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Creator: Michigan Theater Foundation
Title: Michigan Theater Foundation records
Inclusive dates: 1981-1996
Bulk dates: 1989-1995
Extent: 2.5 linear feet (in 3 boxes)
Call number: 2011096 Aa 2

Language: Material is in English
Acquisition: Donated by Michigan Theater Foundation (Donor no. 10558) in May 2011
Accruals: Periodic additions to the collection are expected.
Access: The collection is open without restriction.
Photographs: Photographs located in Box 1
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Processed By: Olga Virakhovskaya in July 2011

Abstract

Collection of administrative records, grant proposals, and fundraising materials of the Michigan Theater Foundation in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

History

The Michigan Theater, currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places opened its doors in January 1928. The architect, Maurice H. Finkel of Detroit, designed it for both live stage and film performances. Angelo Poulos, a local businessman constructed the shell of the theater and the adjoining office building, W.S. Butterfield Company which operated several motion picture and vaudeville theater in Ann Arbor and throughout Michigan, supervised the construction and furnishing of the theater's interior. An eleven-piece orchestra accompanied the live stage acts, while the silent movie shows were accompanied by the Barton Pipe Organ. In 1929 the orchestra and vaudeville presentations were disbanded as the Michigan Theater switched to the an all-talking film format, but the Barton Organ was played into the 1940s. On occasion during the 1930's, 40's, and '50s touring Broadway shows played live-on-stage and included such stars as Helen Hayes, Ethel Barrymore, Paul Robeson, Uta Hagen, Jose Ferrer, Zasu Pitts, and Bela Lugosi.

As television started to replace the movies as the public's first choice for popular entertainment, the management took an attempt to "modernize" the theater in 1956. Unfortunately, the original architectural design of the façade and outer lobby were destroyed, and stylistically inappropriate fixtures replaced the original chandeliers and wall sconces.

In the 1960s-1970s the theater became less and less profitable to operate, and the Butterfield Theater Corporation decided not to renew their lease and the theater was put up for sale. A number of area volunteers joined the forces to buy the Ann Arbor landmark. In 1979, the theater was sold to their newly-formed Michigan Theater Foundation, a non-for-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the facility.

The new ownership and the Ann Arbor business and citizens community stepped in to assist with financing the purchase of the building. In 1985 the Michigan Theater embarked on a \$1.5 million fundraising campaign to restore the theater to its 1920's glory. The theater reopened in 1986.

Scope and Content Note

The records date to the period of the Michigan Theater Foundation's intensive fundraising campaign to preserve the Michigan Theater and its life during first decade after it reopened its doors in 1986.

The **Administrative** series contains records of the Executive Director, the Board of Trustees, administrative committees, as well as by-laws, budgets, financial statements and correspondence regarding donations in kind made by the Michigan Theater to local groups and organizations; also included here materials related to special programs that took place at the Theater, membership campaigns and volunteer recruitment, and photographs.

The **Grants** series contains grant proposals, descriptions of programs, and letters of support accompanying Michigan Theater's grant applications for federal, state, and private funding. Also included here are materials regarding awards received by the Michigan Theater.

The **Fundraising** series includes correspondence with individual and corporate sponsors and fundraising organizations, information about private and corporate giving; records related to specific fundraising needs, events and campaigns led by the theater.

Box No. Description

Administrative**Box 1**

By-laws, 1989, 1993, undated
 Board of Trustees, 1991, 1993-1995
 Executive Director, 1987-1994
 Board Nominating Committee, 1992-1994
 Executive Committee, 1989, 1991, 1993-1996 (6 folders)
 Development Committee, 1988-1992 (2 folders)
 Facility Committee, 1991-1995 (2 folders)
 Fundraising Committee, 1993-1995
 Operational Support Committee, 1993-1996
 Budgets, 1981-1991
 Financial statements, 1986-1995
 Strategic planning, 1987-1992
 Awards, 1987-1991
 Donations in kind, 1987-1996 (3 folders)
 History of Michigan Theater
 Membership campaigns, 1989-1995 (with gaps)
 Special campaigns, 1988-1991, 1993-1996 (2 folders)
 Volunteer recruitment, 1991-1995
 Miscellaneous, 1986-1990
 Photographs, 1992-1995, undated

Grants**Box 2**

Ann Arbor Community Foundation, 1988-1994 (3 folders)
 Arts Midwest, 1987-1991, 1993-1995
 Mervyn's grants, 1983-1993, 1995
 Michigan Association of Community Arts Agencies, 1988-1989
 Michigan Council for the Arts, 1990, 1992 (3 folders)
 Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, 1993-1996 (4 folders)
 Michigan Equity Grant, 1989-1992 (2 folders)
 National Endowment for the Arts, 1988-1992
 Touring Arts Program, 1995

Fundraising**Box 3**

Arts in Education Project, 1990
 Corporate sponsors, 1988-1995 (4 folders)

Crisis campaign, 1991
 Direct mail campaigns, 1989-1991, 1994-1995
 Donor survey, 1990
 Fundraising events, 1983, 1987-1995 (3 folders)
 Huron Valley Fundraisers Network, 1990-1995
 Large gifts, 1989-1994
 Needs 1987-1991