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## Double Edge Theatre Records

1970-2002

28 boxes (15.5 linear ft.)

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- [About SCUA](#)
  - [SCUA home](#)
  - [Credo digital](#)
- [Scope](#)
- [Overview](#)
  - [Series 1: Productions and Performances](#)
  - [Series 2: Theatres and Cultural Collaborations](#)
  - [Series 3: Correspondence and Topical Files](#)
  - [Series 4: Administration](#)
  - [Series 5: Photographs and Videos](#)
- [Inventory](#)
  - [Series 1: Productions and Performances](#)
  - [Series 2: Theaters and Cultural Collaborations](#)
  - [Series 3: Correspondence and Topical Files](#)
  - [Series 4: Administration](#)
  - [Series 5: Photographs and Videos](#)
- [Admin info](#)
- [Download](#)
  - [xml version](#)
  - [print version \(pdf\)](#)

[Read collection overview](#)

Since its founding, Double Edge Theatre has embraced a two-fold mission: to develop and promote the highest quality of original theatre performance, and to create a permanent center of performance, practice, training research, and cultural exchange. The collection documents the theatre's focus on research, international collaboration, and the elevation of artistic performance above and beyond stage work into the realm of cultural exchange.

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[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)  
[Photographs](#)

## Background on Double Edge Theatre



A Bold Stroke for a Wife

Double Edge Theatre, founded in 1982, views itself as having a two-fold mission: to develop and promote the highest quality of original theatre performance, and to create at its home, "The Farm," located in Ashfield, Massachusetts, a permanent center of performance, practice, training research, and cultural exchange. The group's focus is on "living culture," a term used to describe both their unique method of research, exchange and collaborations in many parts of the world, and the belief that their work has the ability to transform an audience. This vision is exemplified in The Song Trilogy, a performance cycle more than ten years in the making about the life of the Jewish community in diaspora and its relationship to the various cultures which it confronts.

The group first performed in Allston, a district of Boston, before purchasing the Farm in 1995 both to escape the high cost of rent in the city as well as to expand the activities of the center. The 105-acre farm, one of oldest dairy farms in rural Ashfield, hosts artists, students, and community exchange, and permits the theatre to more fully embrace the practice of "living culture." From the Farm's opening in 1997, DET has premiered four of its own performances, created extra-theatrical research and exchange projects, long-term residencies, and collaborations with over a dozen artists and countries from across the United States, Asia, Latin America and Europe. In 1999 Double Edge initiated the first artist's think tank in this country to research theatre, culture, and creation, and to provide a place for professional artists to work free from the demands of daily survival.

## Scope of collection

The records of Double Edge Theatre trace the history of this experimental company from their first performance featuring an all-female cast to their more recent collaborations and projects, which have secured them a prominent place in the international theater community. The collection documents the theatre's focus on research, international collaboration, and the elevation of artistic performance above and beyond stage work into the realm of cultural exchange.

The collection is organized into five series that together document Double Edge's productions and performances, their involvement and relationships with other theaters and cultural projects, as well as the administrative side of operating the theatre.

## Series descriptions

### Series 1: Productions and Performances

1982-1999

4.75 linear ft.

Bringing together research material, rehearsal notes, and scripts with programs, flyers, and reviews, this series documents the entire creative process from a project's conception to its performance before an audience. Each of the theatre's major productions is represented, and often times individual performances of these productions, demonstrating how they have evolved over time.

Beginning with the group's first production, Rites, which later became part of the Women's Cycle, through The Song Trilogy and Republic of Dreams, this series also provides a record of their artistic growth and thematic movement. Over the years, Double Edge has changed, but they have always stayed true to their mission of training, research, performance, and cultural exchange.

Of particular importance is their work on The Song Trilogy developed from 1987 to 1998. Consisting of three productions, Song of Absence, Song of Songs, and Keter, the Crowning Song, the Trilogy deals with the Jewish diaspora and its relationship to the cultures it encounters. Out of this performance cycle emerged Republic of Dreams, an international Jewish / American / Central European cultural exchange project, which focused on breaking through cultural and social isolation by unearthing remains of Jewish culture and other indigenous cultures through music, celebration, research, and oral histories of Holocaust and Stalinist survivors.

### Series 2: Theatres and Cultural Collaborations

1972-2002

4.5 linear ft.

Double Edge Theatre has been involved in international study, exchange, and collaboration since its earliest days. Their first major collaboration was with Poland's Gardzienice Theater Association, a collaboration that since 1986 has included producing one another's work, hosting pedagogical sessions, symposia, and creating projects together, such as Republic of Dreams. This series documents the theatre's collaborations with Gardzienice as well as with many other theater companies around the world and in the U.S., including Odin Teatret, Diablonundo, Charlestown Working Theater, and Women in Theater Festival/Next Stage. Also covered are cultural exchanges seminars and symposia, residencies and research, as well as international guest artists performing with DET.

