

Kenneth W. Leish Theatre Reviews, 1961-'68

Scope and Content Note

Variety Newsprint clippings of reviews of off-Broadway openings, or follow-up reviews of long running Broadway shows, or shows with a new cast. Includes annotations by the author-donor. Occasionally includes letters and memos from readers, editors or cast.

Persons of note (award winners, or mentioned at least 3 times): Alvin Ailey, Alan Arkin, Leonard Bernstein, Ray Bradbury, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, Rosemary Harris, James Earl Jones, Le Roi Jones, Linda Lavin, Ming Cho Lee, Liza Minelli, Jerry Orbach, Estelle Parsons, Harold Pinter, George C. Scott, Stephen Sondheim, Jon Voight, Billy Dee Williams.

The records may contain harmful language that reflects attitudes and biases of their time.

Provenance

Collected, compiled and occasionally annotated by the original creator, Kenn. Donated to MU in 2018.

Biographical/Descriptive Note

Kenneth W. Leish (Kenn.) was a freelance drama critic in New York City from 1961-1966 for *Variety Magazine*. *Variety's* policy did not allow the use of critic's full names, and Leish signed his reviews "Kenn."

Leish was born in Cambridge, MA in 1936. He grew up in Boston and Brockton, where he attended many shows at Boston's renowned theaters, the Shubert, the Wilbur, and Emerson's Colonial Theatre and Cutler Majestic Theatre. His usual seat was in the second-story balconies (the cheap seats!). At the time many Broadway productions had Boston try-outs before bowing on Broadway. It was not uncommon for shows to undergo major revisions, deletions or additions of songs during these Boston-based runs. Boston was also a prime engagement for second companies and touring editions of Broadway hits.

Leish graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard in 1958 as an English major with a thesis on Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. He then attended the Columbia graduate school of Journalism in New York and remained there to work in publishing. Leish's publishing career included 15 years at the American Heritage Publishing Company, where he edited scores of books on American history and the creative arts, and eventually became manager of the book division and vice president of the publishing company. Leish married Barbara Ackerman in 1966, with which he has 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

Leish also worked at Bantam Books before becoming Vice President of Grolier Publishing Company. His projects included "Hello America," a mixed media project for English language learners. Leish even

wrote 2 books for Newsweek Books about the history of movies and the history of the white house. Nevertheless, Leish watched as many plays and musicals as possible, on and off Broadway. He retained all his theatre programs, which he then donated to the University of Missouri in 2018.

Conditions of use

Access

Materials do not circulate but are available to all users in the special collections reading room during [service hours](#) or by appointment.

Collection details

1 archival box, 1.25 linear feet.

5 hard cover 3-ring binders. 1 1-inch binder, 2 3-inch binders, 2 2-inch binders

Contains newsprint clippings from *Variety Magazine*, letters from readers, memos from editors and Leish's annotations.

Series Descriptions:

Kenn. *Variety* theater reviews. Arranged by author-donor. Original order preserved.

Inventory

Box 1– Kenn. *Variety* theatre reviews

[includes bio and footnotes by Leish. Archivist notes marked "A/N:"]

Binder #1 – 1961-1962

Title	Annotations	Binder
Autobiographical note		1
<i>A Worm in The Horseradish</i>		1
<i>Ladies' Night in A Turkish Bath</i>		1
<i>Anything Goes</i>	A Major Hit!	1
<i>The Only Sense Is Nonsense</i>		1
<i>The Seven at Dawn</i>		1
<i>Happy As Larry</i>		1
<i>A Fig Leaf in Her Bonnet</i>		1
<i>Walt Whitman Am I</i>		1
<i>No Corner in Heaven</i>		1

<i>The Apple</i>	Living Theatre was an important producer of avant-garde plays	1
<i>The Dark Lady of The Sonnets</i>		1
<i>The Ticket-Of-Leave Man</i>		1
<i>All Kinds of Giants</i>		1
<i>Brecht On Brecht</i>		1
<i>A Stage Affair</i>		1
<i>The Lovers in The Metro</i>		1
<i>The Man of Destiny</i>		1
<i>Fly Blackbird</i>		1
<i>The Book of Job</i>		1
<i>Dumbell People in A Barbell World</i>		1
<i>Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in The Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad</i>	A great success. Kopit wrote many more plays. Barbara Harris was a delight	1
<i>This Side of Paradise</i>		1
<i>Signs Along the Cynie Route</i>		1
<i>The School for Scandal</i>	APA Rep. was a superb company with the great Rosemary Harris as leading lady. Many great actors appeared in their productions	1
<i>Mummers & Men</i>		1
<i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>		1
<i>Nathan The Wise</i>		1
<i>Solo</i>		1
<i>Half Past Wednesday</i>		1
<i>The Tavern</i>		1
<i>At Sea and Aleestis Comes Back</i>		1
<i>King Of the Whole Damn World</i>		1
<i>If Five Years Pass</i>		1
<i>Come Out Carlo! and In the Penal Colony</i>		1
<i>The Father</i>		1
<i>The Mime's Eye View</i>		1

