



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre records

1960s-1994 [bulk 1980s]

*T-Mss 1994-029

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2014

Summary

Creator: Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre

Title: Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre records

Date: 1960s-1994 [bulk 1980s]

Size: 3.5 linear feet (10 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

Source: Donated by Geoff Shlaes, 1994.

Abstract: The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre (PRTT) was founded in 1967 by Miriam Colón (born 1933) as a bilingual theatrical organization that emphasized the dramatic history of Puerto Rico and Latin America. The collection, dated 1960s to 1994 (bulk dates 1980s), documents the PRTT through correspondence, flyers, mockups, photographs, production books, theater programs, posters and sound recordings.

Conditions Governing Access:

Inquiries regarding audio and video materials in the series may be directed to the Billy Rose Theatre Division (theatrediv@nypl.org). Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

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Preferred citation: Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre records,*T-Mss 1994-029. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

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Creator History

In 1966, *The Oxcart* debuted at the Greenwich Mews Theater in New York City. This highly successful play, written by René Marquez, traced a poor family's migration from Puerto Rico to New York City.

Miriam Colón, Lucy Boscano and Raul Julia starred.

Miriam Colón (born 1933), realizing that many of those in the community could not afford to see the play, made the decision to present it free of charge. Funding was secured from then Mayor John V. Lindsay.

The following year, Colón established the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre (PRTT), whose inspiration came from The Oxcart and the need to promote Hispanics in the performing arts. The Oxcart and the PRTT were credited with starting the development of the Spanish bilingual theater in the United States.

In 1977, Colón began a program for Hispanic youngsters who wished to become involved in the dramatic arts. The program held workshops for aspiring actors, directors, and playwrights in Spanish and English. Today, the PRTT sponsors the Raul Julia Training Unit, an after school program for low to moderate income Latino and other minority youths throughout New York City. Every summer, PRTT tours the city neighborhoods.

On the twentieth anniversary of the PRTT, Colón remarked that the objective was to establish the PRTT as a bilingual theatrical organization which would emphasize the dramatic history of Puerto Rico and Latin America, highlight the contributions of Hispanic dramatics in the United States, and to make these theatrical presentations accessible to the people (PRTT 20th anniversary program, 1987).

Colón continues to work as an actress on stage, film and television. She has appeared in many PRTT productions including *The Boiler Room* and *Senora Carrar's Rifles*. In 1977, the PRTT bought a former firehouse located at 304 West 47th Street, New York City. The theater continues to operate from this location as of 2014.

Scope and Content Note

The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre (PRTT) records, dated 1960s to 1994 (bulk dates 1980s) document thirty years of theatrical productions at the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre through correspondence, flyers, mock-ups, photographs, production books, posters, theater programs, and sound recordings.

The bulk of the collection consists of production books created mostly during the early 1980s. These books hold essential information about the plays' production including budgets, cast information, contact sheets, correspondence, critical reviews of the works, photographs, press releases and theater programs. During the 1980s, the PRTT also recorded audio of several of the live performances.

There are two final reports, dated 1990 to 1991, of the Training Unit for students that hold information about how the PRTT appraised the program. The files includes an assessment of the success of the program; an invitation to students to apply to the training unit; course descriptions; work that students did behind the scenes; photographs of the production; and invitations to performances.

Mockups are preproduction work for theater programs and some posters. The mockups indicate the placement of the the text and images; color; and the placement of advertisements.

Printed matter consists of articles of performance reviews; theater programs; and publicity for PRTT. The remaining material is several black and white photographs of audiences at outdoor summer performances.

Arrangement: The collection arrangement follows: Production Books, Training Unit, Posters, Mockups, Printed Material, and Photographs.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actors

Producers (managers)

Subjects

Actors, Hispanic American

American drama -- 20th century

American drama -- New York (State) -- New York

Hispanic American theater

Puerto Ricans -- New York (State) -- New York

Theater -- New York (State) -- New York

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Books

Clippings (information artifacts)

Photographs

Posters

Programs (documents)

Geographic Names

New York (N.Y.) -- Drama

Names

Colon, Miriam

Container List

Production Books

- b. 1 f. 1-4 Betances 1981
- b. 1 f. 5-9 Death Shall Not Enter the Palace 1981
- b. 2 f. 1-2 Fanlights. Los Soles Truncos 1980
- b. 2 f. 3-4 Happy Birthday 1989
- b. 2 f. 5-8 Paper Flowers 1982
- b. 3 f. 1-4 El Macho 1979
- b. 3 f. 5-8 The Man and the Fly 1982
- b. 4 f. 1-5 Summer Tour 1982

Training Unit

- b. 4 f. 6-7 1990
- b. 4 f. 8-10 1991

Posters

- b. 5 f. 1 Boiler Room 1993
 - o. 1 Betances 1981
- b. 5 f. 2 Cantos Latinos 1990
Not Traveling Theatre.
 - o. 1 Celebrandola Cultura Latina
- b. 5 f. 3 Coralito undated
- b. 5 f. 4 Encuentro de Teatro Espana. America Latina 1981
- b. 5 f. 5 Era Latina undated
- b. 5 f. 6 Flores de Papel. (Paper Flowers) 1982
- b. 5 f. 7 El Hombre y la Moscha undated
- b. 5 f. 8 Imagenes del Teatro 1981
- b. 5 f. 9 Inquisition 1983
- b. 5 f. 10 Los Jibaros Progresistas undated
- b. 5 f. 11 Man and the Fly 1982
- b. 6 f. 1 Marine Tiger 1983
- b. 6 f. 2 O.K 1969
- b. 6 f. 3-4 Passion of Antígona Perez 1972 (Two posters)
One is printed on paper stock, and the other poster is printed on metal.
- b. 6 f. 5 Payment as Pledged undated
- b. 6 f. 6 Sala la Caratula undated
- b. 6 f. 7 Senora Carrar's Rifles undated
- b. 6 f. 8 Serenata undated
- b. 6 f. 9-10 Simpson Street 1979, 1985
- b. 6 f. 11 Story of Don Cristobel undated
- b. 6 f. 12 Miriam Colon on cover of the San Juan Star 1980
Not Traveling Theatre.

Posters (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 13 2nd Latin American Popular Theater Festival 1980
Not Traveling Theatre.
- o. 1 VII International Hispanic Theatre Festival 1992

Mockups

- b. 7 f. 1 A Beat For Four Losers 1985
- b. 7 f. 2-3 Bravo! A Musical Benefit for PRTT 1989
- b. 7 f. 4 Charge It, Please 1991
- b. 7 f. 5 An End of Summer Party 1990
- b. 7 f. 6 English Only Restaurant 1990
- b. 8 f. 1 Mambo Louie and the Dancing Machine 1992
- b. 8 f. 2 Marine Tiger 1983
- b. 8 f. 3 Nydia Caro 1991
- b. 8 f. 4 Simpson Street 1985
- b. 8 f. 5 Telemundo. Advertisement undated
- b. 9 f. 1-7 Twentieth Anniversary of PRTT 1987
- b. 8 f. 6-8 Assorted Mockups undated

Printed Material

- b. 10 f. 1-3 Articles and Reviews 1970s-1990s
- b. 10 f. 4-9 Programs 1960s-1990s
- b. 10 f. 10-15 Publicity 1980s-1990s
- b. 10 f. 16-17 Photographs 1970s-1980s