### Series 3: Correspondence and Topical Files

1973-2002

2.5 linear ft.

This series consists almost entirely of correspondence between Double Edge and other artists or companies from around the world. Critical to understanding the development of the theatre are the correspondence, speeches, and writings of Stacy Klein, founder of Double Edge. There is some overlap between the correspondence series and the other series in this collection, in particular, Series 2: Theaters and Collaborations. Many of the proposals and exchanges discussed in the letters found here were later developed into the projects and collaborations documented primarily in series 2. For the most comprehensive view of the evolution of projects from research to performance, both series should be consulted.

### Series 4: Administration

1982-2001

2.25 linear ft.

Dealing chiefly with the more prosaic details of operating a theatre group, this series includes records that reveal details about the company's day-to-day activities, covering financial, legal, and fundraising aspects. Minutes of meetings from the early years of the theatre are of particular interest as well as the notes and financial records documenting the formation of the Conversation project, a symposia for directors from Central Europe and the U.S. which concluded in a public forum for fifty arts professionals.

### Series 5: Photographs and Videos

1970-1998

1.50 linear ft.

The series consists mostly of photographs of Double Edge productions and collaborations, again documenting the evolution of their productions. Beyond capturing the staged performances of the theatre's work, though, this series also includes images of the company's training and life on the Farm, providing a unique behind-the-scenes look at this artistic community.

## Inventory

### Series 1: Productions and Performances

1982-1999  
Blood Rubies  
1982  
Box 1  
Blood Rubies: posters  
ca. 1982  
Box 28  
Blood Rubies: programs and invitation  
1982  
Box 22  
Blood Rubies: publicity  
1982  
Box 22  
Blood Rubies: reviews  
1982  
Box 22  
Blood Rubies: scripts  
1982  
Box 22  
Blood Rubies: scripts  
1982  
Box 22

Second draft.

Blood Rubies: scripts  
1982  
Box 22

Third draft.

Bold Stroke for a Wife: flyers  
1985  
Box 22  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: posters  
ca. 1985  
Box 28  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: printed material  
1985  
Box 1  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: programs  
1985  
Box 22  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: research  
1985  
Box 1  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: review  
1985  
Box 22  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: scripts  
undated  
Box 1  
Bold Stroke for a Wife: set design  
undated  
Box 1

Chehov Project: posters

ca. 1986  
Box 28  
Chehov Project: programs  
1986

Box 22  
Chehov Project: scripts  
ca. 1984  
Box 22  
Chehov Project: scripts  
ca. 1984  
Box 22  
Chehov Project: Work on 3 Sisters  
1984-1986  
Box 1  
Electra  
1984-1988  
Box 1

Electra: brochures and programs

1988  
Box 22  
Electra: correspondence and notes  
1982-1988  
Box 22

Electra: correspondence and notes  
1987  
Box 22  
Electra: correspondence and notes  
1987-1988  
Box 22

Electra: correspondence and notes  
1988  
Box 22  
Electra: form letter  
ca. 1984  
Box 22

Electra: flyers  
ca. 1984  
Box 22  
Electra: planning  
1987-1988  
Box 23

Electra: publicity  
1987-1988  
Box 23  
Electra: resolution, City of Boston  
1988  
Box 23

Electra: reviews

1987-1989  
Box 23  
Electra: scripts  
ca. 1987  
Box 23  
Had She Spoken  
1984-1985  
Box 1  
Had She Spoken: box office reports  
1984  
Box 1  
Had She Spoken: flyers  
ca. 1984  
Box 23  
Had She Spoken: posters  
ca. 1984  
Box 28  
Had She Spoken: programs  
1984

Box 23  
Had She Spoken: scripts  
ca. 1985  
Box 1  
Hunger Artist  
1984  
Box 1  
Hunger Artist: program  
1984  
Box 23  
Hunger Artist: publicity  
1984  
Box 23  
Hunger Artist: rehearsal notes  
1983-1984  
Box 1  
Hunger Artist: reviews  
1984  
Box 23  
Hunger Artist: script and set designs  
1984  
Box 23  
Hunger Artist: scripts  
1983-1984  
Box 1  
My Sister in This House: posters  
ca. 1983  
Box 28  
My Sister in This House: production  
1983  
Box 2  
My Sister in This House: production and set designs  
1982  
Box 23  
My Sister in This House: programs  
1983  
Box 23  
My Sister in This House: programs and flyers  
1983  
Box 2  
My Sister in This House: rehearsal notes  
1983  
Box 2  
My Sister in This House: reviews  
1983  
Box 2  
My Sister in This House: review  
1986  
Box 23  
My Sister in This House: script  
1983-1984  
Box 2  
Republic of Dreams  
1993-1994  
Box 2  
Republic of Dreams: correspondence  
1993-1994  
Box 2  
Republic of Dreams: news clippings  
1994-1996  
Box 2  
Republic of Dreams: proposals and reports  
1992-1997  
Box 2  
Republic of Dreams: scripts and music  
undated  
Box 2  
Request Concert  
1986  
Box 2  
Request Concert: notes  
1986  
Box 23  
Request Concert: publicity  
1986  
Box 23  
Request Concert: reviews  
1986  
Box 23  
Rites  
1982  
Box 2  
Rites: posters  
ca. 1983

