



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

Guide to the

Henry D. Miller theater collection

1957-2005 [bulk 1970-2002]

Sc MG 756

Processed by Sacha Page, 2009.

Summary

Creator: Miller, Henry (Henry D.)

Title: Henry D. Miller theater collection

Date: 1957-2005 [bulk 1970-2002]

Size: 4.37 linear feet (11 boxes)

Source: Gift of Henry Miller, July 2005.

Abstract: A veteran theater artist of the 1960s and 1970s civil rights inspired Black theater movement, Henry Miller has directed a number of plays in the African American drama canon. Between 1962 and 1992, Miller founded three Black theater companies: the Joseph Patterson Players (1962-1965), the Afro-American Repertory Theatre Company (1971-1978) and the James Baldwin Writers' Workshop Theater (1992-2002). The Henry Miller Theater collection chronicles Miller's work in theater, film, and television as an artist and scholar and spans the period 1957-2005.

Preferred citation: [Item], Henry D. Miller theater collection, Sc MG 756, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Sacha Page, 2009.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Related Materials:

Also found in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture:

Frederick O'Neal papers, Sc MG 965

Creator History

A veteran theater artist of the 1960s and 1970s civil rights inspired Black theater movement, Henry Miller has directed a number of plays in the African-American drama canon, staging more than 30 Off-Off Broadway and regional productions. Between 1962 and 1992, Miller founded three Black theater companies: the Joseph Patterson Players (1962-1965), the Afro-American Repertory Theatre Company (1971-1978) and the James Baldwin Writers' Workshop Theater (1992-2002). His one-act plays, *The Christmas Eve Companion Plays: A Winter Reunion* and *Gifts of Parting* were awarded first and second prize in Samuel French's Off-Off Broadway Short Play Festival in 1995 and 1998, respectively. The two plays were also published by Samuel French, Inc., and the Alexander Street Press in Virginia. Beyond theater and drama, Miller has been active in film, writing, and teaching. His 1975 short film *Death of a Dunbar Girl* was exhibited in Black American film festivals at the Vatican, the National Theater in London, the Forum des Halles in Paris, and the Public Theater and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. He has written for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum in Philadelphia, Columbia Pictures, and the New York *Village Voice*. Miller has various teaching experience, including teaching writing at the American Folk Theater and play and screenwriting at Writers Voice, Inc. in New York; theater history at The City College of New York; and guest lecturing at Kean University in New Jersey and New York City Technical College. Miller holds a Ph.D. in theater from the City University of New York's Graduate School and University Center. His doctoral dissertation is titled "Art or Propaganda: A Historical and Critical Analysis of African-American Approaches to Dramatic Theory, 1900-1965".

Scope and Content Note

The Henry D. Miller Theater collection chronicles Miller's work in theater, film, and television as an artist and scholar and spans the period 1957-2005. The collection is divided into two series: Personal and -General. The Personal series consists of general correspondence; production papers and other materials related to plays which Miller either wrote, performed in, or directed; playwright workshops in which he was involved; and his professional and academic writings and projects in film, television and theater, including his work with Black theater organizations such as the Afro-American Repertory theater Company, the Atlanta Theater of the Stars/Just Us Theater Company, and the Yomo/New Heritage Repertory theater. The General series is a collection of material by and about other African American writers, actors, and theater companies that Miller amassed over the span of his career. The General series also contain a collection of scripts by well- and little-known African American playwrights including Kai Adwoa, Sylvain Bemba, Christopher Blake, Townsend Brewster, Thomas E. Buckrham Jr., Steve Carter, Wendell Carter, Ronald Llyod Davis, Rafael Diaz, Hisani Du Bose, Marjorie Eliot, Everett Ensley, J.E. Franklin, Arthur French Jr., Haile Gerima, Maxwell Glanville, Don Wilson Glen, Sam Greenlee, Laurence Holder, Endesha Holland, Leecynth Hunkins, Rashidah Ismaili, Matthew Jackson, Gertrude Jeannette, James Arlington Jones, Ken Lauber, Glenville Lovell, Malik, Norman Matlock, Lofton Mitchell, Winston Lungelo Mvusi, Mark Nelson, Owa (Dr. Howard Jackson), Passion (Rhonda Hansome), Louis Peterson, Clayton Riley, Garret Robinson, S.M. Shephard-Massat, David Smith, Valerie Thomas, Jacqueline Wade, Clifton Walker, Rudy Wallace, Marion Warner, Ajene Washington, Jaso Wati, and Richard Wright.

