Summary

Creator: De Groen, Alma 1941-

Title: Papers of Alma de Groen

Date range: c. 1946-2002

Reference number: MS 172

Extent: 1.69 m (14 boxes)

Repository: Academy Library, UNSW@ADFA

Abstract: A collection of manuscripts and related papers by the playwright Alma de Groen.

Scope and Content

This is a comprehensive collection, which comprises papers relating to Alma de Groen's career as a playwright. The collection consists of correspondence, notebooks, drafts of plays, reviews, newspaper cuttings, scrapbook, audio cassette tapes and photographs relating to plays written by De Groen for stage, film, radio and television.

Organization

Special Collections staff have imposed the series arrangement of this collection to describe and preserve context and relationships.

Biographical Note

Alma Margaret de Groen, née Mathers was born in Manawatu in the North Island of New Zealand on 5 September 1941. She grew up and attended Primary School and the District High School in Mangakino, Waikato. She moved to Australia in 1964; left Australia in 1968 and spent the next four years overseas in England, France and Canada, before returning to live and work in Australia in December 1972.

During her career De Groen has worked as a library assistant in the New Zealand Library Service in Hamilton and Wellington, 1958-1964. After
moving to Australia in 1964 she worked as a library assistant at Fisher Library, Sydney University, 1964-1965 and as a librarian at the New Zealand Trade Commission, Sydney, 1965. She has been Writer-in-Residence at various universities in Australia and the United States, and was Dramaturg at the Griffin Theatre Company in 1987.

De Groen began her first play, *The sweatproof boy* in 1968 and has worked as a playwright for live theatre, film, radio and television in Canada and Australia. Her plays are regularly performed in Australia and overseas and studied in high schools and universities. While living in Canada in 1970, she won the National Playwriting Competition (Canada) for her first short work, *The Joss Adams show*. In November 1998, she was the first playwright to win the Patrick White Award for her contribution to Australian theatre.

De Groen has been awarded the following grants and prizes:
New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, Play Award, 2003, shortlisted for *Wicked sisters*
New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, Play Award, 1993, shortlisted for *The woman in the window*
Patrick White Award, 1998
Australia Council Grants, Awards and Fellowships, Literature Board Fellowship, Category A Fellowship, 1994
AWGIE Awards, Stage Award, Original, 1993, winner for *The girl who saw everything*
Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, Louis Esson Prize for Drama, 1988, winner for *The rivers of China*
New South Wales State Literary Awards, Play Award, 1988, winner for *The rivers of China*
AWGIE Awards, Television Award, Adaptation, 1985, winner for *Man of letters*
Canada Council Playwriting Grant, 1970
Canadian National Playwriting Competition, 1970, shortlisted for *The Joss Adams show*

First performances of her plays include:
*The Joss Adams show* (1970)
*Chair* [1970-1971]
The sweatproof boy (1972, later shortened into *Perfectly all right*)
*Going home* (1976)
*Chidley* (1976)
*Vocations* (1981)
*Singles* episode “Chris” (television series, 1984)
*Man of letters* (screenplay adaptation, 1985)
The rivers of China (1986)
After Marcuse (telemovie, 1989)
Rafferty's rules episode “The woman” (television series, 1988)
The girl who saw everything (1991)
Available light (radio play, related to Invisible sun, 1993)
Invisible sun (radio play, 1994)
Wildheart, co-writer and dramaturg with Legs On the Wall (1994)
Stories in the dark, co-written with Ian Mackenzie (radio play, 1995)
The woman in the window (1997)
Wicked sisters (2002)

Her publications include:
Going home and other plays (including: Going home; The Joss Adams show; Perfectly all right (1977)
Chidley (1977; 1993)
Going home (1983)
The rivers of China (1987)
Australian playwrights speak [videorecording and DVD] Alma de Groen; producer, Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (1991)
Available light (1993)
The girl who saw everything (1993)
The woman in the window (1999)
Wicked sisters (2003)

De Groen returned to live and work in New Zealand in late 2003.

References:
Alma de Groen, 7 April 2004
RGM Associates Web site for Alma de Groen:
The Plays of Alma de Groen, by Elizabeth Perkins, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1994
Concise companion to theatre in Australia, general editor, Philip Parsons with Victoria Chance, Currency Press, Sydney, 1997
Administrative Information

Access
The collection is partly available for research and partly closed.