Box 2  
Rites: programs and brochures  
1983  
Box 2  
Rites: reviews  
1982  
Box 2  
Sojourn at Ararat  
undated  
Box 28  
Song Trilogy  
1986-1999  
Box 2  
Keter, the Crowning Song: costumes and props  
undated  
Box 3  
Keter, the Crowning Song: production  
1996-1999  
Box 2  
Keter, the Crowning Song: programs and posters  
1996-1997  
Box 3  
Keter, the Crowning Song: reviews  
1996-1998  
Box 3  
Keter, the Crowning Song: review  
1996-1998  
Box 23  
Song of Absence: Box office reports  
1987-1992  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: flyers  
ca. 1989  
Box 33  
Song of Absence: posters  
1992  
Box 23  
Song of Absence: posters  
ca. 1992  
Box 28  
Song of Absence: programs and flyers  
1989-1996  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: programs and flyers  
1989-1996  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: programs  
ca. 1989  
Box 23  
Song of Absence: project description and writings  
1989-1995  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: receipts  
1988  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: reviews  
1986-1989  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: reviews  
1988-1989  
Box 23  
Song of Absence: reviews  
Language: InPolish.  
1988-1989  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: text  
ca. 1986  
Box 3  
Song of Absence: tributes and memorials  
1972-1987  
Box 4  
Song of Songs: Box office reports  
undated  
Box 4  
Song of Songs: flyers and printed material  
1992-1995  
Box 4  
Song of Songs: posters  
1993-1995  
Box 23  
Song of Songs: posters  
ca. 1993  
Box 28  
Song of Songs: programs  
1993-1994  
Box 23  
Song of Songs: reviews  
1990-1995  
Box 4  
Song Trilogy: technical requirements and sets  
1992-1996  
Box 4  
Unanswered Question  
ca. 2008  
Box 23  
Series 2: Theaters and Cultural Collaborations  
1972-2002  
7 Stages (Atlanta, Ga.)  
1986-1994  
Box 4  
Akademia Ruchu  
1980-1988  
Box 4

Alternative Roots  
1987  
Box 23  
Arbos  
ca. 1996  
Box 4  
Armenian Youth Federation of Boston  
1986-1988  
Box 4  
Armenian Youth Federation of Boston  
1989  
Box 4  
Arts Boston  
1983  
Box 4  
Arts Lac Champlain  
1993  
Box 4  
Baltimore Theatre Project  
1995  
Box 4  
Bengkel Teater Pendra  
1987  
Box 4  
Buster-Scimitar Theater  
undated  
Box 4  
Cardiff Laboratory Theatre  
1986-1987  
Box 4  
Center for Performance Research  
1995-1996  
Box 4  
Charlestown Working Theater  
1995-1997  
Box 4  
Charter Oak Temple Cultural Center  
1991-1992  
Box 5  
Dah Teatar  
1995-1996  
Box 5  
Dåk Theatre Co.  
1989  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: background packets  
1985-1995  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: consortium contacts  
undated  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: contacts  
1996-1998  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: Conversation Open Forum contacts  
1997  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: Conversation Open Forum guest information  
1997  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: Conversation Open Forum invitation list  
1996  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: exchange projects, Diablorundo  
1992-2001  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: exchange projects, Diablorundo  
undated  
Box 5  
Spiral Mirror.  
Double Edge Theatre: exchange projects, Hungary  
1996  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: National Ensemble Theatre Conference  
1999-2000  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: posters  
2002, undated  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: press release packet  
ca. 1992  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: press releases and news clippings  
1983-1995  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: press releases and news clippings  
1996-1999  
Box 5  
Double Edge Theatre: scripts, possibilities  
ca. 1982  
Box 6  
Double Edge Theatre: scripts, possibilities  
ca. 1982  
Box 6  
Double Edge Theatre: workshop residency  
1998  
Box 6  
Linklater residency.  
Double Edge Theatre: workshops  
1986

