

BROADSIDE

NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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NEW SERIES

SARAH CHOKLA GROSS

Seven days before her fatal coronary Sarah Chokla Gross wrote in a letter "The McCord Collection, the Marion Street School Book Fair and TLA have been the major efforts of my life and it is remarkable that in the history of each I was omitted or barely noted." The history of the McCord Collection to which she referred appeared in the alumni magazine of Southern Methodist University. The Book Fair history was related in a PTA paper at the Marion Street School. *Library Journal* ran an account of a master's degree based on research on *Broadside* of which Sarah had been the sole editor and chief writer at that time. Since Sarah was a founder or prime mover in these three major efforts of her life, this memorial tribute will note something of her place in them.

Concerning her role in the Theatre Library Association I can say little except that she was a founding member and that she never lost interest in the organization. She was concerned with its vitality and growth and contributed to its activities by encouraging others to join and to participate. For years, even after the death of her only child, she edited *Broadside*, TLA's newsletter, and it was only when her husband became critically ill that she resigned as editor. She still attended meetings, however, and did what she could for the organization.

Sarah began learning the craft which she exercised for *Broadside* by beginning as a book reviewer for the *Dallas Morning News* while she was a graduate fellow in the English Department at Southern Methodist University. Soon she became assistant editor of the book page and never broke that association. Her reviews appeared frequently after she went

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GISH AWARD IN FILM CRITICISM

The *Journal of Popular Film* (Bowling Green State University, Ohio) has announced the establishment of the Gish Award in Film Criticism. This annual award, named in honor of Dorothy and Lillian Gish, will carry a stipend of \$200.00 and will be presented to the author of the best critical work of American film history published in the *Journal of Popular Film* during the previous year.

The first Gish Award will be made at the end of the current volume, Volume V. The essays will be evaluated by a Board of Judges to be named in the near future. Further information on the Gish Award will be carried on the editorial page of the *Journal*.



CHAMBERLAIN BROWN COLLECTION

A Chamberlain Brown Theatrical Scrap Book Collection is available from Gershwin & Associates. The holding consists of 148 folios featuring 132 actors and actresses of the 1920's as represented by talent agent Chamberlain Brown. The price is negotiable. Staff members of the Theatre Collection of The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center reportedly agree that these materials would enhance any theatrical library collection. Further information may be obtained from Alan C. Gershwin, Gershwin & Associates, P. O. Box 623, Radio City Station, New York, N. Y. 10019.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THEATRE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The 20th Anniversary Conference of the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) will be held in Cambridge, Massachusetts on Friday and Saturday, November 19th and 20th. The two-day program will be devoted to American theatrical subjects in recognition of the Bicentennial year and the historic Boston and Cambridge settings.

Friday morning's panel session will be chaired by Jeanne T. Newlin, Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection, with the following panelists and their respective topics: Laurence Senelik of Tufts University on the "Vaudeville Gagbook Manuscript" and Arnold Wengrow of the University of North Carolina at Asheville on the "Career of Robert Redington Sharpe and his Designs in the Harvard Theatre Collection". The program will be prefaced by remarks on the nature and new setting of the Harvard Theatre Collection by its curator.

The afternoon activities will consist of the reading of papers by Kenneth Silverman of New York University on "Economic Arguments against the Theatre in Revolutionary America" and Julian Mates on "How Does Your Musical Grow? The First 100 Years of American Lyric Theatre". Concluding the program will be a discussion on "Historic Theatre Preservation" chaired by Robert Sarlos of the University of California at Davis followed by a reception in the Harvard Theatre Collection.

The Saturday morning session will begin with the annual business meeting of ASTR followed by the reading of three papers: "Jamaican Theatre: Background to an Emerging National

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to Austin to teach at the University of Texas. After her marriage to Benjamin Gross of New York her reviews of children's literature and books on arts, crafts and antiques were regularly featured. Later she reviewed children's books for the *New York Times*, and for a time, the *Boston Transcript*. In recent years she wrote for *Publishers Weekly* and *Library Journal*. For a number of years after her daughter's death in 1954 she pursued her work as a professional editor with the Franklin Watts Publishing Company of New York. There she read, discovered, translated and edited children's books. In 1968 her own beautiful anthology *Every Child's Book of Verse* was highly acclaimed. Most recently she served as editor of the *Journal of the Long Island Book Collectors*.

Occasionally Sarah wrote stories and articles, some of which were published in *Library Journal* and the *Southwest Review*. During her last year she had been converting the diaries of her first year as a graduate student at Columbia University into a nostalgic book which she hoped to have published under the title *Green Girl*. That subject was not finished, but some of us who had read the early draft believe it could have become a volume of nostalgic charm.

