



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Amiri Baraka collection of playscripts

1964-1986

Sc MG 279

Summary

Creator: Baraka, Amiri, 1934-2014

Title: Amiri Baraka collection of playscripts

Date: 1964-1986

Size: 1.67 linear feet (4 boxes)

Source: Purchase, Glenn Horowitz, Bookseller, Inc, 1988

Abstract: The Amiri Baraka Collection of Playscripts includes more than thirty plays and screenplays including such early works as *The Toilet* (1964) in addition to *Jello*, *Slave Ship*, and *S-1*.

Preferred citation: [Item], Amiri Baraka collection of playscripts, Sc MG 279, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: 12 original black and white photographs from the original 1964 production of the *Dutchman* at the Cherry Lane Theatre, New York City, and 1 black and white photograph from the 1962 production of *The Toilet*

Creator History

Imamu Amiri Baraka is a writer whose variety of forms include drama, poetry, music criticism, fiction, autobiography and the essay. As a major and controversial author, his ideas and art - especially, as the primary architect of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960's - have had a profound influence on the direction of subsequent African-American literature.

Baraka was born Everett LeRoi Jones in Newark, New Jersey of working class parents; he attended Rutgers, Howard, and Columbia Universities and the New School for Social Research. He has taught at several universities and founded the Black Arts Repertory Theater School in Harlem in 1964. His

literary career began in 1958 when he founded *Yugen* magazine and Totem Press. Although Baraka started publishing in the early 1960s, he did not achieve fame until the 1964 publication of his play *Dutchman*, later made into a movie. Other important plays he wrote include *The Slave* (1964) and *Toilet* (1964). A prolific writer, Baraka has published two books of poetry, *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note* (1961) and *The Dead Lecturer* (1964). The mid 1960s saw the publication of *The System of Dante's Hell*, a novel, and *Tales*, a collection of short stories. Baraka also wrote a major social-aesthetic study of African-American music, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963).

Baraka's career has gone through a series of dramatic stages, from his Beatnik years in the late 1950s through the early 1960s when he refused to take action in the world, to black cultural nationalist, renouncing the white world in the mid-1960s through mid-1970s, to a Marxist-Leninist rejecting monopoly capitalism starting in the mid-1970s. In 1974, dramatically reversing himself, Baraka rejected black nationalism as racist and became a Third World Socialist. Some critics see Baraka as one of this century's major literary figures who has significantly affected the course of African American literary culture.

Scope and Content Note

The Amiri Baraka Collection of Playscripts includes more than thirty plays and screenplays including such early works as *The Toilet* (1964) in addition to *Jello*, *Slave Ship*, and *S-1*. Some items have been produced and published, but included in the material is a quantity of unproduced and unpublished works. The collection consists of holographs scripts, some with the author's annotations and changes; typescripts, rehearsal scripts, some with changes and productions; production files and a photocopy of a galley.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American dramatists
Black arts movement
Drama -- Collections

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scripts

Names

Baraka, Amiri, 1934-2014

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 *Arm Yourself of Harm Yourself*
- b. 1 f. 2 *At the Dim' Crackr Party Convention* 1980
- b. 1 f. 3 *Ba-Ra-Ka*
- b. 1 f. 4 *The Baptism*
- b. 1 f. 5-6 *A Black Mass* 1968
Includes review.
- b. 1 f. 7 *Black Power Chant*
- b. 1 f. 8 *Blood Rites*
- b. 1 f. 9 *Board of Education* 1967-1968
- b. 1 f. 10 *Boy and Tarzan Appear in a Clearing* 1980
- b. 1 f. 11 *Cellar Vigil (Experimental Death Unit #2)*
- b. 1 f. 12 *Chant (Black Power Chant)*
- b. 1 f. 13 *CIA Movie (or The Discovery of America)*
- b. 1 f. 14-17 *Columbia Gem of the Ocean* 1972 May
Includes handwritten draft and production file.
- b. 1 f. 18 *The Death of Malcolm X (unproduced) handwritten manuscript*
- b. 1 f. 19 *Dialogue with Nkulunkulu*
- b. 1 f. 20 *Everything Point to Us*
- b. 1 f. 21-22 *Experimental Death Unit #1* 1965
Produced in 1965.
- b. 1 f. 23 *Good News*
- b. 1 f. 24-25 *Home on the Range* 1968
Produced in 1968.
- b. 1 f. 26 *The Incredible Rocky or Black Power*
- b. 1 f. 27-30 *Jello*
- b. 2 f. 1-4 *Junkies are Full of... (Shhh)* 1969 July 30
- b. 2 f. 5 *Mad Heart* 1967
Produced in 1967.
- b. 2 f. 6 *The Marathon Runner*
- b. 2 f. 7 *Money* 1978 December-1979 January
- b. 2 f. 8-10 *The Motion of History* 1975 December-1976 January
- b. 2 f. 11-13 *The Motion of History, Introduction Police* 1967 March 7
Includes unproduced version.
- b. 2 f. 14-15 *A Recent Killing* ca. 1968
- b. 3 f. 1 *Rockgroup*
- b. 3 f. 2-6 *S-1* 1976
Includes press release, glossary, and production file.
- b. 3 f. 7-10 *The Sidnee Poet Heroical or if in Danger of Suit, the Kit Poet Heroical*
Includes production file.
- b. 4 f. 1-2 *A Skit for Young Boys*
- b. 4 f. 3 *The Slave*

- b. 4 f. 4-10 *Slave Ship* 1966-1967
Includes production file.
- b. 4 f. 11-13 *The Toilet*
 - b. 4 f. 14 *Two one-act plays (The Baptism and The Toilet)*
- b. 4 f. 15-16 *Weimar 2* 1981
Includes production file from 1981.
- b. 4 f. 17-18 *What Was the Relationship of the Lone Ranger to the Means of Production*
1978
 - b. 4 f. 19 *Supercoon...A Cartoon*
 - b. 4 f. 20 Unidentified handwritten play, 52 pages
 - b. 4 f. 21 Miscellaneous fragments and printed material 1971