Box 24  
Double Edge Theatre: workshops  
1987-1991  
Box 24  
Double Edge Theatre: workshops and training residency  
1996-2001  
Box 6  
Double Edge Theatre: works in progress  
1986  
Box 6  
En Garde Arts  
1989-1993  
Box 6  
Ensemble Studio Theatre  
1991  
Box 6  
Five Lesbian Brothers: Brave Smiles  
undated  
Box 6  
Gardzienice  
1985  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: Appalachian project  
1987  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: brochures  
1986-1989  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: college tours, Bennington College  
1998  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: college tours, Central Connecticut University  
1998  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: college tours, SUNY Buffalo  
1998  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: company resume  
ca. 1985  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: consortium background  
1999  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: consortium participant information  
1999-2001  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: consortium student response  
2000-2002  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: grants  
1986  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: International Theatre Symposium  
1987  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: Metamorphosis  
1998-2001  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: performances  
1985, 2000  
Box 6  
Gardzienice: planning  
1987-2000  
Box 7  
Gardzienice: posters  
1986-1987  
Box 7  
Gardzienice: posters  
undated  
Box 28  
Gardzienice: press releases and clippings  
1980-1986  
Box 7  
Gardzienice: press releases and clippings  
1988-1993  
Box 7  
Gardzienice: press releases and clippings  
1997-1998  
Box 7  
Gardzienice: press releases and clippings  
1983-1992  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: productions  
ca. 1986  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: productions  
ca. 1986  
Box 24  
Gardzienice: programs  
1983-1998  
Box 7  
Gardzienice: technical and stage  
undated  
Box 7  
George Coates Performance Works  
1983-1992  
Box 7  
Grenland Friteater  
ca. 1986  
Box 24  
Grenland Friteater  
1987-1995  
Box 8

Heggen, Gonne and Poelstra, Frans  
1991-1992  
Box 24  
International Contemporary Theatre Festival and Symposium  
1987  
Box 24  
International Consortium of Theatre Practice Training Program  
2000  
Box 8  
International Festival of Young Professional Theatre (Sibiu, Romania)  
1993-1996  
Box 8  
International Theatre Institute of the United States  
1996-1997  
Box 8  
International Women's Culture Festival  
1995  
Box 8  
Invisible Theatre  
1994  
Box 8  
Jordcircus  
1982-1989  
Box 8  
Konfrontacje Teatralne: The International Festival Theatre Confrontations  
1997  
Box 8  
Latitude 45  
1997  
Box 8  
Mabou Mines  
1983-1986  
Box 8  
MC 93 Bobigny  
1990  
Box 8  
Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater Schnerin  
1990-1991  
Box 8  
Netherlands Theatre Institute  
ca. 1992  
Box 24  
New England Artists Trust  
1993  
Box 8  
Next Stage  
1992  
Box 8  
Odin Teatret: grants  
1986  
Box 24  
Odin Teatret: International School of Theatre Anthropology  
1986-1995  
Box 8  
Odin Teatret: press releases and news clippings  
1967 June-1972 Oct  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: press releases and news clippings  
1973 May-1976 Nov  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: press releases and news clippings, book  
1976  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: press releases and news clippings  
1978 May-1983 Dec  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: press releases and news clippings  
1984 May-1986 Mar  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: production report, FERAI  
ca. 1972  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: programs and festivals  
1974-1984  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: scripts  
1972-1982  
Box 9  
Odin Teatret: scripts  
1972-1982  
Box 9  
Organic Performance Center  
1987  
Box 10  
Osjan  
1988  
Box 10  
Philadelphia Festival for the Arts  
1991-1994  
Box 10  
Pilgrim Theatre: 2nd Stage  
1994-1995  
Box 10  
Polish Theatre  
1977-1987  
Box 10  
Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council: flyers and programs  
1989-1990  
Box 10  
Research Center for Experimental Theatre, Inc.  
1994  
Box 10  
Roy Hart Theatre