The second of what she termed her "major efforts" was the Book Fair which she inaugurated at the Marion Street School where her daughter, Emily, attended. Sarah was a member of the local school board as well as an active participant in the PTA. She was a frequent visitor to the school and was shocked to find that few of the children in this prosperous neighborhood had books of their own to read at home. To call the attention of the parents to the great variety of worth-while books available and to the interest of the children in books when seen by them, Sarah arranged with publishers to display their wares at a gala evening in the school. The enticing display coaxed and seduced each child into choosing at least one volume to buy for himself. The first fair was such a success that the Marion Street Book Fair has been a tradition for over twenty years.

I was involved from the beginning in the third of Sarah's major projects. In May 1933 Sarah, then a young instructor at Southern Methodist Uni-

versity, came rushing into my office in the public speaking department after having just read Dorothy Neville's article on "Theatre Museums and their Uses" in the latest issue of *Theatre Arts Magazine*. "A theatre museum," she said. "We must have one too. It will be the first in Texas — maybe the first west of the Mississippi. We will concentrate on our region. We will comb the area and find documents and artifacts of Texas theatre history. To cap it all we will honor Miss McCord"

Professor Mary McCord was Chairman of the Public Speaking Department, the founder of and, for several years, the sole director of SMU's only play producing group. Sarah had studied with her, acted for her and admired her greatly. I agreed that we should begin work on a theatre museum as did David Russell of our department. And so did Mary McCord, the most modest of women. The fever spread Sarah's enthusiasm was infectious. Students were enthusiastic and we soon had influential Dallas people on our planning board. In June of that same year, at the annual reunion banquet of the Arden Club Players, the project was launched with the blessing of the critics of the Dallas leading newspapers. In September *Theatre Arts* reported that the McCord Theatre Museum had been founded. The article commented wryly that "Things move fast in Texas".

During that summer Sarah visited the Theatre Collection in The New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue. There she made friends who directed her to possible sources of free collectable material. They also introduced her to influential people from whom the fledgling museum received some of its first valuable items. Since that beginning few weeks have passed in which Sarah did not make some contribution to the McCord Collection. On the day of her death, July 20, 1976, we received a box of pamphlets, books and brochures.

Sarah was a compulsive collector. Her theory was that if you had one of anything you liked, you should get another. If you acquired three, you had a collection. Naturally then you had to add more. She put her theory into practice in great profusion. Her choices were varied: old glass paper weights, fans, paisley, lace, pressed glass, snuff boxes,

miniature books, Lewis Carroll, brass, copper and graphic arts — all these plus the theatre memorabilia she gathered for herself and for McCord. Her gifts include programs, playbills, posters, photography, engravings, old magazines and books. She haunted estate sales for unusual discoveries. She gave her own treasures. Perhaps the most valuable of them is her ballet collection. It is the heart of McCord's dance section.

Sarah had been my close friend since my junior year when I met this young and exceptionally eager freshman who was to become recognized in *Who's Who in American Women*. To quote Allen Maxwell's tribute in the *Dallas Morning News*, "She had an imperishable genius for friendship and the memory shall not perish."

---- Edyth Renshaw

WORKS IN PROGRESS

BONFANTI, Maria (1847-1921). Italian born ballerina. Barbara Barker, Dept. of Drama, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712.

CARTER, Mrs. Leslie (1862-1937). American actress. Ph.D. Dissertation. Charles H. Harper, 1306 Logan Street, Marquette, Michigan 49855.

CLURMAN, Harold (1901-). Director-critic-author-lecturer. Mary Craven, 4630 Saloma Avenue, Sherman Oaks, California 91403.

DIXEY, Henry (1859-1943). Actor-Manager. Ph.D. Dissertation. John Morgan, 510 West Healey St., Champaign, Illinois 61820.

DUNCAN, Maria-Theresa. (One of the famous six pupils of Isadora Duncan). Monograph. Kay Bardsley, 29 Indian Hill Road, Mount Kisco, N. Y. 10549.

GLASPELL, Susan (1882-1948). American novelist and playwright. Biography. Marcia Noe, 4130 14th St., Rock Island, Illinois 61201.

VACHÉ, William Alexander (1815-1849). American actor. Warren W. Vaché, 836 West Inman Avenue, Rahway, N. J. 07065.

WILDER, Thornton (1897-1975). American author and playwright. Biography. Linda Simon, Ice Glen Road, Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01262.

SHUBERT ARCHIVE COURSE AT NYU

During the academic year 1976-1977 the Graduate Drama Department in the School of the Arts at New York University is offering a two-semester seminar in the management of historic theatre materials. Funded by the Shubert Foundation, the course is directed by NYU Professor Brooks McNamara and is taught by Brigitta Kueppers, archivist from the Theatre Research Collection of The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center.

