

Guide to the John Braswell (1939-1989) Papers

RG 10.2

Finding aid prepared by Processed by Tara James, Fall 1999.

Reprocessed and finding aid updated June 2005 by Sarah Crossley.

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Sarah Lawrence College Archives
1999, June 2005
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Summary Information

Repository	Sarah Lawrence College Archives
Creator	Braswell, John, 1939-1989
Title	John Braswell (1939-1989) Papers
Date [inclusive]	1964-1987
Extent	2.5 linear feet 1 record carton, 1 oversize box
Language	English
Mixed materials [Oversize]	Box 2
Text [Carton]	1

Biographical note

John Braswell was born on March 16, 1939 in Paxton, Illinois. He graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana before coming to Sarah Lawrence College to study theatre in 1958. Upon completion of his M.F.A. in 1959, Braswell was appointed to the Sarah Lawrence theatre faculty, where he co-developed the theatre workshop program with Wilford Leach. In addition to his tenure at Sarah Lawrence, Braswell co-founded and co-directed the ETC Company/La Mama, where many of his plays were performed. Until his death, Braswell had remained open about both his homosexuality and his diagnosis of AIDS, even announcing it to the theatre department. He died February 14, 1989 of complications from AIDS in Champagne, Illinois.

Scope and Contents note

The John Braswell Papers consist mainly of manuscripts and theatre scripts. Original artwork, musical scores, theatre programs and reviews round out the collection. The collection is small but representative of the substantial creative body of work of which Braswell conceived. The collection is divided into six series:

- I Series I. Biological and Miscellaneous
- II Series II. Artwork
- III Series III. Lyrics
- IV Series IV. Manuscripts
- V Series VI. Scores
- VI Series V. Scripts

The collection is mainly housed in one record carton. However, four folders, belonging with the regular series are housed in a second oversize box. The newspaper clippings and Village Voice Off-Broadway OBI award are part of Series I, while “Obligato” and “Three Billy Goats Gruff” belong in Series IV.

Series Description

Series I. Biographical and Miscellaneous Series II. Artwork Series III. Lyrics Series IV. Manuscripts
Series V. Scripts Series VI. Scores

Series I. Biographical and Miscellaneous, n.d. 1964-1992 contains curriculum vitae, sparse correspondence, newspaper clippings, theatre programs and reviews.

Series II. Artwork, n.d. 1978-1986 consists mostly of original watercolors divided into an unnamed book and individual works. As well there are some drawings and exhibition info for “Crows” at the Chameleon Gallery in Brooklyn, New York.

Series III. Lyrics, n.d., 1979 contains lyrics for Braswell’s 1979 “Song Night in the City” as well as lyrics not authored by Braswell, himself, for the musical “Streetdreams” which he directed but did not write.

Series IV. Manuscripts, n.d., 1976, 1987 one of the larger series of this collection, consists of some of Braswell’s original works intended for publication in book form. Included are Acting: The Method in the Madness (Unpublished), The Artificial Grandmother (Unfinished), (Sweet) Basil: The Working Dog (Unpublished illustrated children’s book), and Moment of Bliss (Unpublished, written by Braswell, and illustrated by Susan Haskins).

Series V. Scripts n.d., 1972-1987 probably the most significant part of the John Braswell papers, this series consists of theatrical scripts, mostly authored by Braswell, himself. Those created by other playwrights are noted as such. Additionally, two Sarah Lawrence Faculty Show scripts are housed in this series. Some scripts contain handwritten notes such as Champagne Anyone?, The Elephant Calf, and The Interior Castle. A Kind of Hamlet was written by Jim Coates and re-written again by Charles Soule in 1882. The Moon’s On Fire is a play addressing issues of homosexuality. Reviews and programs corresponding with scripts are housed in their own folders in Series I.

Series VI. Scores n.d. contains the musical scores for theatrical plays. The series is small and one-third of it is authored by someone other than Braswell. This is noted in the folder list and on the folder.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Sarah Lawrence College Archives 1999, June 2005

Revision Description

Entered into Archivists' Toolkit by Dylan Emmons February 2013

Conditions Governing Access note

The collection is open to researchers without restriction.

Acquisition Note

Donated by Pearl Braswell, 1999.

Related Materials

See also

John Braswell Photograph Collection for photographs donated with this collection as well as the Sarah Lawrence College Faculty Files for information pertaining to Braswell's tenure at the College.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Sarah Lawrence College. Theatre Department.

Genre(s)

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Manuscripts (document genre)
- Programs (documents)
- Scores
- Works of art

Subject(s)

- Sarah Lawrence College

Series I. Biographical and Miscellaneous

Collection Inventory

Series I. Biographical and Miscellaneous	
	Carton
Curriculum Vitae undated, circa 1976	1
Correspondence undated, 1981-1992	1
Miscellaneous undated, 1976	1
	Oversize
Newspaper Clippings circa 1970-1971	Box 2
	Carton
Newspaper Clippings undated, 1972, 1986-1990	1
Programs undated, 1964-1987	1
Reviews undated, 1972-1973, 1979	1
	Oversize
Village Voice Off-Broadway Award (OBI) undated	Box 2
Series II. Artwork	
	Carton

Series III. Lyrics

Drawings undated	1
Exhibition: "Crows," Chameleon Gallery, Brooklyn, NY undated	1
Watercolor Book, Untitled 1986	1
Watercolors undated, 1978, 1985-1986	1

Series III. Lyrics**Carton**

Song Night in the City 1979	1
"Sweetdreams" (not authored by Braswell) undated	1

Series IV. Manuscripts**Carton**

"Acting: The Method in the Madness" undated	1
"The Artificial Grandmother" circa 1970s	1
"The Incan Princess" undated	1
"A Moment of Bliss" (Authored by John Braswell, Illustrated by Susan Haskins) undated	1
	Oversize

Series V. Scripts

"Obligato" (not authored by Braswell) undated	Box 2
	Carton
"(Sweet) Basil, The Working Dog" 1976	1
	Oversize
"Three Billy Goats Gruff" undated	Box 2
Series V. Scripts	
	Carton
"Anouijian: The Genius" 1987	1
"Artificial Love: A Comedy in Two Parts undated	1
"Buried Child" (not authored by Braswell) undated	1
"Champagne, Anyone?" undated	1
"Child's Garden of Curse: A Domestic Tragedy" undated	1
"Corsage" undated	1
"The Early African Piece" 1973	1
"The Elephant Calf" undated	1

Series VI. Scores

"Four Saints in Three Acts" (not authored by Braswell) undated	1
"Hamlet Revamped" (not authored by Braswell) 1882	1
"Incarnate" (SLC Faculty Shows) 1985, 1987	1
"The Interior Castle" undated, 1973, 1979	1
"King Stag: An Adaptation from the Original" undated	1
"The Moon's on Fire" undated	1
"Nobody Should Sleep with Everybody (The Bar That Never Closes)" 1972	1
"Pecan, a Déjà vu" circa 1981	1
"Therapy" undated	1
"Tree of Night" undated	1
"Troyer" undated	1
Series VI. Scores	
	Carton
"Troyer" undated	1