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Preferred Citation
[Manuscript Item], Papers of Alma de Groen, Academy Library, UNSW@ADFA, MS 172, Series [Number], Folder [Number].

Provenance
The collection was acquired from Alma de Groen in two consignments, one in 1990 and one in 2003.

Additional Information

Separated Material
Further papers of Alma de Groen are held at the following institutions:
Hanger Collection of Australian Playscripts, Fryer Library, University of Queensland
The Rodney Seaborn Library, The National Institute of Dramatic Art, Sydney
ScreenSound Australia, National Screen and Sound Archive
The Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand

Access Terms

Personal Names
- De Groen, Alma, 1941-

Topical Subjects
- Dramatists, Australian--Archives
- Women dramatists, Australian--20th century
- Australian drama--20th century
Series List and Descriptions

Series 1 Correspondence, 1969-2002

This series comprises personal and business letters, emails, postcards and invitations received by De Groen from friends, colleagues, agents, theatre companies and publishers.

Folder 1
Miscellaneous correspondence, 1969-1976


Folder 2
Miscellaneous correspondence, 1977-1987


Folder 3
Miscellaneous correspondence, 1988-2002

and letters regarding *The rivers of China*, *The girl who saw everything*, *Available light*, *The woman in the window* and *Wicked sisters*

Folder 4
Correspondence from Currency Press, 1970-1999

Folder 5
Correspondence from Elizabeth Perkins, 1986-1997 closed

Folder 6
Correspondence from Brian Syron, 1969-1972 closed

Folder 7
Correspondence from Bruce Keller, 1979-1988 closed

**Series 2 Dramatic Works, 1970-2002**

This series comprises dramatic works for the theatre including *The Joss Adams show*, *Chair*, *The sweatproof boy* and *Perfectly all right*, *The afterlife of Arthur Cravan*, *Going home*, *Chidley*, *Vocations*, *The rivers of China*, *The girl who saw everything*, *The woman in the window* and *Wicked sisters*. There are also scripts for film and television work such as *Man of letters*, “Chris”, *After Marcuse* and “Singles”.

Correspondence and related audio cassette tapes and photographs are included in Series 1, Series 4 and Series 5.

Folder 1

Notebook containing notes
Annotated photocopy typescript draft with cut and paste inserts, 19 p.
Prop list

Folder 2

Annotated photocopy typescript draft
Flyers and program
Reviews
List of national awards from the 32nd annual Canadian playwriting competition, 1970-1971
Folder 3
*Chair*, *The sweatproof boy* and *Perfectly all right*, one-act, 1970-1973

Carbon typescript of the 1st version of *Chair*, 15 p.
Flyers, programs and reviews of *The sweatproof boy*
Carbon typescript draft and program of *Perfectly all right*, 20 p.

Folder 4
*The after-life of Arthur Cravan*, two-acts, 1972

Typescript draft of the 1st version completed in Canada, 98 p.

Folder 5
*The after-life of Arthur Cravan*, 1973

Jane Street Theatre, Sydney, version, 1973
, 55 p.

Folder 6
*The after-life of Arthur Cravan*, 1974

Raymond Omodei’s staging typescript draft for Perth’s Hole-in-the-Wall 1974

production, 88 p.

Folder 7

Radio script adapted by Ron Blair, 36 p.
Programs and reviews
Cast list for Jane Street Theatre production
Notes from the Australian National Playwrights’ Conference, 1973

Folder 8
*Going home*, three-acts, 1976-1980

Annotated typescript draft with cut and paste inserts, 104 p.

Folder 9
*Going home*, 1976-1980

2nd typescript draft with white-out corrections, 100 p.
Folder 10

*Going home*, 1976-1980

Workbook, loose notes and Brian Syron's responses
Programs, reviews and ticket sales figures

Folder 11

*Going home*, 1980

Script for ABC television broadcast in 1980 as part of the Australian Theatre Festival II, 182 p.

