



A Backstage Pass to the Past

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA WEBB

CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE
PRESENTS

Cleveland Play House was founded in 1915. Billed as the nation's first regional theater, it survived two world wars, the rise and fall of the city's industrial might and the invention of alternate forms of entertainment, including radio, television and the Internet.

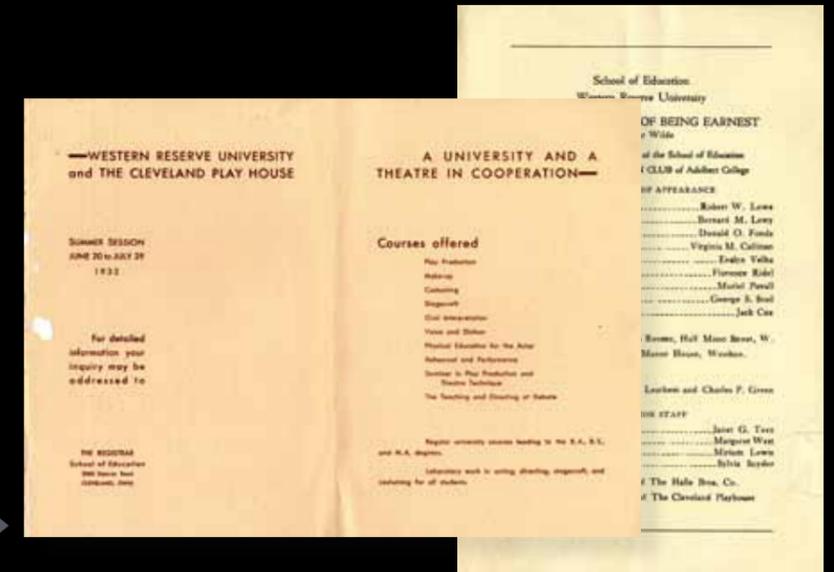
The history of the venerable theater, and with it the cultural and economic ups and down of the region and the nation, is chronicled in a trove of archival materials recently granted to Case Western Reserve University.

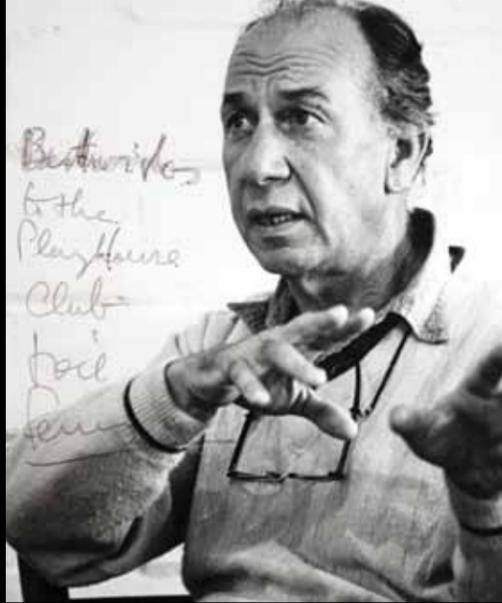
Archival experts at the university, which has long been a partner of the theater, are daily encountering new gems from the more than 1,000 boxes in the collection, including letters from Tennessee Williams and George Bernard Shaw; original programs and posters; set and costume designs; photographs of famed performances and actors; and much more. Staff members at the Kelvin Smith Library are working tirelessly to uncover, identify, restore and catalogue the treasures in this special collection.

Think was offered a sneak peak at some of what has been found thus far, and more is being uncovered every day. University archivist Jill Tatem is posting images and information about new pieces as they become known. Follow her progress at bit.ly/GRdbJS.

