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the large panels to form the background for scenes where the heads of several characters are seen. Boxes have been eliminated, leaving, occupying the space generally devoted to upper boxes, there is a small balcony on either side of the stage. On occasion, these balconies are used in conjunction with the stage.

Contrasting with the soft brown tones of the oak, are the light plaster ornamented ceiling, the plaster base, crystal chandeliers, the blue curtains (black printed in silk), and the conventional velvet hangings on the window side. These curtains open and disappear into the driveway through which one glimpses colorful grass and paintings hung on the rough plaster window walls.

The Kenneth Saxon Goodson Memorial Theatre, which is so significant a monument to the young playwright, is now the last monument, not to the architect who conceived and brought into being, in spite of various obstacles, a theatre of charm and beauty as expressive of his own ideal as design as of the dramatist's ideal as expression. Standing in one personality in the complete building of Goodson (for which Mr. Saxon was known), with the spirit of Kenneth Saxon Goodson, whom the architect immortalized by the use of quotations from the young playwright's works, such as, "You remember that old story in the legend which you have brought," carried in mind over the prominent work, and another inscribed in the stone band over the stage entrance, which reads: "To preserve the old values and to win the new."

That is the purpose of the theatre: to glorify, then, the ideal of the young dramatist set forth in perfect harmony with the design of the architect.

46. PASADENA PLAYHOUSE

Pasadena, California

Opened May 18, 1925

Among the leaders of the community theater movement was the Pasadena Playhouse,

under the direction of Gilmore Brown. For nearly fifty years this playhouse stood for excellence in regional theater. Since it was founded in a community that had huge talent resources, the Playhouse has over the years fostered many outstanding stars and contributed greatly to the community theater movement and to professional theater throughout the United States.

The Playhouse was closed in 1970 because of financial difficulties, but the directors of the Playhouse hoped to reopen it once again.

The following historical account of the theater and its founders was published the year following the opening of the playhouse on May 18, 1925.

46:1 In the fall of 1916, Mr. Gilmore Brown brought his company of professional players to the Savoy Theatre—the old Community Playhouse—and many groups of people interested in the drama assisted and encouraged his attempt to keep alive the spoken drama, which, due to the war and the advent of the movies, was threatened with destruction.

The following summer the Community Players was organized around this group under an Advisory Committee and a program of play production with this nucleus of paid professionals assisted by amateurs was adopted, Mr. Brown assuming all financial responsibility. At the end of the first season, the financial condition becoming desperate, it was found to continue the services of these faithful professionals who had remained steadfast through two trying years.

After much hard, discouraging work the Advisory Committee, late in the summer of 1918, took the plunge and organized the Pasadena Community Playhouse Association, a legally incorporated non-profit organization with a Board of Directors that assumed all financial responsi-

46:1. Clinton C. Clarke, "Playhouse History," *Pasadena Community Playhouse Association Year Book, 1925-26* (Pasadena: The Playhouse, 1926), pp. 10, 16.

bility and management, reconstructed the players on a purely amateur basis, and engaged Mr. Brown as manager and director. In November, 1918, production was started in the Shakespeare Clubhouse, three nights a week, the highest seat price 50 cents. However, this arrangement proving unsatisfactory both financially and in arousing public interest, the players soon returned to the Savoy, which was rented outright and renamed the Community Playhouse.

Attendance and interest increasing and the quality of the productions showing great improvement, the directors, by employing a trained publicity expert, put on an extensive campaign of selling the idea to the general public. Three years passed before definite results were obtained. While these foundations were being built the Association survived two serious financial crises—the two years of the influenza epidemic when attendance fell off markedly and the theatre was closed for long periods during the winter months. It was a question whether the organization could survive these blows, but through the financial assistance of interested friends the work continued.

During these formative years three attempts were made to obtain a suitable, convenient building through co-operation with commercial projects. Unfortunately the permanence of the playhouse not being sufficiently established, the money could not be found and failure resulted.

One project almost won through when the Association encountered its severest test and passed the most critical period of its career. The coming to Pasadena of a professional stock company, which, encouraged by the success of the Community Players, put on good plays in a new modern theatre near the old, poorly ventilated and heated, dilapidated Playhouse, brought competition almost too great to overcome.

At once all hope of a new theatre was gone, and the very existence of the movement threatened. This challenge only stim-

ulated the players and their friends to greater efforts to prove that they had at last become a necessary, a vital factor in the community life of the city. That the average theatre goer should flock to this new toy was to be expected; the first year of this unanticipated competition demanded unswerving loyalty and devotion. Again a large financial loss was incurred. However, the following winter the players by raising their work to a high standard of acting and production, won back their audience, and the value of permanence of the organization was universally acknowledged.

Thus encouraged a serious business-like campaign was started to build a suitable theatre for the exclusive use of the players. The public generously supported the project, a lot was purchased, plans drawn, and money donated. At the end of two years of steady advancement, the building was finished. The players and their friends, 3000 strong, moved triumphantly into their new home, eight years after a building committee appointed far back in 1917, to "obtain a suitable building" reported "progress."