Binder #2 – 1962-1963

Title	Annotations	Binder
Off-B'way Follow-up: Second City	Second City Improvisational Company from Chicago flourished off-Broadway	2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Mary, Mary</i>	Legit Follow-Ups are reviews of Broadway shows with cast changes	2
<i>The Days and Nights of Beebee Fenstermaker</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Milk and Honey</i>		2

<i>Sweet Miani</i>		2
<i>Digging For Apples</i>		2
<i>Wretched The Lionhearted and A Toy for The Clowns</i>		2
<i>Iolanthe</i>		2
<i>Take Her, She's Mine</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Night of The Iguana</i>		2
<i>King Lear</i>		2
<i>Raisin' Hell in The Son</i>		2
<i>The Tempest</i>	Note from Hobe Morrison, long-time head of Variety's theater desk.	2
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	George C. Scott went on to play many great parts on Broadway and in films. James Earl Jones in an early appearance	2
<i>The Cat's Pajamas</i>		2
<i>Down In the Valley and Look at Us</i>		2
<i>The Kumquat in The Persimmon Tree</i>		2
<i>The Mikado</i>		2
<i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Sound of Music</i>		2
<i>Man Is Man</i>		2
<i>A Man's a Man</i>		2
<i>Angels Of Anadarko</i>	"Hints to First-Nighters"	2
<i>Hints To the First-Nighter</i>		2
<i>A Thousand Clowns</i>		2
<i>The Sound of Music</i>		2
<i>O Say You Can See!</i>		2
<i>The Love of Two Hours</i>		2
<i>The Anvil</i>		2
<i>Intimate Relations</i>		2
<i>P.S. 193</i>		2
<i>We're Civilized</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>No Strings</i>		2
<i>A Tenth of An Inch Makes a Difference</i>		2
<i>The Living Room</i>		2
<i>Macbeth</i>		2
<i>Camelot</i>	Phone message for Ken Leish, reporting words of praise from <i>Variety</i> editor	2
<i>The Dumbwaiter and The Collection</i>	American audiences took time to appreciate Harold Pinter, a major British playwright	2

Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>		2
<i>The Cherry Orchard</i>	More kind words from Hobe Morrison	2
<i>Whisper into My Good Ear</i> and <i>Mrs. Dally Has a Lover</i>	Rave review for Estelle Parsons, future Oscar-winner	2
<i>Pullman Car Hiawatha</i>		2
<i>The Coach with Six Insides</i>		2
<i>The Love Nest</i>		2
<i>The Night is Black Bottles</i>		2
<i>Riverwind</i>		2
<i>The Wide-Open Cage</i>		2
<i>Parnassus '63</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Carnival</i>		2
<i>Desire Under the Elms</i>	Coleen Dewhurst was one of the greatest actresses. At this time, she was married to her co-star Georg [sic] C. Scott also a superb actor	2
<i>Abe Lincoln In Illinois</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>A Funny Thing Happened on The Way to The Forum</i>		2
<i>Mary, Mary</i>		2
<i>I Got Shoes</i>		2
<i>A Doll's House</i>	Later productions showed that <i>A Doll's House</i> was far from out-dated	2
<i>The Typist</i> and <i>The Tiger</i>	Wallach and Jackson appeared later on Broadway in Schigal's <i>Lov</i> , a big hit	2
<i>Vanity Of Nothing</i>		2
<i>The Laundry</i>		2
<i>New Girl in Town</i>		2
<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>		2
<i>A Wilde Evening with Shaw</i>		2
<i>The Taming of The Shrew</i>		2
<i>Six Characters in Search of An Author</i>		2
<i>A Darker Flower</i>		2
<i>The Magistrate</i>		2
<i>Yes Is for A Very Young Man</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Camelot</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Stop the World – I Want to Get Off!</i>		2
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Fade Out – Fade In</i>		2