1985-1987  
Box 10  
Shlomo Bar and Habrera Hativit  
1988-1991  
Box 10  
Silesian Dance Theatre  
1995  
Box 10  
Sitges Teatre International  
1991  
Box 10  
Sleeveless Theatre  
1989  
Box 10  
Suzuki Company of Toga (SCOT)  
ca. 1987  
Box 10  
Teatr Ósmego DNIA  
1985-1996  
Box 10  
Teatr Provisorium  
1986-1987  
Box 10  
Teatret York  
1985-1986  
Box 10  
Teatro Nucleo  
1986-1987  
Box 10  
Theater im Puppenhaus  
1986  
Box 10  
Theater im Puppenhaus  
1986  
Box 24  
Theater Instituut Nederland  
1996-1997  
Box 10  
Theater Instituut Nederland  
1996-1997  
Box 11  
Theatre Communications Group, Inc.  
1999-2002  
Box 11  
Theater Der Welt  
1993  
Box 11  
Theatre Druzba  
1990  
Box 11  
Theater Project  
1985  
Box 24  
Theatre S.  
1985  
Box 11  
TMU-NA Theatre  
1987-1993  
Box 11  
Voiceworks!  
1990  
Box 11  
Women in Theatre  
1985-1986  
Box 24  
Women in Theatre: Magdalena Project  
1982-1995  
Box 11  
Series 3: Correspondence and Topical Files  
1973-2002  
Ahrens, Lois  
1998-2000  
Box 11  
Akko Festival  
ca. 1994  
Box 11  
Allston Brighton Arts Council  
ca. 1983  
Box 24  
Allston Brighton Theater Workshop  
ca. 1985  
Box 24  
Ambrová, Alena  
1980-1981  
Box 11  
American Repertory Theatre  
1992-1993  
Box 11  
Argentina  
1993  
Box 11  
Arnoult, Philip  
1991-1995  
Box 11  
Arnoult, Philip  
1996  
Box 11  
Arnoult, Philip  
1996  
Box 12  
Arnoult, Philip  
1997  
Box 12

Arnoult, Philip  
1997  
Box 12  
Arnoult, Philip  
1998, undated  
Box 12  
Arsem, Marilyn  
1985-1987  
Box 24  
Arsem, Marilyn  
1987  
Box 12  
Asian Cultural Council  
1996-1998  
Box 12  
Barba, Eugenio  
1975-1985  
Box 12  
Bornstein, Kate  
1989  
Box 24  
Central Connecticut University  
1992-1995  
Box 12  
Ceterchi, Liana  
1997  
Box 12  
Chack, David Yehudah  
1990  
Box 12  
Chadwick, Helen  
1989-1991  
Box 12  
Chiriac, Constantin  
1996-1997  
Box 12  
Church of St. Luke's & St. Margaret's  
1993-1997  
Box 12  
Chwat, Jacques  
1973-1985  
Box 12  
Chwat, Jacques  
1982-1986  
Box 25  
Chwat, Jacques  
1986  
Box 25  
Coigney, Martha  
1987-1998  
Box 12  
Conference on Cultural Conservation  
1987  
Box 25  
Coorlawala, Uttara  
1982-1985  
Box 25  
Coorlawala, Uttara  
1984-1988  
Box 12  
Cordon, Bonnie  
1988-1997  
Box 12  
Cox, Amelia  
1993-1996  
Box 12  
Cox, Amelia  
1997  
Box 12  
Cunha, Edite  
2000-2001  
Box 12  
Czechoslovakia  
1991  
Box 13  
Dishy, Andrea  
1986  
Box 13  
Double Edge Theatre: community support letters  
1991-1994  
Box 13  
Double Edge Theatre: Gardzienice  
1986  
Box 25  
Double Edge Theatre: Gardzienice Consortium  
1999  
Box 13  
Double Edge Theatre: Gardzienice Consortium  
2000  
Box 13  
Double Edge Theatre: Gardzienice Consortium  
2001  
Box 13  
Double Edge Theatre: general  
1982-1994, undated  
Box 13  
Double Edge Theatre: general  
1982-1986  
Box 25  
Double Edge Theatre: workshop residency  
1998  
Box 13  
Duffy, Maureen

undated  
Box 13  
Durand, Carroll  
1982-1997  
Box 13  
Dzamonja, Dario  
undated  
Box 13  
Facing History and Ourselves  
1988-1989  
Box 25  
Flaxman, David  
1986-1996  
Box 13  
Gabow, Michelle  
1989-1990  
Box 13  
Gardzienice Theatre  
1986-2001  
Box 13  
Gardzienice Theatre: national theater status  
1998-1999  
Box 13  
Germany: tour contacts  
1995  
Box 13  
Gierat, Krzysztof  
1992-1999  
Box 13  
Göcker, Ayten  
undated  
Box 13  
González, Pilar Medina  
ca. 1986  
Box 13  
Greenhalgh, Jill  
1986-1987  
Box 13  
Greenland Friteater  
1988-1996  
Box 13  
Griggs, Michael  
1994  
Box 13  
Grusková, Anna  
1995-1996  
Box 13  
Heggen, Gonne and Poelstra, Frans  
1991  
Box 25  
Hur, Soon-ja  
1996-1997  
Box 13  
International Meeting of Moving Theatre  
1998  
Box 14  
Israeli Fringe Theatre Festival  
1994  
Box 14  
Janiszewski, Tadeusz  
1994-1995  
Box 14  
Jausovec-Novack, Aniece  
1994  
Box 14  
Jones, Rhodessa  
1992  
Box 14  
Joods Historisch Museum  
1994  
Box 14  
Jordcircus  
1987-1989  
Box 14  
Kanter, Shauna  
1990  
Box 14  
Katal, Dmytro  
undated  
Box 14  
Keller, Anthony  
1996-1999  
Box 14  
Kesmarky, Nora  
1999  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: biographical material  
ca. 1985-1996  
Box 14  
Klien, Stacy: correspondence  
1981-1992  
Box 25  
Klien, Stacy: correspondence  
1982-1986  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: correspondence  
1987-1988  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: correspondence  
1989-1991  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: correspondence  
1992-1996

Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: correspondence  
1997  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: correspondence  
1998-2001  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: correspondence  
undated  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: dissertation  
1988  
Box 14  
Klein, Stacy: dissertation  
1988  
Box 15  
Klein, Stacy: speeches and writings  
1992-1997, undated  
Box 15  
Kot, Marcin  
1997  
Box 15  
Kroetz Dramatik  
1986-1988  
Box 25  
Krukowska, Jolanta  
ca. 1986  
Box 25  
Krukowski, Wojtek  
1988-1989  
Box 15  
Krukowski, Wojtek  
1988  
Box 25  
Lica, Anna  
1986  
Box 25  
Lorca, Frederico Garcia  
undated  
Box 15  
Lubavitch  
1987  
Box 25  
Makuch, Janusz  
1995  
Box 15  
Marmor, Kathy  
1989  
Box 15  
Milosevic, Dijana  
1998  
Box 15  
Mirecka, Irena  
1984-1986  
Box 25  
Molik, Zygmunt  
ca. 1984  
Box 25  
Murray, Michael  
1990  
Box 15  
Nascimento, Claudia Tatinge  
1997  
Box 15  
New England Foundation for the Arts  
1993  
Box 15  
Odin Teatret  
1980-1999  
Box 15  
Ostaszewski, Jacek  
1988-1989  
Box 15  
Palar, Max Edison  
1982-1987  
Box 15  
Paquin, Normand  
1993-1994  
Box 15  
Peitso, John  
1997  
Box 15  
Pilgrim Theatre  
1993, 2002  
Box 15  
Plotksy, Netta  
ca. 1983  
Box 25  
Plotksy, Netta  
ca. 1987  
Box 15  
Poland: festival correspondence  
1991-1997  
Box 15  
Popchristov, Damian  
1987  
Box 15  
Portland State University  
1994-1998  
Box 15  
Primus Theatre  
1995-1996  
Box 15

Prithvi Theatre  
1998  
Box 15  
Reichblum, Bill  
1986-1999  
Box 15  
Rendra, W.S.  
1981-1987  
Box 15  
Reyna, Marie  
2000-2001  
Box 15  
Robins, Daina  
1983-1984  
Box 15  
Roth, Beatrice  
1987  
Box 16  
Sadowski, Andrzej  
1995  
Box 16  
Saito, Ikuko  
1986-1987  
Box 16  
Samarth, Alaknanda  
1987  
Box 16  
Samarth, Alaknanda  
1987  
Box 25  
Samarth, Alaknanda  
1987  
Box 16  
Sarabhai, Mallika  
1990  
Box 16  
Scales, Barbara  
1996-1998  
Box 16  
Scott, Alexander  
1987-1989  
Box 16  
Seattle Repertory Theatre  
1995  
Box 16  
Senelick, Laurence  
1991-1993  
Box 16  
Serious Play  
1998  
Box 16  
Sherman, Margo Lee  
1987  
Box 16  
Sibiu International Theatre Festival  
1997  
Box 16  
Slowiak, James  
1989  
Box 16  
Spain: tour contacts  
undated  
Box 16  
Stage International  
1991  
Box 16  
Staniewski, Wladzimierz  
1980-1988  
Box 16  
Staniewski, Wladzimierz  
1992-1996  
Box 16  
Staniewski, Wladzimierz  
1997  
Box 16  
Staniewski, Wladzimierz  
1998-2000  
Box 16  
Takei, Kei  
1976-1984  
Box 25  
Takei, Kei  
1976-1985  
Box 16  
Talking Debs, Inc.  
1998  
Box 16  
Teatr Powszechny  
1994  
Box 16  
Teatret Marquez  
1985  
Box 25  
Teatret Yorick  
1987  
Box 25  
Teatret Yorick  
1988-1994  
Box 16  
Theatre of Nations (Korea)  
1996-1997  
Box 16  
Tierney, Hannah

