Papers, circa 1942-2006, of Edith Macarthur, actor (b.1926). The collection includes scripts, photographs, press cuttings and other items of theatre and television memorabilia.

Edith Macarthur’s stage career has taken her to most major producing theatres in Scotland, and to many in England. The variety of her range is demonstrated in the collection, from her early days with respected amateur company, the Ardrossan and Saltcoats Players, to acclaim with prestigious companies such as the Royal Lyceum, Citizens’, Gateway, Bristol Old Vic, Pitlochry Festival, Traverse and Royal Shakespeare. Leading roles in the canon of major plays by Arthur Miller, James Bridie, Anton Chekhov, Eugene O’Neill, Noel Coward and their like, and various acclaimed productions of ‘The Thrie Estaites’, established her stage reputation. Alongside runs a vein of comedy and variety, from the ‘Five Past Eight Shows’ of the 1950s at the Citizens’, to regularly playing Cinderella’s Fairy Godmother in pantomime during the 1980s and 1990s.

There is also a considerable body of television work, from early series such as ‘The Borderers’ and ‘Sutherland’s Law’, and the renowned 1970s adaptation of ‘Sunset Song’, to the long-running Scottish Television soap, ‘High Road’. A milestone was the 1993 film ‘The Long Roads’ by John McGrath. At about this time Miss Macarthur was coming to the attention of less mainstream theatre-producers in Scotland. This resulted in a widening of her established range with challenging roles – for both actor and audience – for example in C P Taylor’s ‘Good’ at The Tron in 1992, and Iain Heggie’s ‘Wiping My Mother’s Arse’ with the Traverse in 2002.

Miss Macarthur’s regular and lauded performances as a reader of poetry and prose form another consistent strand. Much of this work was done in collaboration with her friend and colleague, the actor and director Tom Fleming (1927-2010). Their rendering of a selection of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle correspondence in ‘Carlyle and Jane’ proved consistently popular and was frequently revived.

The papers remain largely as arranged by Miss Macarthur, though some larger groupings have been split to facilitate the chronological arrangement of the theatre files. Duplicate items have been weeded out, and programmes of shows in which Miss Macarthur did not perform have been incorporated into the Library’s general theatre programmes collection.

The collection is arranged in the following order:

67-77. Television.
78. Radio.
79-80. Press cuttings.
81-84. Programmes.
85-88. Miscellaneous.

1-66 Theatre

The productions covered in this section should not be taken as a comprehensive listing of every play in which Miss Macarthur performed – this is far from being the case. Productions which are represented only by a programme can be found in the Library’s Scottish Theatre Programmes database, and these programmes are gathered as Acc.13182/84 (see below).

1. Ardrossan & Saltcoats Players.

   ‘Separate Tables’ by Terence Rattigan. One photograph.
   ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’. One photograph.

   ‘Dr Angelus’ by James Bridie (1957). One photograph.
   ‘She Stoops to Conquer’ by Oliver Goldsmith (1958). 2 photographs.

   Press cuttings, photographs.

   ‘As You Like It’ (Stratford, 1960). One photograph.
   ‘Romeo and Juliet’ (Stratford, 1961). Two photographs, one press cutting.

   Press cuttings and photographs relating to various productions:
   ‘Busman’s Honeymoon’ by Dorothy Sayers (1964).
   ‘Arms and the Man’ by George Bernard Shaw (1964).
   ‘See How They Run’ by Philip King (1964).
‘A Little Winter Love’ by Alun Owen.
‘They Called the Bastard Stephen’ by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall (1964).
‘Little by Little’ revue (1964).
‘Cuckoo in the Nest’ by Ben Travers (1965).
‘The Birthday Party’ by Harold Pinter (1965).
‘The Beggars’ Opera’ by John Gay (1965).


16. Ochtertyre Festival 1974, Ochtertyre Theatre. Programmes, posters, press cuttings, photographs relating to various productions including:
   ‘Relatively Speaking’ by Alan Ayckbourn
   ‘Ghosts’ by Henrik Ibsen
   ‘The Lion in Winter’ by James Goldman
‘Border and Ballad’ devised by Tom Fleming
‘Carlyle and Jane, a recital in two acts from the letters and papers of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh’ by Henry Donald.

17. ‘Ghosts’ by Henrik Ibsen (Royal Lyceum Theatre, 1974).
   Press cuttings.

18. ‘Carlyle and Jane, a recital in two acts from the letters and papers of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh’ by Henry Donald. (Various venues, 1974-1975). Programmes, press cuttings.

   Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

   Programme, press cuttings.

   Programme, press cuttings, one rehearsal photograph.

   Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

   Programme, press cuttings.

   Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

   25. Rehearsal script with stage directions, notes and amendments.

27. ‘Charley’s Aunt’ by Brandon Thomas (Royal Lyceum Theatre, 1978-1979).
   Programme, photographs.

   Flyers, poster, press cuttings, photographs, with a few reviews of ‘Macbeth’ (Scottish Theatre Company, 1983).

   Photographs.


36-37. ‘Hay Fever’ by Noel Coward (Royal Lyceum Theatre, 1987).

36. Rehearsal script.
37. Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

38. ‘Charley’s Aunt’ by Brandon Thomas (Royal Lyceum Theatre, 1987). Press cuttings, photographs.


