



Stagebridge Records

1978-2017

2 boxes (2 linear feet)

Call no.: MS1024

Collection overview

A theater company of older adults based in Oakland, Calif., Stagebridge is recognized as a pioneer in the field of creative aging. Founded by Stuart Kandell in 1978, the organization sponsors workshops, performances, and other opportunities for lifelong learning that provide a creative means to transform the lives of older adults and their communities through the performing arts. Organized "for and of" older adults, Stagebridge is testimony to the ways in which elders enrich our culture and communities.

The Stagebridge collection contains scrapbooks, photograph albums, news clippings, and some scripts beginning in the earliest years of the organization. Digital materials in the collection are even richer, ranging from videos of performances to promotional materials and organizational records.

Background on Stagebridge

Stagebridge, founded in 1978, describes its mission as to enrich and transform the lives of older adults and their surrounding communities through the performing arts. The company attempts to remove social stigma associated with aging and disprove the idea that seniors cannot contribute to society by demonstrating through theater how older citizens can improve our culture. *Never Too Late*, Stagebridge's longest running show, is one way they accomplish their goal, as the play breaks down stereotypes about what it means to be old and showcases older actors, singers, and dancers in funny but wise skits and songs.

Stuart Kandell was a young theater teacher who worked at a senior center through the East Bay Center of Performing Arts before he founded and began directing the "College Avenue Players" at the College Avenue Adult Activity Center in Oakland, Calif. What began as a drama class of five women in their 70s soon became an up-and-coming theater company which by 1985 had twenty core members between the ages of 50 and 85. Playwright Linda Spector was hired in 1980 (and named Co-Director in 1981) to write original plays for the Players that featured positive roles for older actors and addressed themes including media stereotypes of older people, the problems of crime and the elderly, and work and identity. In 1989, the company changed its name to Stagebridge, to more accurately reflect their mission of bridging the generations, and moved to the First Congregational Church in downtown Oakland, which Stagebridge still calls home.

An innovator in the field of creative aging, Kandell received his doctorate in Intergenerational Studies from the Union Institute in 1996. Though he stepped down from Stagebridge in 2013, Kandell continues the work he began so many years ago, traveling around the world speaking, training artists, and helping governments and organizations develop creative aging programs. As for the organization Kandell established, Stagebridge has been honored as the winner of the 2013 MetLife Foundation Creative Aging Award and the 2009 American Society on Aging MetLife MindAlert Award. Stagebridge's work has also been featured on ABC-TV, CNN, and National Public Radio, in publications including The Wall Street Journal, The Huffington Post, Modern Maturity, Oakland Magazine, and Storytelling Magazine, and at national and regional conferences.

Now known as the nation's oldest senior theater company, Stagebridge is regarded as a leader in the field of healthy aging. The company currently offers programs that span from storytelling visits to classrooms through the Storybridge Speaking and Listening Program, to the Performing Arts Institute (PAI) which offers training and classes in acting, storytelling, musical theater, and improv.

Scope of collection

The Stagebridge records contain materials that follow the company since its founding to just before its 40th anniversary, including VHS tapes and CDs of plays and events, files associated with certain plays, scrapbooks, news clippings, posters, magazine articles, event programs, marketing materials, and newsletters.

Inventory

Aging conferences in California	1980-1998	Box 1: 1
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Articles: general	1980	Box 1: 3
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Grandparent tales: teacher guide	undated	Box 1: 24
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Play files: "Women changing"	1990	Box 1: 35
Play files: "Take care"	1993, 1995	Box 1: 36
Play files: "Love, sex, and growing old"	1997	Box 1: 37
Play files: "Women and men"	1999	Box 1: 38
Play files: "The hypochondriac"	2004	Box 1: 39
Play files: "Being something"	2005	Box 1: 40
Play files: "Sylvia's advice on how to age gracefully on the planet denial"	2010	Box 1: 41
Play files: grandparent tales- "Chicken Sunday"	1993, 1998, 2005	Box 1: 42
Play files: grandparent tales- "Strega Nona"	1994-1996	Box 1: 43
Play files: grandparent tales- other grandparent tales	1995-2000	Box 1: 44
Posters	1987-1999	map case
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Posters	2005-2010	map case
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Scrapbook: "'Boarding house' and San Diego Ca. American art convention, special awards and notes"	1979-1983	Box 1: 46
Scrapbook: "Plays, 'Friends and lovers,' 'Images, ages, changes'"	1979-1980, 1994	Box 1: 47
Scrapbook: "Was there life before TV?" play files, finances, traveling files, correspondence, and articles	1979-1981	Box 1: 48
Storytelling booklet: "The old lady in a shoe" (Chabot School P.M. Kindergarten)	1987-1999	map case
Video: "3 short videos about Stagebridge" (CD)	undated	Box 1: 49
Video: "The danger project" - Stagebridge; "Hendrika" - Early Wise Company (VHS tape)	undated	Box 1: 50
Video: "Stagebridge sampler" (TV features) (CD)	undated	Box 1: 51
Video: "Storytelling sampler" (CD)	undated	Box 1: 52
Video: "Take care" (VHS tape)	undated	Box 1: 53
Video: "Time slips" (program for dementia) (CD)	undated	Box 1: 54
Video: "USS Hornet Spanish TV" (VHS tape)	undated	Box 1: 55
Video: "The war at home" (storytelling program) (CD)	undated	Box 1: 56
Video: "News programs" (CD)	ca.1980-1999	Box 1: 57
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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Stuart Kandell, May 2018.

Processing Information

Processed by Elizabeth Huang, 2018.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- Aging

- Creative aging
- Kandell, Stuart.
- Older people
- Spector, Linda.
- Stagebridge.
- Theater and older people
- Theater--California
- Theatrical companies

Contributors

- Stagebridge **[main entry]**

Genres and formats

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Promotional materials
- Scrapbooks
- Theater programs
- VHS