1986  
Box 16  
Timmons, Ann  
1989  
Box 16  
Todorov, Petar  
1995-1996  
Box 16  
Toll, Nelly: Without Surrender posters  
undated  
Box 28  
Trust for Mutual Understanding  
1993-2001  
Box 16  
University of Tennessee Theatres  
1992  
Box 16  
Uriona, Carlos  
1997  
Box 16  
Vasiliu, Codruta  
1999  
Box 16  
Vaughn, Roderick  
undated  
Box 16  
Ward, Lucy  
undated  
Box 17  
Warner, Gwynne  
1996  
Box 17  
Women in Theatre Festival  
1984-1986  
Box 17  
Women in Theatre Festival  
1987-1989  
Box 17  
Women in Theatre International: Magdelena Project  
1986  
Box 25  
Zlatkes, Gwido  
ca. 1986  
Box 25  
Zlatkes, Gwido  
1987-1995  
Box 17  
Series 4: Administration  
1982-2001  
Advertising  
1984-1986  
Box 17  
Application  
1986  
Box 25  
Biographical sketches  
ca. 1990-2000  
Box 17  
Board of Directors  
1982-1986  
Box 25  
Box office  
1994-2000  
Box 17  
Brochure: DET history  
ca. 1997  
Box 17  
Building use agreement  
1985-1986  
Box 25  
Calendars  
2000  
Box 17  
Company members and staff  
1983-1984  
Box 25  
Contracts  
1982-2000  
Box 17  
Contracts: Church of Sts. Luke and Margaret  
1985-1994  
Box 17  
Contracts: Odin Teatret  
1985  
Box 17  
Contracts: Theatre of Nations (Seoul-Kyonggi)  
1997  
Box 17  
Conversation project: contracts  
1997  
Box 17  
Conversation project: finances  
1997-1999  
Box 17  
Conversation project: meeting notes  
1997  
Box 17  
Finances  
1982-1985  
Box 25  
Finances  
1983-1991  
Box 25

Finances  
1986-1998  
Box 18  
Finances: accounts payable  
1996-1997  
Box 18  
Finances: Blood Rubies  
1982  
Box 25  
Finances: budgets  
1985-1992  
Box 25  
Finances: budgets  
1989-1992  
Box 18  
Finances: Chehov Project  
1986  
Box 26  
Finances: Gardzienice  
1986, 1996  
Box 18  
Finances: Gardzienice  
1988  
Box 26  
Finances: Gardzienice  
1998-1999  
Box 18  
Finances: Gardzienice  
2000-2001  
Box 18  
Finances: Request Concert  
1982-1985  
Box 26  
Finances: Rites  
1982  
Box 26  
Finances: Song of Absence  
1987  
Box 26  
Floor plan: Harris, Ryan  
undated  
Box 18  
Fundraising  
1981-1982  
Box 26  
Fundraising  
1982-1991  
Box 18  
Grants  
1983-1985  
Box 26  
Grants  
1995-1996  
Box 18  
Grants: Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities  
1985  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities  
1986  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities  
1987  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities  
1987  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities  
1988  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities  
1988  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Cultural Council  
1990  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy  
1984-1985  
Box 26  
Grants: Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy  
1985  
Box 26  
Grants: Sommerville Arts Council  
1983-1985  
Box 26  
Letterhead and stationery  
undated  
Box 18  
Liability forms  
1989-1998  
Box 18  
Massachusetts Cultural Alliance: Organizational Development Project  
1983  
Box 27  
Memoranda  
1982-1983  
Box 27  
Minutes  
1983  
Box 18  
Minutes  
1984-1985  
Box 19  
Minutes

1986, 1993  
Box 19  
Mission statements  
ca. 1984  
Box 27  
Newsletter  
1985-1986  
Box 27  
Newspaper clippings: MCC funding  
1993  
Box 19  
Outreach  
1985-1987  
Box 27  
Printed materials: brochure inserts  
1985-1988  
Box 27  
Printed materials: brochure inserts  
ca. 1990  
Box 27  
Printed materials: brochures  
1985-1988  
Box 27  
Printed materials: brochures  
ca. 1991  
Box 27  
Promotion packet  
ca. 1988  
Box 27  
Schedules  
ca. 1989, 2008  
Box 27  
Second Stage Programs: letters of agreement  
1994-1996  
Box 19  
Travel  
1997-2000  
Box 19  
Travel: Gardzienice  
1986  
Box 19  
Travel: Ukrانيا  
1994  
Box 19  
Writings and miscellaneous  
1987, undated  
Box 19  
Workshops  
1987-1988  
Box 27  
Series 5: Photographs and Videos  
1970-1998  
Akademia Ruchu  
1982-1986  
Box 19  
Ambrová, Alena  
undated  
Box 19  
Armenian Youth Federation of Boston  
1989  
Box 19  
Arnoult, Philip  
1988  
Box 19  
Arsem, Marilyn  
1987  
Box 19  
Blood Rubies  
1982  
Box 19  
Blood Rubies  
1982  
Box 19  
Bold Stroke For a Wife  
1985  
Box 19  
Bold Stroke For a Wife  
1985  
Box 19  
Coorlawala, Uttara Asha  
undated  
Box 19  
Chehov Project: Work on 3 Sisters  
1986  
Box 19  
Chehov Project: Work on 3 Sisters  
1986  
Box 19  
Company portraits  
undated  
Box 19  
Electra  
1987  
Box 27  
Electra  
1988  
Box 19  
Electra: negatives  
1987  
Box 27  
Electra: slides  
1987  
Box 27