1988 Season programme.
‘Pygmalion’ by George Bernard Shaw. Press cuttings.
‘Pride and Prejudice’ adapted by David Pownall. Press cuttings.


42. ‘The Cherry Orchard’ by Anton Chekhov (Royal Lyceum Theatre, 1989). Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

43. ‘Carlyle and Jane’ (Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, 1989). Programme and 2 letters from staff at Edinburgh University.
Programmes, press cuttings, photographs.

45. ‘Carlyle and Jane’ (Lamp of Lothian, Haddington, 1991).
Programmes, one photocopied press cutting.

1990 Season programme.
‘Arsenic and Old Lace’ by Joseph Kesselring. Press cuttings, photographs.
‘Separate Tables’ by Terence Rattigan.
‘The Cherry Orchard’ by Anton Chekhov. Press cuttings.

Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

Programme, 2 press cuttings.

49. Rehearsal script.
50. Programme, flyer, press cuttings, 3 publicity photographs.

51. Rehearsal script.
52. Programme, press cuttings, photographs.

Programmes, press cuttings, some correspondence and a copy of the Martini/TMA Regional Theatre Awards programme, 1994 (Edith Macarthur was nominated for Best Actress).

Press cuttings, programmes and flyers from various theatres; tour schedule, good luck cards and letters.

55. Pitlochry 1996.
1996 Season programme.
   Rehearsal script.

   57. Rehearsal script.
   58. Programmes, flyer, press cuttings, photographs, cards from well-wishers.

59. ‘Widows’ by Ariel Dorfman (Traverse and touring, 1997).
   Press cuttings, handbill, photographs.

   60. 1999 Season programme.
       ‘The Summertime is Come’ by Tom Gallacher. Press cuttings, photographs.
       ‘Great Expectations’ adapted by John Clifford. Press cuttings, photographs.
   61. ‘The Summertime is Come’ by Tom Gallagher (Pitlochry 1999).
       Rehearsal script.

   62. Rehearsal script.
   63. Programme, photographs, press cuttings.

64. ‘Wiping My Mother’s Arse’ by Iain Heggie (Traverse Theatre, 2001).
   Tenth draft/rehearsal script, notes regarding costume changes loosely inserted.

   2002 Season programme.
   ‘Arsenic and Old Lace’ by Joseph Kesselring.
   ‘The Queen of Spades’ adapted by John Clifford from Pushkin’s novella. Press cuttings, photographs.
   Commemorative programme for 50th anniversary of Pitlochry Festival Theatre, with a carbon copy of Edith Macarthur’s written piece for the programme, and a manuscript list of Pitlochry productions in which she performed, 1988-1999.

66. ‘Uncle Varick’ by John Byrne, adapted from Chekhov’s ‘Uncle Vanya’ (Royal Lyceum Theatre, 2004).
   Publicity, press cuttings, photographs.

67-77. Television
‘TV’.
Miss Macarthur had major roles in many series, including ‘The Honours of Drumlie’, ‘The Borderers’, ‘Sunset Song’, ‘Sutherland’s Law’, ‘Rob Roy’ ‘Doom Castle’ and ‘Weir of Hermiston’; she also appeared in in a great number of television plays over her long career.

‘Take the High Road’, Scottish Television.
70. Edith Macarthur’s ‘Take the High Road’ clipboard.

71. Script, filming schedule, notes and related papers.
72. Photographs and make-up shots.
73. Press cuttings and papers relating to 1993 BAFTA Scotland award nominations.
74. Letters from friends and viewers in response to The Long Roads.

‘Doctor Finlay’ script.

‘Hamish Macbeth’ script.
‘Meanwhile ... Back at Lochdubh’ by Daniel Boyle. Series II, episode 5, shooting draft, 18 September 1995.

Press cuttings and one photograph relating to ‘Golden Wedding’ (BBC television drama, 1998) and Radio Times cuttings relating to ‘Life Support’ (BBC television series, 1999).

Radio
78. ‘Radio’.

Press cuttings
79. Album of press cuttings, 1945-1958. Some cuttings, programmes and photographs are loosely inserted. A few later papers including a draft list of productions in which Edith Macarthur performed during her time with the Wilson Barrett Company are inserted at the end of the file.

82. Programmes, press cuttings, some photographs and correspondence, relating to Royal Gala concerts and other fund-raising events, 1966-2006.


84. Programmes, 1950-2006. These are mostly, but not exclusively, programmes of productions in which Edith Macarthur performed. All Scottish programmes have been catalogued individually in the Library’s Scottish Theatre Programmes database (enter the name Edith Macarthur as the keyword search term).

85. Education certificates, 1942-1947, and a reference from Admiralty’s Chart and Chronometer Depot, Saltcoats, where Edith Macarthur was briefly employed in the mid-1940s while studying at The Royal College of Music in Glasgow.


87. Letters, 1953-1959, 1976 and undated. Includes some in response to a live television advertising show, ‘Your Home and Mine’, which Edith Macarthur presented in the late 1950s from the Theatre Royal, Glasgow (which served as STV’s studios during the company’s first year); letter, 1976, from Leslie Mitchell, broadcaster.

88. Miscellaneous, c.1944-1953. Includes caricatures and cards made by Edith Macarthur’s colleagues at the Chart and Chronometer Depot in the 1940s; dance card for the Victoria League in Scotland’s Coronation Ball at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, 25 June 1953.