The seminar is being presented to eight students presently enrolled in the Ph. D. program of the Graduate Drama Department who have special interest in American theatre history and/or the problems of performing arts collections. The seminar surveys methods of organizing and preserving such items as posters, programs, stage designs and costume plates, correspondence, photographs and theatre business records. It includes lectures by librarians from major theatre collections and preservation specialists as well as practical work with the archive of the Shubert Organization, which is estimated to contain some 1,400 file drawers of theatre materials dating from the turn of the 20th-century to the mid-1950's.

Students in the class are beginning the process of organizing and analyzing these materials as part of a long-term School of the Arts project to conserve and catalog the Shubert archive which is believed to be the largest single collection of theatre documents ever generated by an American producing organization.

EARLY MUSICAL AMERICANA

Gershwin and Associates is making available an extensive collection of "Musical Americana" encompassing sheet music, songsters, broadsides, musicals, hymnals, recordings, correspondence and books. The cache consists of over 20,000 items of sheet music (many bearing American imprints prior to 1905) including ragtime hits by such virtuosos as Scott Joplin and Bert Williams; approximately one thousand songsters with a complete bound Wehman Bros. set and some related volumes of 17th-century European claim; five hundred folios of published song collections; over one hundred college songbooks and fifty hymnals;

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Theatre" by Erroll Hill of Dartmouth College; "The Theatrical Syndicate: Robber Barons in a Landscape" by Douglas McDermott of Stanislaus State College; and "Ned Harrigan: Corlear's Hook to Herald Square" by Richard Moody of Indiana University.

At one o'clock the ASTR 20th Anniversary Banquet will be held in the Lynn Room of Anthony's Pier 4 Restaurant on the Boston Harbor with a welcoming address by Walter Muir Whitehill, Librarian Emeritus of the Boston Athenaeum, entitled "The Historical Boston Waterfront and the City". Closing remarks will be made by A.M. Nagler, Professor Emeritus of Yale University, at which time the original Board of ASTR founders will be honored.

All program sessions and the ASTR business meeting will be held at the Harvard Theatre Collection. Tours of the Collection will be scheduled regularly during the conference weekend.



approximately seventy-five broadsides; over three hundred musicals; some three hundred fifty books and volumes of serials divided mainly between trade reference books and directories and works concerned with history, folklore, biography, literature and bibliography; over one thousand recordings (45rpm and some 78rpm) mostly in mint condition; an archive of 1930's correspondence reflecting the views of foreign governments on the official version of their respective national anthems; and a miscellaneous assortment of engravings, posters and periodicals.

The estimated market value of this unique collection is one hundred thousand dollars. The price is negotiable. Further information may be obtained from Alan C. Gershwin, Gershwin and Associates, P. O. Box 623, Radio City Station, New York, N. Y. 10019.

LITERATURE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS COURSE AT COLUMBIA

A new course, Literature of the Performing Arts, is being offered at the Columbia University School of Library Service this fall. The course provides a survey of reference tools and information sources in the performing arts: music, recordings, dance, theatre, films, radio and television.

The program, which carries three semester hours of graduate credit, is being taught by Susan Sommer, Head, Rare Books and Manuscript Collection of the Music Division and Curator of the Toscanini Memorial Archive of The New York Public Library. Mrs. Sommer has been a lecturer at the School of Library Service at Columbia since 1970, teaching Music Literature and Librarianship which she will continue to offer in the spring semesters.

Anyone interested in particulars may write to Admissions Officer, School of Library Service, Columbia University, New York, N. Y. 10027.

OSU THEATRE HISTORY CONFERENCE

"Teaching Strategies and Methodologies in Theatre History" is the theme of the 1977 Ohio State University Theatre Research Institute Conference to be held at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, April 15-17. The three-day symposium will be held in conjunction with the Spring 1977 Conferences of the American Theatre Association Region III and the Ohio Theatre Alliance.

Professor Allan Woods, Conference Coordinator, is currently soliciting papers for consideration and suggests that appropriate offers be sent to him in care of the Department of Theatre, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

Papers from the 1976 OSU Theatre History Conference have been issued as a supplement to *Theatre Studies* No. 22 (1975-76) under the title *Research in Theatre History: Current Projects and New Directions*. Persons interested in acquiring these proceedings may do so by sending a request to the Department of Theatre at The Ohio State University with an enclosure of one dollar fifty cents (\$1.50) to cover postage and handling charges.