Farm life (Ashfield, Mass.)  
ca. 1996  
Box 19  
Gardzienice  
1980-1985  
Box 19  
Gardzienice  
1979-1980  
Box 27  
Gardzienice: Metamorphosis  
undated  
Box 19  
Gardzienice: Taos (New Mexico)  
1998  
Box 19  
Gatherings  
undated  
Box 19  
Grenland Friteater  
1991  
Box 20  
Had She Spoken  
1984  
Box 20  
Had She Spoken  
1984  
Box 20  
Hunger Artist  
1984  
Box 20  
Hunger Artist  
1984  
Box 20  
Maleczek, Ruth  
1983  
Box 20  
Mirecka, Rena: Beckett  
1985  
Box 20  
Mirecka, Rena: Italy  
1985  
Box 20  
My Sister in This House  
1983  
Box 20  
My Sister in This House  
1983  
Box 20  
My Sister in This House: negatives  
1983  
Box 20

Head shots of entire company.

My Sister in This House  
1983  
Box 27  
Odin Teatret: productions  
undated  
Box 20

Figures 1.1-1.20.

Odin Teatret: productions  
undated  
Box 20

Figures 2.1-2.49, 3.1.

Odin Teatret: productions  
undated  
Box 20

Figures 4.1-4.14.

Palar, Max  
1975-1987  
Box 20  
Plotksy, Netta  
undated  
Box 20  
Protnowski, Kenta  
1987  
Box 20  
Rendra-Bengkel Theatre  
1970-1987  
Box 20  
Request Concert  
1986  
Box 27  
Request Concert: negatives  
1986  
Box 27  
Rites  
1981  
Box 20  
Rites  
1982  
Box 20  
Samarth, Alaknanda  
1981  
Box 20  
Sleeveless Theatre  
undated  
Box 20

Song of Absence: art work and documentary research

1987

Box 20

Song of Absence: Poland research

ca. 1985

Box 21

Song of Absence

1986-1987

Box 21

Song of Absence

1988

Box 21

Pre-Poland tour.

Song of Absence

1988

Box 21

Polish tour.

Song of Absence

1988

Box 21

Song of Absence

1989

Box 21

Song of Absence

1990

Box 21

Song of Absence

undated

Box 21

Technical shots.

Song of Absence

undated

Box 21

Negatives.

Song of Songs

1990

Box 21

Prepatory work in Maine.

Song of Songs

1990-1991

Box 21

Song Trilogy

1998

Box 21

Suzuki Company of Toga

undated

Box 21

Takei, Kei

1982-1983

Box 21

Teatro Nucleo

undated

Box 21

Teatr Provisorium

undated

Box 21

Teatret York: Madame Bovary - Downtown

ca. 1985

Box 21

Teatret York: Richard III

undated

Box 21

Theater im Pumpenhaus

1985-1987

Box 21

Theatre Druzba

undated

Box 21

Training

1985-1986

Box 21

Training

1993-1999

Box 21

Unidentified

undated

Box 20

Unidentified

undated

Box 27

Vanch Qui Rit (Hegger/Poelstra)

ca. 1991

Box 27

Video: Had She Spoke

1984 Nov-Dec

Box 21

VHS tape re-formatted to DVD.

Video: My Sister in This House

1983 Sept-Oct

Box 21

VHS tape re-formatted to DVD.

Video: Republic of Dreams, Ukrainian Research Expedition

1994  
Box 21

VHS tape re-formatted to DVD.

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### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from Stacy Klein in 2005.

### Related Material

For collections in SCUA related to theater, see:

- [Robert Uno Asian American Women Playwrights Scripts Collection](#) (MS 345)
- New World Theater Records (RG 25/F2/2)
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## Search terms

### Subjects

- Arnoult, Philip
- Double Edge Theatre
- Durand, Carroll
- Experimental theater
- Jewish diaspora in literature
- Klein, Stacy
- Odin teatret
- Staniewski, Włodzimierz
- Stowarzyszenie Teatralne "Gardzienice"
- Theater and society
- Theater management
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- Theatrical companies

### Contributors

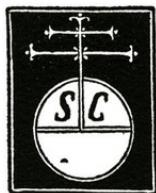
- Double Edge Theatre [main entry]

### Genres and formats

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