Guide to the University of Chicago, Off-Off Campus Records 1986-2008
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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.OFFOFF
Title  University of Chicago. Off-Off Campus. Records
Date  1986-2008
Size  5.5 linear feet (8 boxes)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
            University of Chicago Library
            1100 East 57th Street
            Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Off-Off Campus is a student improvisation theater group founded at the University of Chicago in 1986. The Records include administrative files, advertising and written short scenes.

Information on Use

Access
This collection is open for research with the exception of Box 5, which is restricted until 2045.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: University of Chicago. Off-Off Campus. Records, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Historical Note
Off-Off Campus is the second oldest continuously running student improvisation theater troupe in the country, with the first generation of actors dating back to 1986. Improvisational and sketch comedy first started at the University of Chicago in the 1950’s as a group of students formed the Compass players on campus, which in 1959 became The Second City. In 1986, U of C Alum and Second City co-founder Bernie Sahlins (A.B. ’43) returned the University campus in order to begin a south side group to rival his north side creation. Sahlins trained the first generation of Off-Off Campus in the art of sketch and improve comedy, using the same technique he had developed and taught 27 year prior within his classroom. The group has continued to use this same regiment of training since.

The troupe is set to the rhythm of the University of Chicago quarter system, casting a new “generation” each fall, who regularly produce a theater revue in the autumn, winter, and spring. The group also brought comedy to the orientation week (O-Week) of the University of Chicago and many other Midwest schools as they used sketch comedy as a means of transmitting
messages and mirth to incoming freshman. For a period of time, the group also participated in the international Fringe Theater festival.

Some of the groups alumni have gone on to further success in theater and comedy including David Auburn, winner of the Pulitzer prize for his show (and now film) Proof, Greg Kotis, best known for penning the Tony award winning musical Urinetown, and Tami Sagher, writer on the television series “30 Rock.” Early comedic sketches written by David Auburn and Tami Sagher can be found within the collection.

**Scope Note**

The collection contains assorted administrative records from the campus group including correspondence regarding its founding, general correspondence, budgets, and scenes related to their Orientation tours and Edinburgh fringe festival ephemera related to their productions. The collection also contains a vast collection of their written scenes dating from the first generation of the troupe (1986) until today. Some of these represent the early comedic works of writers David Auburn and Tami Sagher.

**Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

http://off-off.uchicago.edu

**Subject Headings**

- Auburn, David
- Kotis, Greg
- Sahlins, Bernard
- University of Chicago. Off-Off Campus
- Theatrical Companies
- Improvisation (acting)
- Sketch Comedy

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: General Administrative**

- Box 1
  - Folder 1
    - Off-Off Campus Constitution, undated
- Box 1
  - Folder 2
    - Running Order and Schedules, 1987
- Box 1
  - Folder 3
Audition, The second generation 1986-1987
Box 1
Folder 4
  Auditions, The eighth generation, 1993
Box 1
Folder 5
  Off-Off Campus clippings 1986-1994
Box 1
Folder 6
  Casting, budgets, correspondence, 1985-1990
Box 1
Folder 7
  Posters, scenes, clippings, correspondence, 1988-1995
Box 1
Folder 8
  Posters, Mailing Lists, Correspondence, 1993-1994
Box 1
Folder 9
  Cast List, 2008
Box 1
Folder 10
  Program Pictures, 1994-2005
Box 1
Folder 11
  Program Pictures Spring 1997-1997
Box 1
Folder 12
  Program Pictures 2005-2006
Box 1
Folder 13
  Pre-Fall Shows, Programs, 1992-1993
Box 1
Folder 14
  'Peel Carefully, Display Proudly' Program, Spring 1992
Box 1
Folder 15
  'Euripides, You Pay for them' Program, Autumn 1993
Box 1
Folder 16
  'Slinky: The Unwinding' Program, 1994
Box 1
Folder 17
  'The comedy Group Formerly Known as: Off-Off Campus' Program, Autumn 1994
Box 1
Folder 18
  'All Thumbz, no Fonz' Program, Spring 1995
Box 1
Folder 19  
Tickets, 1995
Box 1
Folder 20  
'UnderDogma' Program, Spring, 1997
Box 1
Folder 21  
'Improv-o-rama' Program, Summer 1998
Box 1
Folder 22  
'Big Bang, Big Crunch, Big Deal' Program, Autumn 1998
Box 1
Folder 23  
'Truth Decay' Program, winter 2000
Box 1
Folder 24  
'The Amazing Lipnicki Revolution' Program, Winter 2000
Box 1
Folder 25  
'Plays of Future Past' Program, Winter 2001
Box 1
Folder 26  
'If these Balls Could Talk' Program, Autumn 2001
Box 1
Folder 27  
'Riddle of the Sphinx' Program, Spring 2002
Box 1
Folder 28  
'Recess(ion)' Program, Autumn 2008
Box 1
Folder 29  
Advertising, 2005-2006
Box 1
Folder 30  
A river runs through Id Program, DVD 2002