<i>The Firebugs</i>		2
<i>Do You Know the Milky Way?</i>		2
<i>Hey you, Light Man</i>		2
<i>Call It Virtue</i>		2
<i>Darkness At Noon</i>		2
<i>Best Foot Forward</i>	Liza Minelli scores her first hit	2
<i>Legit Follow-Ups: Tehin-Tehin</i>		2
<i>The Good Soldier Schweik</i>		2
<i>The Dragon</i>		2
<i>The Emperor</i>		2
<i>The Boys from Syracuse</i>	Revival of Rodgers and Hart Show is a big hit!	2
<i>The Saving Grace</i>		2
<i>Oklahoma</i>		2
<i>Legit Follow-Ups: Calculated Risk</i>		2
<i>Enter Laughing</i>	Kenn. is criticized by a reader. Abel Green, publisher of Variety, sent it.	2
<i>The Square Root of Wonderful</i>		2
<i>The Lion in Love</i>		2
<i>The Chief Thing</i>		2
<i>The Blue Boy in Black</i>		2
<i>Utopia!</i>		2
<i>The Uncommon Denominator</i>		2
<i>Save Me A Place at Forest Lawn and The Last Minstrel</i>		2
<i>Five Evenings</i>		2
<i>Room Service</i>		2
<i>Put It in Writing</i>		2
<i>Night Of the Auk</i>		2
<i>The Summer of Daisy Miller</i>		2
<i>Along Came a Spider</i>		2
<i>The Brig</i>	Another audacious success from Judith Malina and Julian Beck's Living Theater	2
<i>The American Dream</i>		2
<i>A Month in The Country</i>		2
<i>Asides and Ad-Libs</i>		2
<i>Off-B'way Was In-'N'-Out In '62-'63, But Season Had Quota of Rewards</i>	Assessment of the '62-'63 Off-Broadway Season	2
<i>Off B'way's 1962-63 Season</i>		2

Binder #3 – 1963-1964

Title	Annotations	Binder
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<i>The Gondoliers</i>		3
<i>Chiaroscuro</i>		3
<i>Patience</i>		3
<i>Cages</i>	Brilliant acting by Shelley Winters and Jack Warden	3
<i>The Living Premise</i>		3
<i>Tour De Four</i>		3
<i>Brecht On Brecht</i>		3
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Beyond the Fringe</i>		3
<i>Never Too Late</i>		3
The Second City		3
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>		3
<i>Beyond The Fringe</i>		3
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Cages</i>		3
<i>Plutus</i>		3
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>		3
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Best Foot Forward</i>		3
<i>Five Queens</i>		3
<i>A Time of The Key</i>		3
<i>The Bald Soprano</i> and <i>The Lesson</i>	Ionesco hits off-Broadway	3
<i>A Political Party</i>		3
<i>The Spots of The Leopard</i>		3
<i>Color Of Darkness</i>		3
<i>Opening Night</i> and <i>A Matter of Like Life and Death</i>		3
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Fantasticks</i>		3
<i>Mister Johnson</i>		3
<i>Morning Sun</i>		3
<i>Corruption In the Palace of Justice</i>		3
<i>Ballad For Bimshire</i>		3
<i>Mr. Simian</i>		3
<i>Penny Change</i>		3
<i>The Vegetable</i>		3
<i>Walk In Darkness</i>		3
<i>The Streets Of New York</i>		3
<i>God, Man & You, Baby</i>		3
<i>In White America</i>	Important play about American racism	3
<i>The Theater of Peretz</i>		3
<i>The Immoralist</i>		3
<i>Journey To the Day</i>		3
<i>The Maids</i>		3
<i>Kismet</i>		3

<i>Telemachus Clay</i>		3
<i>Burn Me to Ashes!</i>		3
<i>Thistle In My Bed</i>		3
<i>The Ginger Man</i>		3
<i>The Plot Against the Chase Manhattan Bank</i>		3
<i>The Burning</i>		3
<i>The Worlds of Shakespeare</i>		3
<i>The Theatre in Israel</i>		3
<i>Candida</i>		3
<i>Crime and Crime</i>		3
<i>Trumpets Of the Lord</i>		3
<i>The Trojan Women</i>		3
<i>Play and The Lover</i>		3
<i>Pimpernel!</i>		3
<i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i>		3
<i>Jerico-Jim Crow [sic]</i>	A/N: Alvin Ailey	3
<i>The Athenian Touch</i>		3
<i>Too Much Johnson</i>		3
<i>A Lovely Light</i>		3
<i>Cabin In the Sky</i>		3
<i>A Man for All Seasons</i>		3
<i>Once In a Lifetime</i>		3
<i>The Caretakers [sic]</i>		3
<i>Legit Follow-Ups: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>		3
<i>The Shrike</i>		3
<i>The Deputy</i>		3
<i>Riverside Drive</i>		3
<i>Jo</i>		3
<i>The Amorous Flea</i>		3
<i>Plain And Fancy</i>		3
<i>Squat Betty and The Sponge Room</i>		3
<i>The Blood Knot</i>	Early play by Athol Fugard, important South African playwright. James Earl Jones superb in lead.	3
<i>Right You Are (If You Think You Are)</i>		3
<i>The Tavern</i>		3
<i>Anna Russell</i>		3
<i>Scapin and Impromptu at Versailles</i>		3
<i>Clerambard</i>		3
<i>The White Rose and The Red</i>		3
<i>Homage to Shakespeare</i>		3
<i>Little Eyolf</i>		3
<i>Luther</i>		3