In the same publication as the previous article was another, "Facts and Figures," by Robert O. Foote, one of the active members of the Playhouse.

46:2 The present Playhouse was opened May 18, 1925, after nearly nine years of operations in a little old ex-burlesque house on North Fair Oaks Avenue.

The Playhouse seats 820 persons, 608 on the main floor and 212 in the balcony. Depth of auditorium is 69 feet, 2 inches; height, 33 feet, 1 inch; width, 63 feet, 11 inches. It is built upon a lot 110 by 195 feet.

The dimensions of the stage are: Height of proscenium, 20 feet; width of

46:2. Robert O. Foote, "Facts and Figures," *Pasadena Community Playhouse Association Year Book, 1925-26*. (Pasadena: The Playhouse, 1926), pp. 11, 16.

stage opening, 31 feet, 6 inches; depth of stage from curtain line to rear wall, 30 feet, 11 inches; width of stage from wall to wall, 80 feet; height of fly loft from stage level, 67 feet; forty-five sets of rope lines; twenty-one sets of counter weight work lines; 116 dimmers on switchboard; four light boarders; approximate number of lights in auditorium, 974.

Seating capacity of the Recital Hall, 300. The Recital Hall is 26 feet, 10 inches wide and 78 feet long; stage, width 19 feet, 8 inches; depth, 10 feet, 3 inches; height, 9 feet, 4 inches.

There are 11 exits off the auditorium and the amount of time necessary to empty capacity houses is three minutes.

There are 1000 costumes in the wardrobe, of an approximate value of \$7,000.

Twenty-eight regular plays have been given in the new Playhouse, with 275 performances. Approximately 700 persons have participated in the plays and about 500 people have worked on the production and costume committees.

The acoustic perfection of the auditorium is assured by the scientific treatment of the ceiling which is covered with two inches of felt and open-meshed cloth.

The heating and ventilating system provides for a great volume of water-washed and moistened air, circulating downward from openings beneath the ceiling and out by openings under the seats, in such quantity as to be wholly without drafts and regulated or heated to the proper temperature by means of numerous thermostats.

The switchboard cost \$15,000 and weighs 6 tons. Through it all the lighting units are controlled by one man. The lighting plant, in addition to the usual stage lights, has disappearing foot-lights, electricians gallery, concealed spot lights in the false boxes in front of the stage, an anti[ante]-proscenium gallery for lighting in front of the regular stage opening, and a disappearing foot-light in rear of stage. For handling the scenery are six

miles of rope and three miles of steel cable. The "grid" from which hangs all the scenery equipment weighs 27 tons, and is suspended from the roof 67 feet above the floor. Light in four colors is used throughout the theatre—white, California gold and two new shades of red and blue, never before seen in a theatre.

The Green Room beneath the stage is the home of the actors. Around this and leading from it are ten dressing rooms, two chorus rooms, make-up room, costume room, musicians' room, ushers' room, toilets and showers, and kitchen. Cast dinners and other social affairs are held in the Green Room.

The stone pavement in the court is made of petrified sea plants and ferns. It was found 200 miles from the sea in Nevada at an elevation of 5,000 feet.

There are 18 inter-phones and 8 outside phones.

The total value of the entire plant is over \$400,000.

There are 66 rooms of all kinds in the building.

Each play is rehearsed an average of eighteen times.

Over 100,000 pieces of mailing matter were sent out last year from the office. Over \$130,000 is handled each year through the business office. Practically all printed material used by the Playhouse with the exception of the Playhouse News and the tickets is done in the Playhouse. All financial details involved in the operation and maintenance of the building are handled through the Playhouse office.

In 1943 an article brought the history up to that date.

46:3 On May 18, 1925, with paint still tempting to the inquisitive finger and concrete not completely set, the curtain went up in the new Playhouse on Victor Mapes' *The Amethyst*.

46:3, "And Then . . . May 18, 1925," *And Then . . . the Pasadena Playhouse* (Pasadena: The Playhouse, 1943).

There seldom has been so proud an audience. And with good cause. Its members had built a far better theater than the ambitious dreams of most had dared conceive. In so doing they proved to the most sceptical critics that real drama was very much alive and enthusiastically supported 3000 miles from the canyons of Manhattan.

Just as far removed from the New York idea of a theatre was the Playhouse building itself. It was designed to hide its modern efficiency behind the leisurely effect of soft adobe and red tile, of curving staircases, playing fountains and fronded palms. From the patio to the stage, the Playhouse is architecturally a lovely reminder of California's heritage from the days of the dons and the mission padres.

However, even the most rabid of streamlined modern architects will admit that the Playhouse stands as a model of what an efficient play-producing plant should be. Its success as a functional unit has been proved repeatedly in the years since its curtain had its first proud rising.

