Champlain*." *Scripts* 1, no. 10 (Oct. 1972): 18-41.

Physical Description:

Note

Folio 4:2 " *The Student Theater--A Voice of Progress*." *Poland* 187, no. 3 (March 1970): 4-7.

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:28 " *Worries, Poisons, and Screams*." April 1971.

Physical Description:

Note

[manuscript]

Folio 4:2

" *Worries, Poisons and Screams.*" *Poland* 213, no. 5 (May 1972): 4-5, 18.

Physical Description:

Note

Series 2. **Business Records, 1967-1973**

Physical Description: 7 folders

Scope and Content Note

Contains business records of the Bread and Puppet Theater.

- Box 1:29 **Arrangements via Universal Movement Theatre Repertory, 1972-1973.**
Physical Description: 57 items
Note
- Box 1:30 **Internal Memorandum from Peter Schumann to his Puppeteers, Feb. 23 (no year).**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:31-32 **" *List of Plays We Must Do*," n.d.**
Physical Description:
Note
- Box 1:33 **Company History, circa 1970-1973.**
Physical Description: 2 chronologies
Note
- Box 1:34 **Descriptions of Bread and Puppet Theater, 1967-1971, n.d.**
Physical Description:
Note
[French and English]
- Box 1:35 **Bibliography, 1973.**
Physical Description:
Note

Series 3. **Reviews, 1962-1973**

Physical Description: 6 folders

Scope and Content Note

Arranged chronologically. Contains national and international reviews and articles.

Box 1:36-40 **1962-1973, n.d.**

Physical Description:

Note

Folio 4:3 **1971-1973, n.d.**

Physical Description:

Note

Series 4. Ephemera, 1962-1975

Physical Description: 7 folders

Scope and Content Note

Contains catalogs, fliers, posters, prints, and other items connected to the Bread and Puppet Theater. Within each category, items are arranged chronologically.

Box 1:41 **Catalogs, 1971-1972.**

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:42 **Fliers, 1962-1975, n.d.**

Physical Description:

Note

Folio 4:4 **Oversize Fliers and Posters, 1964-1973.**

Physical Description:

Note

Map Case III:Drawer **Posters, n.d.**

P

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:43-44 **Prints, 1965-1974, n.d.**

Physical Description:

Note

Box 1:45 **Other, 1965-1974.**

Physical Description:

Note

Series 5. **Photographic Prints, 1968-1972**

Physical Description: 17 prints

Scope and Content Note

Arranged by title.

Box 1:46-59 ***Domestic Resurrection Circus, 1968-1972, n.d.***

Physical Description:

Note

[b & w]

Box 1:60-61 ***Fire, 1968.***

Physical Description:

Note

[b & w]

Box 1:62 ***" Outdoor Performance and Parade," 1972.***

Physical Description:

Note

[b & w]

Series 6. **Realia**, [1975]

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

Contains banners, mask, sign, and puppet from the Bread and Puppet Theater's 1975 performance of *A Monument for Ishi* at the University of California, Davis.

Box 2:1 **Banners from *A Monument for Ishi*, [1975].**

Physical Description:

Note

Box 3 **Hunchback Witch mask from *A Monument for Ishi*, [1975].**

Physical Description:

Note

Map Case III:Drawer **Sign from *A Monument for Ishi*, [1975].**

P

Physical Description:

Note

Aisle 44a **Deer puppet from *A Monument for Ishi*, [1975].**

Physical Description:

Note

Series 7. Added Materials, 1980-1981

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

Contains materials added after Peter Schumann donated the collection to the Library in 1975. Includes one monograph and sound and video recordings of Bread and Puppet Theater performances.

Box 2:2 **Monograph, *This Is*, 1980.**

Physical Description:

Note

Box 2:3-4 **Sound recordings, " *Bread and Puppet Theater Rehearsal*," n.d.**

Physical Description: 2 reel to reel tapes

Note

Box 2:5 **Video recording, " *Bread and Puppet Theater*," April 6, 1981.**

Physical Description:

Note

[U-matic]

Box 2:6 **Video recording, " *The Meadow's Green*," April 6, 1981.**

Physical Description:

Note

[U-matic]