<i>How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying</i>		3
<i>La Vida Es Sueno</i>		3
<i>Cindy</i>		3
<i>Life Is a Dream</i>		3
Beeket-Arrabal-Jones Triple Bill	<i>Play; Two Executioners; Dutchman</i>	3
<i>In The Summer House</i>		3
<i>The Lower Depts</i>		3
<i>The Salad of The Mad Cafe</i>		3
Inside Stuff-Legit	<i>The Seagull</i>	3
Repertory Reviews: <i>The Seagull</i>		3
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>		3
<i>The Crucible</i>		3
<i>A Dream of Swallows</i>		3
<i>Diary Of a Madman</i>		3
<i>Billygoat Eddie</i>		3
<i>Arms And the Man</i>		3
<i>Doubletalk</i>		3
<i>The Knack</i>	Mike Nichols is praised for comedy directions	3
<i>Dark Corners and Mr. Grossman</i>		3
<i>Porgy And Bess</i>		3
<i>Home Movies and Softly, And Consider the Nearness</i>		3
<i>The Awakening of Spring</i>		3

Binder #4 – 1964-1965

Title	Annotations	Binder
Productions '63-'64 Season	Review of 1963-64 season. Note that there were some 90 openings, more than twice the Broadway total. See back of review	4
The New Yorker 8/27/64	Edith Oliver, theater critic of <i>The New Yorker Magazine</i> , thanks Kenn. for a book and offers words of praise	
<i>Around the World in 80 Days</i>	'Around The World' An Eye Opener For 2 nd Season at Jones Beach	4
<i>World Of Illusion</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Three Sisters</i>		4
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Mobile 'Dream' Preems in Harlem to Favorable (Loud) Reaction	4
<i>Here's Love</i>		4
<i>The Alchemist</i>		4

<i>That Hat</i>		4
<i>Kiss Mama</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Barefoot in the Park</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Cindy</i>		4
<i>The Tragical Historie of Doctor Faustus</i>		4
<i>Gogo Loves You</i>		4
<i>What Makes Sammy Run?</i>		4
<i>Othello</i>		4
<i>That 5 A.M. Jazz</i>		4
<i>Oliver</i>		4
<i>The Secret Life of Walter Mitty</i>		4
<i>Shout From the Rooftops</i>		4
<i>Suddenly Last Summer</i> and <i>A Memory of Two Mondays</i>	Praise for actress Elizabeth Farley, but her career never developed	4
<i>The Old Glory</i>		4
<i>The Cradle Will Rock</i>		4
<i>The Giants' Dance</i>		4
<i>Route One</i>		4
<i>Ernest In Love</i>		4
<i>I Knock at The Door</i>		4
<i>Man And Superman</i>	Rosemary Harris returns to the wonderful APA/Phoenix Company after a year at London's new National Theatre	4
<i>On The Necessity of Being Polygamous</i>		4
The New Pinter Plays	<i>The Room; A Slight Ache</i>	4
<i>Helen</i>		4
Le Roi Jones Plays	Le Roi Jones shocks white audiences with his frightening view of American life. <i>The Toilet; The Slave</i>	4
<i>Pictures In the Hallway</i>		4
<i>The Child Buyer</i>		4
<i>Her Master's Voice</i>		4
<i>Babes In the Wood</i>		4
<i>Play With a Tiger</i>		4
<i>The Cat and The Canary</i>		4
Polish Mime Theatre		4
<i>War And Peace</i>	Another APA/Phoenix success with superb Rosemary Harris and Sydney Walker	4
<i>A View from The Bridge</i>	Nice early appearance by Jon Voight	4
<i>All Women Are One</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Cambridge Circus</i>		4
<i>The Fourth Pig</i>		4