The first years in the new building brought expansion in every department of Playhouse affairs. They brought satisfaction, to be sure; yet, on the other side of the ledger was a bonded debt of approximately \$200,000. Interest and principal payments haunted the management with visions of bankruptcy should unforeseen events suddenly throw akilter the delicate balance of income and outgo. Several factors, however, served considerably to brighten this picture.

The never to be forgotten part Mrs. Fannie Morrison played in strengthening and extending the Playhouse at this time and later is a simple but greatly significant chapter in its history. In May, 1930, this quiet lady inquired at the Playhouse box office as to how she might help the Association. Told of the heavy mortgage which was preventing the organization from making any definitely great strides

forward, she sent the Association a check for \$180,000 to lift this bonded debt.

Again, in 1936, Mrs. Morrison donated \$160,000 for the acquisition of property adjoining the Playhouse and for the erection of the new six-story annex, which for the first time made it possible to house all the various departments under one roof.

Second important factor was the reorganization of the Playhouse into two major departments . . . production and business. Gilmore Brown became Supervising Director and assumed charge of production; Charles Prickett, retaining his position as head of the business department, became General Manager. In this way, a synchronization of the various sub-departments, in both production and business was achieved. This eliminated waste and friction, kept red ink to a minimum during depression years.

Physical expansion, moreover, increased Playhouse problems other than of a financial nature. The dangers of professionalism, of separation of Playhouse and community, of a gradual decline in cultural and artistic integrity might have become real had not a system of organization capable of preventing them been evolved.

In the fore of that system is the loyal audience built up over the years—an intelligent, critical audience which can be said to be almost permanent.

With a high dramatic goal in view, plays for the winter season are selected during the summer by Gilmore Brown, who works out a schedule of dates for each production. From this point organization steps are as follows:

Six to ten weeks before an opening date, casting committee, director, and assistants meet to read and discuss the play. From a card index of some 1000 volunteer actors a cast is selected and tryouts are held. Weeks of intensive rehearsal follow.

Meanwhile, sets are designed and made up in model form. Details are worked out

with the Stage Manager and his assistants. Building, painting, and decorating of sets is done in the Playhouse workshop. The Costume Committee makes costumes or selects them from the Playhouse Wardrobe, which contains 10,000 costumes valued at \$40,000. The Production Committee assembles the properties from the huge Playhouse property room or obtains loans of furniture and needed accessories from stores and friends.

During this preparation, the Business Office sees that tickets are sold, programs made up, publicity and advertising effectively circulated.

Finally opening night arrives. In the audience, as the footlights go up, are the familiar faces of many who have long been Playhouse "first nighters" and who form the backbone of the patronage that has kept the Playhouse alive these many years. Almost invariably there will be visitors from afar, for the reputation of the Playhouse has spread over the world and it has become a sort of mecca for those who love good drama. Then, too, there will be super-critical patrons who visit the Playhouse in their professional capacities in search of new material, both plays and players, so frequently found on the Playhouse stages. For the Playhouse is widely recognized as the most fertile source of new faces in the dramatic arts. Those whom its stages have helped include some of the most famous names in lights today, as well as many who, though still obscure, are aided in their struggle toward professional recognition by the impetus of their work at the Playhouse.

47. CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE

Cleveland, Ohio

Opened April 9, 1917

47.1 The Cleveland Play House is an out-

47.1 Edith Jones, *Architecture for the New Theatre* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1935), pp. 84-87. Copyright 1935, 1937 by Theatre Arts, Inc.

standing example of a city theatre built to meet the needs of an organized permanent company carrying on a heavy production program in a main auditorium, and experimental work in a smaller stage in the same building.

Red brick with red sandstone trim and graduated stone walls. Main composition good. Stage tower an effective expression of a difficult element. Excellent auditorium completely parallel to heavy girders, good acoustically and in color. Balcony rather low. Porch beside proscenium do not improve acoustics. Seating area spread too closely. Mechanical appliances very good. Stage quite high above auditorium floor. Removable area for circulation. One end of lounge used as smoking room. Small area included in lounge space is good weather. Interesting double use of area for large and small auditoriums. Fine arrangement of two stages for joint use of shops, desks, and dressing rooms. Main stage a good working size, completely trapped. No cross-over on stage when planned back wall is used as cyclorama. Rigging worked from fly gallery stage left. Spot booth and ceiling beam system. Removable stage over orchestra pit. Dressing rooms with exterior balcony over lobby. Ample workshops and desk, paint frame and wall, small property room, storage on left over desk and under stage. Workshops area small, supplemented by attic space. Completely equipped laboratory theatre seating 174. Traps, vestibule, gridiron, good depth on stage, front-of-house lighting, no footlights. Rehearsal or ballet room on upper floor with large open-air deck. Lunch room next to kitchen on third floor. Library, staff reading room, study room, entrance between dressing rooms corridor and stage. Two telephone booths. Office.

Edith Jones described the Cleveland Play House in 1935. This remarkable organization had its beginnings back in 1917, and in the early 1970s was still a vigorous project.