

University of Victoria Special Collections and University Archives

Finding Aid - Theatre Energy fonds (SC581)

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Theatre Energy fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	University of Victoria Special Collections and University Archives
Title:	Theatre Energy fonds
Reference code:	SC581
Date:	1970s to 1990s (date of creation)
Physical description:	3.25 m of textual records and other materials

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Theatre Energy, 1976-1993, was a prominent, innovative theatre collective in the West Kootenay area of British Columbia. Centred originally in the Slocan Valley, it was founded in the spring of 1976 when a small group of local actors, who had been staging amateur productions of published plays, decided to “do theatre in a bigger way, to making our own plays.” They began by offering a series of community summer workshops, utilizing the skills of local and outside resource persons, notably Ronnie Gilbert who had been a member of Joseph Chaikin’s Open Theatre Company in New York and Buzz Bense who had worked with Tamahnous Theatre collective in Vancouver. Both became active members of Theatre Energy. The original company consisted of eight members operating as a theatre collective whose mandate was to make theatre “by, for and about the Kootenays,” creating their first work, *Renderings*, with stories and images from their direct experiences of living in the Slocan Valley. This was followed by works of local histories such as *Voices, Now and Then in the Kootenays* (tales of settlement of various peoples in the Valley), which had a number of incarnations as a touring show to high schools, and a number of locally inflected works. These included *Muck Millie Virgil* (open and non-monogamous relationships), *Powerplay* (exploitation of local natural resources), *The Girls Will Be Out in a Minute* (Kootenay women from historical and contemporary periods), and *The Food Show* (issues and celebrations of food). Eventually the Company began to include non-original, published plays beginning with *Waiting for Godot* and *The Threepenny Opera* in the early 1980s.

Through much of their production history, Theatre Energy members typically toured shows throughout the East and West Kootenays, as well as the Okanagan, and with occasional forays into the Cariboo District and Vancouver. These included school performances of the theatre-in-education, audience participation plays *Project Immigration* and *Calling the Play*. The company ceased operations in the mid-1990s.

Scope and content

The fonds consists of histories of Theatre Energy, records of early, founding activities, drafts of original scripts, and files regarding the non-original scripts, all ordered chronologically. Included alongside

the scripts are correspondence, the company's financial and operational records, including financial statements, employment records, fund raising files, miscellaneous performance projects, journals, reviews, and posters.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the contents of the fonds.

Immediate source of acquisition

Gift of Penny Haggarty via James Hoffman, April 2015.

Accruals

2019-001, 2022-016

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
 - **Level of detail:** Partial
 - **Status description:** Revised
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Access points

- Textual record (documentary form)
 - financial records (documentary form)
 - posters (documentary form)
 - plays (performing arts compositions) (documentary form)
 - drafts (documents) (documentary form)
 - grants (documentary form)
 - Theatre management (subject)
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Collection holdings

Accession: SC581-2019-001 - Textual Records and Graphic Material

Title: Textual Records and Graphic Material

Reference code: SC581-2019-001

Date: 1970s to 1990s (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The accrual consists of histories of Theatre Energy, records of early, founding activities, drafts of original scripts, and files regarding the non-original scripts, all ordered chronologically. Included alongside the scripts are correspondence, the company's financial and operational records, including financial statements, employment records, fund raising files, miscellaneous performance projects, journals, reviews, and posters.

Physical description: 9 boxes, 1 OS box.

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
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