<i>Say Nothing</i>		4
<i>Friday Night</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Never Too Late</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>What Makes Sammy Run?</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Any Wednesday</i>	Note from actress Mary K. Wells	4
<i>The Great Western Union</i>		4
<i>The Fantasticks</i>		4
<i>The Sweet Enemy</i>	Author Joyce Carol Oates is not successful with this play	4
<i>World Of Oscar Brown Jr.</i>		4
<i>The Queen and The Rebels</i>		4
<i>A Sound of Silence</i>		4
<i>Lorenzaccio</i>		4
<i>The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis and Sing to Me Through Open Windows</i>		4
<i>Billy Liar</i>		4
<i>Judith</i>		4
<i>Lovey and Hunting the Jingo Bird</i>		4
<i>Matty and the Moron and Madonna</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Golden Boy</i>		4
<i>The Bitch of Waverly Place and The Blind Angel</i>		4
<i>L'annonce Faite a Marie</i>		4
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Blues For Mister Charlie</i>		4

Binder #5 – 1965-1968

Title	Annotations	Binder
<i>Wet Paint</i>	Linda Lavin before stardom on TV and Broadway	5
<i>Do Not Pass Go</i>		5
<i>Harry, Noon and Night</i>		5
<i>Baal</i>		5
<i>Colombe</i>		5
<i>By Jupiter</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Barefoot in the Park</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Subject was Roses</i>		5
<i>That Thing at the Cherry Lane</i>		5
<i>The Bitch of Waverly Place and The Blind Angel</i>		5
<i>Matty and the Moron and Madonna</i>		5
<i>Funny Girl</i>		5
<i>The Subject Was Roses</i>		5
<i>Happy Days</i>		5

Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Odd Couple</i>		5
The World of Ray Bradbury	<i>The Veldt; The Pedestrian; To the Chicago Abyss</i>	5
<i>The Trigon</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>		5
<i>The Music Man</i>		5
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>		5
<i>Friends and Enemies</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Golden Boy</i>		5
<i>Hotel Passionato</i>		5
<i>The Parasite</i>		5
<i>The Wives</i>		5
<i>Square in the Eye</i>		5
<i>Good Day and The Exhaustion of Our Son's Love</i>		5
<i>Kill the One-Eyed Man</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Sweet Charity</i>		5
<i>Oliver</i>		5
<i>Oklahoma</i>		5
<i>Trouble in Tahiti and Down in the Valley</i>		5
<i>The Exception and the Rule and The Prodigal Son</i>		5
<i>Troubled Waters</i>	<i>...or the Brother who Protects and Loves</i>	5
<i>Live Like Pigs</i>	NY debut of John Arden, important British playwright	5
Off-B'way Had N.G. Season	Review of 1964-1965 off-B'wy season. 3 pages	5
<i>Love's Labor's Lost</i>		5
<i>Leonard Bernstein's Theatre Songs</i>		5
<i>The Genius Farm</i>		5
<i>Man of La Mancha</i>		5
<i>Monopoly</i>		5
<i>An Evening's Frost</i>		5
<i>Joe Palooka, Go Home</i>		5
<i>Play That on Your Old Piano</i>		5
<i>Great Scot!</i>		5
<i>Hogan's Goat</i>	Early praise for Fay [sic] Dunaway.	5
<i>The White Devil</i>		5
<i>Medea</i>		5
<i>Macbeth</i>		5
<i>Command Performance</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Don't Drink the Water</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Hallelujah Baby</i>		5

<i>Dynamite Tonite</i>	A/N: Original missing	5
<i>Scuba Duba</i>		5
<i>Fortune and Men's Eyes</i>		5
<i>Stephen D.</i>		5
<i>Jonah!</i>		5
<i>The Poker Session</i>		5
Turntable on the Fritz	A/N: Original missing	5
<i>To Clothe the Naked</i>		5
<i>Fragments</i>		5
<i>Beyond Desire</i>		5
<i>Now is the Time for all Good Men</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Mame</i>		5
<i>The Niggerlovers</i>		5
<i>The Homecoming</i>		5
Legit Follow-Ups: <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>		5
<i>Have I Got One for You</i>		5
<i>Beclch</i>	A/N: TW //	5
<i>Dames at Sea</i>	Stardom for Bernadette Peters	5
A/N: Processing 12/20/21	Clippings loose in folder + may slip out sides of folders. BEWARE	5

File Folders

Title	Annotations	Folder
Binder 5 Originals: <i>Colombe – The Music Man</i>	1965	6
Binder 5 Originals: <i>Troilus & Cressida – Live Like Pigs</i>	1965	7
Binder 5 Originals: Off B'way had N.G. season – <i>Macbeth</i>	1965-1966	8
Binder 5 Originals: <i>Command Performance – Dames at Sea</i>	1966-1968	9
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