Folder 12

*Chidley*, two-acts (scrapbook included in [Series 4]), 1974-1977

1st annotated photocopy typescript draft, 64 p. (incomplete)
Playscript 4 from *Theatre Australia*, Jan-Feb, 1977, p. 23-34
Reviews

Folder 13

*Vocations*, two-acts, 1981-1984

1st photocopy typescript draft, 68 p.

Folder 14

*Vocations*, 1981

Letter from the dramaturg Jack Hibberd regarding the play, 15 April 1981

Annotated typescript draft resulting from a workshop at the Australian National Playwrights' Festival, 1981

, 69 p. (incomplete)

Folder 15

*Vocations*, 1981

3rd typescript draft, July 1981

(incomplete)

Folder 16

*Vocations*, 1982

Folder 17
*Vocations*, 1983

Annotated typescript of the La Boite Theatre version, January 1983

, 50 p.
Sketch for the set

Folder 18
*Vocations*, 1983

Radio version, script adapted and directed by Jane Howard for ABC Radio Drama and Features Department, April 1983

, 100 p.

Folder 19
*Vocations*, 1983

Currency Press version, with annotations by Andrew Ross and De Groen, May 1983

, 61 p.
Flyers, programs and reviews

Folder 21
Screenplay entitled *Man of letters*; television adaptation by De Groen of *Man of letters: a romance* by Glen Tomasetti, 1983

1st annotated typescript draft with final pages added to 3rd draft, October 1983

, 43 p. (incomplete)
Annotated typescript of various early and middle attempts at an ending
2nd annotated typescript draft, September 1983

, 46 p.
1st draft of timings, 2 p.

Folder 22
*Man of letters*, screenplay, 1984
Final script for ABC, July 1984
, 148 p. and 5 p. of amendments

Folder 23
“Chris” episode four of the television series *Singles*, 1984
Photocopy script for ABC TV Drama Department, 1984
, 118 p.

Folder 24
*The rivers of China*, two-acts, 1974-1988
Research material
Notes
Notebook with general notes and Renée's dramaturg notes from the Australian National Playwrights' Conference, 1986

Folder 25
*The rivers of China*, October 1985
1st annotated photocopy typescript draft entitled “Keepers of the gate”, 73 p.

Folder 26
*The rivers of China*, c. 1986
Annotated typescript draft, 74 p. (incomplete)

Folder 27
*The rivers of China*, May 1986
Reworked version from Australian National Playwrights' Conference, 73 p.

Folder 28
*The rivers of China*, 1986
Version submitted to Australia Council, 68 p.

Folder 29
Version used in Sydney Theatre Company rehearsals, 1987
The rivers of China, 1987

Typescript photocopy of the introduction by Elizabeth Perkins (2), 13/11/1987

The rivers of China, 1987-1988

Stereo play version, 78 p., recorded November 1987, broadcast March 1988

The rivers of China, 1987-1988

Flyers, programs and reviews
Brochures on the New South Wales State Literary Awards, 1988
Australian Writers' Guild AWGIE Awards nomination certificate
Manuscript summaries of notes taken by Katherine Brisbane and Anne-Marie Mykyta of discussion after Australian National Playwrights' Conference reading of The rivers of China

The girl who saw everything, two-acts, 14/11/1990

Notebook
1st draft - annotated computer typescript draft, 78 p.

The girl who saw everything, June 1992

Revised and expanded version pre-Sydney Theatre Company workshop draft - annotated computer typescript, incorporating dramaturgical suggestions, 123 p.

The girl who saw everything, 1991-1992

Flyers, programs and reviews

The woman in the window, two-acts, 1996
Three notebooks

Folder 37
*The woman in the window*, 8/7/1996

Precedes rough 1st draft sent to Sydney Theatre Company - annotated photocopy typescript, 88 p.

Folder 38
*The woman in the window*, 1996

Annotated photocopy typescript, 99 p.

Folder 39
*The woman in the window*, 1997

Pre-Australian National Playwrights' Conference 1st draft - computer typescript, 77 p.

Folder 40
*The woman in the window*, 1997

Version taken to Australian National Playwrights' Conference - annotated computer typescript draft, 78 p.

Folder 41
*The woman in the window*, August 1997

Pre-Melbourne Theatre Company draft - computer typescript, 84 p.