Arrangement: Organized into two series: I. Personal and II. General.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American actors
African American dramatists
African American entertainers
African American theater
African Americans in the performing arts

Names

Brewster, Townsend, 1924-
Carter, Steve, 1929-
Ensley, Everett, 1931-1986
Franklin, J. E. (Jennie Elizabeth), 1937-
Glanville, Maxwell, 1918-1992
Greenlee, Sam, 1930-
Holder, Laurence
Holland, Endesha Ida Mae, 1944-2006
Jeanette, Gertrude
Miller, Henry (Henry D.)
Mitchell, Lofton
Peterson, Louis, 1922-
Riley, Clayton
Wright, Richard, 1908-1960
Afro-American Repertory Theatre Company (Bronx, New York, N.Y.)
James Baldwin Writers Workshop Theatre (Bronx, New York, N.Y.)
Just Us Theater Company (Atlanta, Ga.)
Theater of the Stars (Atlanta, Ga.)

Container List

Personal 1957-2003

- b. 1 f. 1-2 **Early papers 1957-1970**
Includes scripts and programs of productions in which Henry acted, directed, and/or wrote; production financial statement; flyers; clippings; and contracts.
- b. 1 f. 3-7 **Afro-American Repertory Theatre Company (AAR Theatre) 1970-1978**
Includes *Land of Lem* material (flyers, tickets); correspondence; contracts; minutes of business meeting; membership form; class description; rehearsal schedules; production expenses; and material on *Unjust Do Not Prosper*, written and directed by Miller (program, flyer, ticket), among others.
- The Atlanta Theater of the Stars/Just Us Theater Company 1979-1983**
Includes productions directed by Miller.
- b. 1 f. 8 ***Hansberry, Lorraine. A Raisin in the Sun* 1979 September**
Includes director's rehearsal schedule, contact sheet, and notes; programs; set design drawing by Art Johnson; flyer; and clippings.
- b. 1 f. 9 ***Dean, Phillip Hayes. Every Night when the Sun Goes Down* 1980**
Includes director's rehearsal schedule and notes; program; letter; and clippings.
- b. 1 f. 10 ***Dean, Phillip Hayes. Sty of the Blind Pig* 1980**
Includes letter; director's rehearsal schedule and notes; contact sheet; mailer; program; and clippings.
- b. 1 f. 11 ***Wesley, Richard. The Mighty Gents* 1980**
Includes director's rehearsal schedule, notes, and copy of play; programs; and clippings.
- b. 1 f. 12 ***Mason, Judy Ann. Livin' Fat and Mclver, Ray. Fly in the Coffin* 1982**
Includes director's copy of play and rehearsal notes; contact sheet; letter; and program.
- b. 1 f. 13 ***Wright, Richard. Daddy Goodness* 1982**
Includes contact sheet; director's rehearsal notes; program; and reviews.
- b. 1 f. 14 ***Cleage, Pearl. Puppetplay and Elder, Lonnie. Ceremonies and Dark Old Men* 1983**
Includes program; letters; contact sheet; and director's rehearsal schedule and notes.
- b. 1 f. 15-16 **Other productions 1983-1987**
Includes material for other plays directed by Miller, such as Gertrude Jeannette's *This Way Forward* and Lee Hunkin's *Sequestered* and *The Best of Strangers*.
- b. 1 f. 17-18 ***The Amen Corner* 1991**
b. 2 f. 1-2 Includes rehearsal schedules; letters of agreement; flyers; director's notes and copy of the play; sign-in sheets; correspondence; budget information; and bookkeeping records.
- b. 2 f. 3-6 **Playwrights Workshop 1983-1999**
Includes material (such as brochures, correspondence, student rosters, reading schedules, and class exercises) on the American Folk Theatre (AFT) Playwrights Workshop; Arthur Kopit's City College Drama Workshop; Theatre International; Writer's Voice, Inc.; NYU Black Theatre in America Conference; Southern Writers Festival for Young People; and Kean University/NJPAC Black Theatre Workshop.
- b. 2 f. 7-10 **James Baldwin Writers Workshop Theatre (JBWWT) 1991-2002**
Includes statement of purpose; invitations; programs; schedules of events; rehearsal schedules; newsletters; correspondence; flyers; notes; resumes; and symposium outline.
- b. 2 f. 11 **General correspondence 1967-2003**
Includes correspondence with various individuals, such as Woodie King, Jr., Lofton Mitchell, Brock Peters, and Harold Prince.
- b. 3 f. 1-4 **Film and television 1970-1987**
Includes legal papers (contracts, budgets, agreements); flyers; Black Filmmaker Foundation correspondence; reviews; programs; and material on educational television projects such as *The Gazzaily*, "Storytime with Alaina", and "Teacher Talk".