THEATRICAL EVOLUTION EXHIBITION

Theatrical Evolution: 1776-1976, by Kenneth Spritz. (Yonkers, N. Y.): The Hudson River Museum, (1976). 120 p. Profusely illus. Paper. \$6.95.

In the introduction to this catalogue of the Hudson River Museum's exhibition of *Theatrical Evolution: 1776-1976*, Kenneth Spritz defines his aim: "An exploration of extant artifacts in collections throughout our nation which best demonstrate the changing performance style, play content, and visual quality of our theatre." He comes closer to describing the result when, a few paragraphs later, he calls the exhibition "a colorful sampling of a colorful story."

Among the artifacts in the exhibition (more than 150 of which are illustrated in the catalogue) were scenic designs and models, portraits of performers, views of theatres, playbills, posters, carnival sideshow banners, pottery figures, and photographs. Among the unusual items were a mid-19th-century American scenic design for *Our American Cousin*, Tom Thumb materials from the Somers Historical Society (N. Y.), a splendid view by Hassam of MacKaye's projected Spectatorium, and a full-size scenic drop from the Harmount Company's early twentieth-century productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The modern American Theatre was also well represented. In addition to numerous stage designs for 20th-century plays, the exhibits included leaves from Robert Wilson's production notebook for *A Letter to Queen Victoria*, a videotape of a Mabou Mines production, and numerous photographs of experimental work. The designs of Boris Aronson, Lester Polakov, and Harry Horner were over-represented, apparently because they were willing to lend. I was happy to see Robin Wagner's totem pole for *Hair* (an important icon) and Ming Cho Lee's designs for the New York Shakespeare Festival.

In the text for this catalogue,



Mr. Spritz attempts to encompass in a short space 200 years of theatrical history, with the added difficulty of keying his remarks to the illustrations. The result is, perhaps unavoidably, superficial. Some obvious spelling errors, however, could have been avoided, and some of the descriptions could have been more carefully composed. The view of Plumstead's warehouse is plainly not an "engraving, 1754". A little research would, I suspect, show that this is a late 19th-century copy of a detail from an earlier view. The "color lithograph, 1812," of the burning of the Richmond Theatre is impossible. In 1812 chromolithography was primitive in Europe and unknown in the United States. Finally, I wonder why, of all the excellent and informative illustrations in this catalogue of Americana, the one chosen for the cover is a fanciful, misleading view of the stage of an unidentified and probably English theatre.

—Richard Stoddard

Editor's note: Clothbound copies are also available at \$10.00. All orders should be sent to the distributor, Publishing Center for Cultural Resources, 27 West 53rd Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Prices quoted include postage and handling. No state sales tax is applicable.

PUBLICATION OF NOTE

How to Locate Reviews of Plays and Films: a Bibliography of Criticism from the Beginnings to the Present, by Gordon Samples. Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976. 114p. index. \$6

Research and reference specialists will do well to read with care and attention the compiler's preface to this guide to reviews and critiques of plays and films before using, because "within most sections the selected items are chronologically arranged by years covered, not by publication date of the books". Samples continues, "thus, by first determining the production or publication dates of the play or film in question, one may more easily spot criticism for that year or period of time. This method also throws together items by genre; e.g., the Medieval Stage, the Baroque Stage; or the silent film and the experimental film. By first using the groupings of the table of contents in contents in conjunction with the chronologies and the index, one should be directed more quickly to the material desired".

The bibliography is divided into two main parts: plays and films. Both parts contain sections for review indexing services, criticism checklists, collected critics' reviews, leading periodicals and newspaper indexes arranged chronologically by years of coverage. Chronologies of study guides covering the period from the 12th-century B.C. for plays, and from 1889 for films are also included.

A section on play synopses is included for those looking for special scenes, monologues and types of plays, as well as for those seeking to determine controlling agencies for performers. A listing of film distributors' catalogs covers the major companies offering films for rental and sale. A directory of dealers who can supply research service in locating movie stills, posters, press-books and other cinema memorabilia is also included.

Officers of the Theatre Library Association (founded 1937); *President*, Robert M. Henderson, Chief, Library & Museum of the Performing Arts, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10023; *Vice-President*, Hobart Berolzheimer, Mark Wilson Collection of Literature Department, Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103; *Secretary-Treasurer*, Richard M. Buck, Assistant to the Chief, Performing Arts Research Center, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10023; *Recording Secretary*, Paul R. Palmer, 560 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. 10027. *Broadsides*, edited by Louis A. Rachow, Librarian, The Walter Hampden Memorial Library at The Players, 16 Gramercy Park, New York, N. Y. 10003, is published quarterly by the Theatre Library Association, 111 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10023, whose membership dues of \$10 annually (\$15 for institutions) include *Performing Arts Resources* published annually.