Folder 42
*The woman in the window*, November 1997

Photocopy typescript with annotations by the dramaturg/director Kate Cherry, 93 p.

Folder 43
*The woman in the window*, 1997-1998

Version used for one day reading in Melbourne, 11/12/1997, with cast of 1998 production, 96 p.

Folder 44
*The woman in the window*, January 1998
Notes to cast and director from the dramaturg May-Brit Akerholt
Rehearsal schedules

Folder 45
*The woman in the window*, January-March 1998


Folder 46
*The woman in the window*, 6-22 July 1998

Eureka Theatre workshop script with rehearsal notes - annotated photocopy typescript, 93 p.

Folder 47
*The woman in the window*, 1998

Flyers, programs and reviews

Folder 48
*Wicked sisters*, two-acts - previous titles included “Through the hoops”, “Sweet sisters”, “Tell me the truth about love” “Soul mates” and “Blood sisters”, January 2000

“Through the hoops” - 1st photocopy typescript draft, 94 p.

Folder 49
*Wicked sisters*, March 2001

“Through the hoops” - collage typescript read at a meeting at the start of the Australian National Playwrights' Conference (miscellaneous pages)
4th photocopy typescript draft, 99 p. (1st conference draft, with rehearsal notes)

Folder 50
*Wicked sisters*, April 2001

“Sweet sisters” - photocopy typescript version presented at end of conference, 99 p. (3rd conference draft)

Folder 51
*Wicked sisters*, May 2001
“Tell me the truth about love” - post conference photocopy typescript revision, 100 p.
Letter from Lally Katz with a list of possible titles
Dramaturgical notes from May-Brit Akerholt, Anna Messariti and Louise Gough, June-July 2001

Folder 52
Wicked sisters, August 2001


Folder 53
Wicked sisters, 5/2/2003-1/4/2002

Email rehearsal script changes between De Groen and the Griffin Theatre Company director Kate Gaul

Folder 54
Wicked sisters, 14/2/2002

Annotated photocopy typescript draft for Playworks/Griffin Theatre Company workshop before the Griffin production, 101 p.

Folder 55
Wicked sisters, 21/2/2002

Annotated photocopy typescript draft written after Playworks/Griffin Theatre Company workshop and after receipt of co-dramaturg Ros Horin's notes, 102 p.

Folder 56
Wicked sisters, 1/3/2002

Griffin Theatre Company first week of rehearsal draft - annotated photocopy typescript, 102 p.

Folder 57
Wicked sisters, March 2002

Griffin Theatre Company draft as at end of first week of rehearsal - annotated photocopy typescript, 99 p.

Folder 58
Wicked sisters, 15/3/2002

Griffin Theatre Company rehearsal draft - annotated typescript, 96 p.
Folder 59  
*Wicked sisters*, 2002  
Program notes, flyers, programs and reviews  

**Series 3 Miscellaneous Papers, 1973-1988**  
This small series comprises material collected by De Groen on Australian drama.  

Folder 1  
Miscellaneous papers, 1973-1988  
Photocopy typescript of “Spiral” by Jacqueline de Szombatfalvy, 1988  
(copy of De Szombatfalvy's video cassette tape is included in Series 5)  
“Australian drama : evaluations by its playwrights” by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, 1982  

Magazine and newspaper cuttings relating to De Groen and Australian theatre  
Postcards collected by De Groen  

**Series 4 Scrapbook, 1976-1977**  
Alan Ingram's scrapbook of the Hoopla Productions in arrangement with the Melbourne Theatre Company performance of *Chidley* at Grant Street Theatre, South Melbourne, 1976-1977  

Folio 1  
Alan Ingram's scrapbook of the Hoopla Productions in arrangement with the Melbourne Theatre Company performance of *Chidley*, 1976-1977  
Includes tipped-in flyers, programs, cuttings of reviews and colour photographs of the Hoopla Productions performance

This small series comprises audio cassettes relating to De Groen's radio and theatre productions, including The Joss Adams show, The after-life of Arthur Cravan and Rivers of China. Also included is one video cassette of “Spiral” by Jacqueline de Szombatfalvy.