Personal (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 5-6 Professional writings and projects for film, television, and theater 1974-1990
Includes material (production schedules, descriptions, timelines, proposals, timelines) on *Dinka* (American adaptation of a Russian film); *The History of Black Drama*, an audiovisual exhibit at the Afro-Historical and Cultural Museum in Philadelphia; "Last Chance for a Black Cinema" (article for the *Village Voice*); *Renaissance*; *Ghetto Gifted* (documentary); and *Death in the Park* (film).

- b. 3 f. 7-9 Academic writings and projects for film and theater 1986-1994
b. 4 f. 1 Includes the screenplay, *The Dissident*, by Miller; notes on *My Brother's Keeper*; reports; and articles. Also includes scripts, storyboards, and schedules for *Seduced*, *The Dream*, *The Vignette*, and *Bus Stop*.

Theatrical works for theater, film, and television ca. 1962-1998

Includes drafts, director's scripts, shooting scripts, partial screenplays; and story boards.

Plays

- b. 4 f. 2 *Spectrum of the Ram* ca. 1962
b. 4 f. 3 *Unjust Do Not Prosper* ca. 1972
b. 4 f. 4 *My Brothers Keeper* 1990
b. 4 f. 5 *Zuma's Journey; A Winter Reunion; 26501: A Musical* 1990-1995
b. 4 f. 6 *The Parting; Gifts of Parting; Three Scenes before a Door; The Crystal Tree* ca. 1981-1998

Film, television, and video scripts

- b. 4 f. 7 *Hamhocks*
b. 4 f. 8 *Gregory and Death in the Park* ca. 1971-1980
b. 5 f. 1 *The Gazzaily; Gunther Gets Lost; Praise (Teacher Talk); and Story Time with Alaina* ca. 1983-1987
b. 5 f. 2 *All the Saints* ca. 1993
b. 5 f. 3 *Land of Lem; Mit Out Sound; and Cousin Kitty treatments* ca. 1974-1983

General

- b. 5 f. 4-5 Communications, reviews, other writings, and newsletters 1969-1999
b. 5 f. 6 Roger Furman's New Heritage Repertory Theatre 1967-1970
Includes flyers, programs, *Hip*, *Black*, and *Angry* poems, and reviews.
b. 5 f. 7 The American Folk Theatre and articles on "non-traditional" casting 1986
Also includes correspondence and material related to the Actor's Equity Association's 1st National Symposium on Non-Traditional Casting (1986).
b. 5 f. 8-9 Flyers and programs 1963-2005

Booklets and magazines

- b. 5 f. 10 1963-1983
b. 6 f. 1 1985-2004
b. 6 f. 2 Notable African American theater artists 1967-1994
Includes printed matter on Langston Hughes, Frederick O'Neal, Lofton Mitchell, and Gertrude Jeannette.

Glanville, Maxwell theater materials

- b. 6 f. 3 1977-1982
Includes papers on Glanville's *One Mo' Time*.
b. 6 f. 4 1985-1995
Includes issues of *Showbiz* and memorial programs for Glanville.

African American actors' photographs and resumes

- b. 6 f. 5 A-GI

General (cont.)

African American actors' photographs and resumes (cont.)

b. 6 f. 6 Go-Z

Scripts

Arranged alphabetically by author's last name.

b. 6 f. 7 Adwoa – Bemba

b. 6 f. 8 Blake – Brewster

b. 6 f. 9 Buckram

b. 6 f. 10 Carter – Davis

b. 7 f. 1 Diaz

b. 7 f. 2 Du Bose

b. 7 f. 3 Elliott

b. 7 f. 4 Ensley – French

b. 7 f. 5 Gerima

b. 7 f. 6 Glanville – Glen

b. 7 f. 7 Greenline

b. 8 f. 1 Holder – Hornstein

b. 8 f. 2-3 Hunkins

b. 8 f. 4 Ismaili – Jackson

b. 8 f. 5 Jeannette

b. 8 f. 6 Jones

b. 8 f. 7 Lowell

b. 9 f. 1 Malik – Matlock

b. 9 f. 2 Mitchell

b. 9 f. 3 Mvusi

b. 9 f. 4 Nelson

b. 9 f. 5 Owa

b. 9 f. 6 Passion – Peterson

b. 9 f. 7-8 Riley – Robinson

b. 10 f. 1

b. 10 f. 2 Shephard

b. 10 f. 3 Smith – Thomas

b. 10 f. 4 Wade – Walker

b. 10 f. 5 Wallace

b. 10 f. 6-7 Warner

b. 11 f. 1 Washington

b. 11 f. 2 Wati - Wright