

# “The Miracle” Scrapbook

This scrapbook contains information pertaining to the stage production of "The Miracle" which drew large audiences to Convention Hall for the performances in 1926.

## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Unknown (Perhaps the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce)

**Title:** "The Miracle" scrapbook

**Date:** 1926

**Size:** 1 scrapbook, 1 box

**Location:** SC30-9

## Administrative Information

**Restrictions on access:** Unrestricted access.

**Additional physical form available:** Photocopies only available, photograph digitized.

**Acquisition information:** Unknown

**Citation note:** "The Miracle" scrapbook (SC30-9), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

## Collection Description

### **Biographical/Historical note**

The stage production of "The Miracle" was presented in Kansas City, Missouri at the Convention Hall, running from November 22, 1926, to December 11, 1926. This religious pantomime based on a Christian legend was originally staged and produced by Max Reinhardt. The show originated in London in 1911 and played to 16 cities all over Europe before coming to the United States. It was produced in this county by Morris Gest with set designs by Norman-Bel Geddes.

The Kansas City Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in bringing the production to this area. Arthur Hardgrave, President of the City Ice Company, was general chairman and represented the Chamber. Only a few larger cities east of Kansas City had secured the play at the time. After leaving here it played to a few cities on the West Coast.

For this spectacle, Convention Hall was transformed into a medieval cathedral and the audience was incorporated into the setting. The cast included 600 performers and there was a large choir, an orchestra, a pipe organ and bells and chimes. It was "theatre without stage or curtain, drama without words, opera without lyrics", *Kansas Citian*, March 30, 1926. Ticket prices were kept low, \$1.10 - \$4.40, so that more could attend the performances. It was determined that the show needed 40% out-of-town support in order to be the most successful. There were reportedly 4,500 people in attendance on opening night with an over all attendance of 88,000.

Stars present here from the original New York cast included Lady Diana Manners, Iris Tree, Elinor Patterson, Luis Rainer, Fritz Feld, and others. The total

cost of the production was estimated at \$240,000. The music was written by Engelbert Humperdinck, using a foundation of mostly hymns and folksongs.

### Scope and content note

The original scrapbook was 18 in. by 24 in. and held almost exclusively newspaper clippings. The 73 scrapbook pages were numbered in processing. The scrapbook was disassembled, pages photocopied and these placed in 8 legal size folders. The original pages were then discarded, retaining the photocopies only. The majority of the newspaper clippings are roughly arranged by newspaper title and are dated throughout 1926, being fully cited. The bulk of the clippings come from these local newspapers in this order:

*Kansas City Times*  
*Kansas City Journal*  
*Kansas City Post*  
*Kansas City Journal-Post*  
*Kansas City Star*

The Chamber of Commerce publication *Kansas Citian*, is also featured at the end of the scrapbook. The following local publications are also included to a lesser degree:

*Kansas City Presse* (German)  
*Kansas City Independent*  
*Kansas City Freemason*  
*Midwest Merchant*  
*Greater Kansas City Knights of Columbus Bulletin*  
*Kansas City News Presse*  
*Kansas City Jewish Chronicle*  
*Kansas City Call*  
*Kansas City, Missouri Herald*  
*Midwest Merchant*

Numerous other clippings may be found toward the end of the scrapbook. These give general media coverage of the event as well as personal column snippets found in town newspapers. It appears that a clipping service was used to gather articles from the following states:

Kansas  
 Missouri  
 Texas  
 Oklahoma  
 Nebraska  
 Arkansas

The clippings found throughout the scrapbook feature advertisements, articles, reviews, feature stories, pictures, local business endorsements with ads, etc. Also included; 1 black and white promotional photograph featuring Lady Diana Manners captured in her role of the Madonna in the play, a few fold out/flyer publications, and a reading list pamphlet done by the Kansas City Public Library.

Additional associated material may be found in the department's book collection under the following two call numbers: MVSC Q793.12 U9S and MVSC M782.9 H92M (musical score). Most of the factual information for this finding aid came from the *Kansas Citian* articles located in the scrapbook.

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Sara Nyman, April 1999.