Folder 1
Audio cassette of The Joss Adams show, Channel 1, London, c. 1970

Folder 2-4
Audio cassettes of The after-life of Arthur Cravan, ABC Radio

Folder 5

Folder 6-9

Folder 10-12

Folder 13-14
Audio cassettes of The rivers of China

Folder 15
Video cassette of “Spiral”, by Jacqueline de Szombatfalvy, 1988

Series 6 Photographs, c. 1946-c. 1998

This series is comprises photographs of De Groen, her family and friends, and photographs relating to workshops and productions of De Groen's plays. Box-folder 1 is closed.

Box-folder 1
Family photographs, c. 1946-1983

Including:
School, family, buildings and landscape photographs taken at various functions and locations in New Zealand, c. 1946-1964
(77)
Wedding photographs of Alma and Geoffrey de Groen (3)
Geoffrey de Groen, aged 30
Nadine de Groen, December 1967

(2)
Nadine de Groen, March 1968

(2)
Geoffrey de Groen, August 1968

(4)
Tahiti, October 1968

(5)
Acapulco, October 1968

(9)
Yorkshire, November 1968

(5)
Paris, August-September 1969

(5)
Family photographs (4)
St Johns’ Wood, 1969

(8)
Richard Dunn's studio, Kensington, England, 1970

(5)
Nadine de Groen, London, Ontario, 1971

(4)
Unidentified group
Geoffrey de Groen
Unidentified male (2)
De Groen family (4)
Proof sheet of the De Groen family, Toronto, Canada
De Groen family Kurraba Point, 1975

(5)
Mona Road, Darling Point, 1975
Family photographs Stanley Street, 1977-1978

Brian Syron's, Rose Bay, 1978

Nadine de Groen at Stanley Street, 1978

Alma de Groen, c. 1978

Kerri's birthday, Rose Bay, 1979

Hunter Valley, 1979

Family photographs, 1979

Deer Park Camp, 1979

Stanley Street, 1979

Nadine de Groen at Sydney Girls' High School, 1980

Flat-hunting for Phippsy, 1979

Doyle's, Rose Bay, September 1981

Stanley Street, 1981

Stanley Street, December 1983
Box-folder 2
Photographs of friends and workshops and productions of De Groen's plays, 1970-1986

Including
Rehearsal photographs from Australian National Playwrights' Conference of The after-life of Arthur Cravan, 1973

(4)
Australian National Playwrights' Conference, 1980

Bruce/Beckett, 1980

(6)
Australian National Playwrights' Conference, 1981

(11)
Wagga Wagga residency, 1985

(6)
Bray family, Perth, 1986

(4)
Elizabeth Jolley's orchard, W.A. (WAIT residency) 1986

(4)
Peter Kingston, 1986

Australian National Playwrights' Conference, 1986

(5)
The Joss Adams show at Stratford Shakespearean Festival Theatre, Stratford, Ontario, 1970

(4)
Inter-Action Productions at the Almost Free Theatre, London production of The Joss Adams show (3)
South Australian Theatre Company's production of The Joss Adams show, May 1973

(3)
Nimrod Theatre Company Theatre production of The Joss Adams show (3)
Box-folder 3
Photographs relating to productions of De Groen's plays, 1973-1997

Including:
Jane Street Theatre production of *The after-life of Arthur Cravan*, 1973

(6)
Melbourne Theatre Company production of *Going home*, 1976

(8)
Nimrod Theatre Company production of *Going home*, 28/7/1977

(4)
Nimrod Theatre Company production of *Perfectly all right*, 1977

(2)
Hoopla Productions performance of *Chidley* (2)
Melbourne Theatre Company production of *Vocations*, 1982

(1)
Griffin Theatre Company production of *Vocations* (4)
La Boite Theatre production of *Vocations*, 1983

(3)
Sydney Theatre Company production of *The rivers of China*, 1986

(12)
Downstage Theatre, Wellington, New Zealand production of *The rivers of China*, 1986

(16)
HoChiMinh City Theatre Company production in Vietnamese of *The girl who saw everything*, [1998?]

(27)
Griffin Theatre Company production of *Wicked sisters*, 1997

(3)
Polaroid of stage sets from Richard (2)
# Box List

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