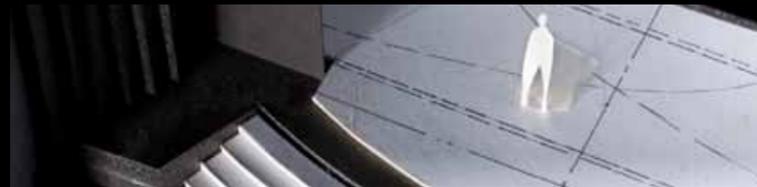
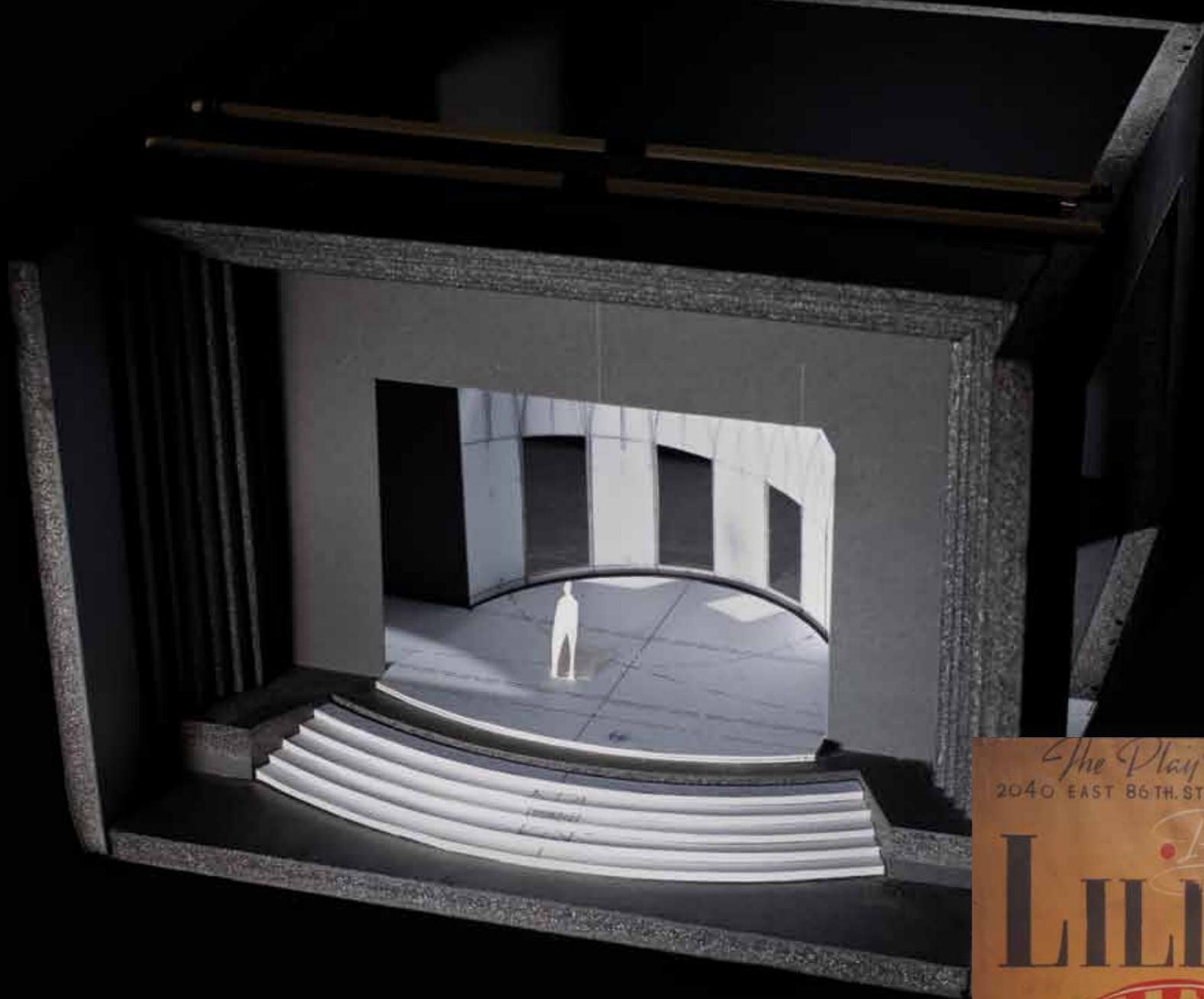
◀ Model and details of the set design for *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, a play about an encounter between Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso, performed at the Play House during the 1989–90 season.

A pamphlet describes the cooperation between the theater and the university, announcing courses offered to Case Western Reserve students in 1932; a program credits a cast of Case Western Reserve students in a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. ▶





▲ The Play House has played host to some influential performers, including (clockwise from top left) Jose Ferrer, Henry Fonda, Margaret Hamilton and Paul Newman.



▲ A set design model shows a lone actor.



▶ A poster for a performance of *Liliom* (1938–39). It was the basis for the musical *Carousel*.