Series II: Short Scenes

Box 1
Folder 31  
Scenes 1988-1995
Box 1
Folder 32  
Plays for Off-Off campus First and Second Generations, 1987-1993
Box 1
Folder 33
Box 2
Folder 1
Box 2
Folder 2
Box 2
Folder 3
    Short Scenes by Third and Fourth Generations (4), 1987-1994
Box 2
Folder 4
Box 2
Folder 5
    Short Scenes by Fifth and Sixth Generations (1), 1993
Box 2
Folder 6
    Short Scenes by Fifth and Sixth Generations (2), 1993
Box 2
Folder 7
    Short Scenes by Fifth and Sixth Generations (3), 1993
Box 2
Folder 8
    Short Scenes by Seventh and Eighth Generations (1), 1990-1994
Box 2
Folder 9
    Short Scenes by Seventh and Eighth Generations (2), 1993-1994
Box 3
Folder 1
    Short Scenes by Seventh and Eighth Generations (3), 1994
Box 3
Folder 2
    Short Scenes by the Twelfth Generation, 1998-1999
Box 3
Folder 3
    Short Scenes by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Generations (1), 1999-2001
Box 3
Folder 4
    Short Scenes by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Generations (2), 2000-2001
Box 3
Folder 5
    Short Scenes by the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Generations, 2003
Box 3
Folder 6
    Short Scenes by the Nineteenth and Twentieth Generations, 2005-2006
Box 3
Folder 7
  Short Scenes by the Twenty Second Generation, 2008
Box 3
Folder 8
  Short Scenes, undated
Box 3
Folder 9
  Short Scene: Reunion, undated

Series III: Orientation Week, Laughing For Understanding, and Edinburgh Fringe Festival
Box 3
Folder 10
  O-Week Scenes and Scene Lists, 1986-1993
Box 3
Folder 11
  Orientation Week Scenes and Information (1), 1991-1993
Box 3
Folder 12
  Orientation Week Scenes and Information (2), Flyers, 1991-1993
Box 3
Folder 13
  Orientation Information, 1995
Box 3
Folder 14
  Off-Off Campus Tour, 1994-1995
Box 3
Folder 15
  Laughing for Understanding Performance Agreement (1), 1995
Box 3
Folder 16
  Laughing for Understanding Performance Agreements (2), 1995
Box 3
Folder 17
  Laughing for Understanding Scenes (1), 1995
Box 4
Folder 1
  Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 1989-1995
Box 4
Folder 2
  Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 1989-1995
Box 4
Folder 3
  Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 1991
Box 4
Folder 4  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 1991-1993
Box 4  
Folder 5  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival (1), 1993
Box 4  
Folder 6  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival (2), 1993
Box 4  
Folder 7  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival (3), 1993
Box 4  
Folder 8  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival (1), 1994-1995
Box 4  
Folder 9  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival (2), 1994-1995
Box 4  
Folder 10  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 1995
Box 5  
Folder 1  
   Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Checks, 1993-1995 [R-50]

Series IV: Oversize Advertising Posters

Box 6  
Folder 1  
   'Gill Kill ProuDale, ' Poster (1), 2001
Box 6  
Folder 2  
   'Gill Kill ProuDale Poster (2), 2001
Box 6  
Folder 3  
   'The Spooky Good Improv Hour' Poster, undated
Box 7  
Folder 1  
   'Honey I Faxed the Kids' Posters, Fall 1989
Box 7  
Folder 2  
   'Discomfors at Yalta' Poster, spring 1991
Box 7  
Folder 3  
   'Answers to Odd Numbered Problems' Poster, Winter 1992
Box 7  
Folder 4  
   'Peel Carefully, Display Proudly' Poster, spring 1992
Box 7
Folder 5
'Euripides, You pay for them' Poster, Fall 1993
Box 7
Folder 6
'Looks Like Wicker, Feels Like Heaven' Poster, Spring 1994
Box 7
Folder 7
'Winfield, Alabama' Poster, Winter 1994
Box 7
Folder 8
'You say Potato, I say New Jersey' Poster, Spring 1995
Box 7
Folder 9
'Step 5: Destroy' Poster, Winter 1996
Box 7
Folder 10
'UnderDogma' Posters, 1997
Box 7
Folder 11
'Glacier!' Poster, Winter 1998
Box 7
Folder 12
'Spaghetti Western Canon' Poster, Spring 1998
Box 7
Folder 13
'Big Bang, Big Crunch, Big Deal' Poster, Fall 1998
Box 8
Folder 1
'You're a Dead Man, Charlie Brown' Poster, Winter 1999
Box 8
Folder 2
'The Afterlife for Dummies' Poster, Spring 2000
Box 8
Folder 3
'Plays of Future Past' Poster, 2001
Box 8
Folder 4
'A River Runs Through Id' Poster, Fall 2002
Box 8
Folder 5
'Pastor Muppets' Poster, Winter 2003
Box 8
Folder 6
'Pillow Fight Club' Poster, Spring 2003
Box 8
Folder 7
  'Pants Pants Revolution!' Poster, Spring 2005
Box 8
Folder 8
  'The House that Crack Built' Poster, Fall 2004
Box 8
Folder 9
  'Mild, Mild West' Poster, Winter 2005
Box 8
Folder 10
  'Welcome to the Pleasure Dome' Poster, Fall 2005
Box 8
Folder 11
  'Where the Wild Things At’ Poster, 2006
Box 8
Folder 12
  'Umbrella for Beginners' Poster, Spring 2006
Box 8
Folder 13
  'The Giving up Tree' Poster, 2006-2007