



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**New Federal Theatre photographs**

1959-2014

\*T-Mss 2016-016

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2017.

## Summary

**Creator:** New Federal Theatre (New York, N.Y.)

**Title:** New Federal Theatre photographs

**Date:** 1959-2014

**Size:** 2.26 linear feet (7 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Woodie King and New Federal Theatre, 2016.

**Abstract:** The New Federal Theatre photographs document several decades of theatrical productions, mostly through photographs and to a lesser extent through playbills, posters, prompt books, and reviews.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

**Preferred citation:** New Federal Theatre photographs, \*T-Mss 2016-016. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2017.

## Creator History

Woodie King Jr. is an African-American director and producer who founded the New Federal Theatre in 1970, on the Lower East Side. The Theatre was initially funded by the Henry Street Settlement. The early performances during the 1960s were produced in a theatre program with Mobilization for Youth. The performance space offers a place for actors, directors and playwrights to develop their creative talents. The theatre has been a proving ground for many established and emerging African-American artists, and women to work on the national stage. This theatre also showcases their talent in other locations and has attracted diverse talent from across the country.

Bert Andrews (died 1993), a performing-arts photographer shot many of the photographs in this collection. Andrews was widely recognized for his work chronicling the black theatre.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The New Federal Theatre photographs, dated 1959 to 2014, document the history of the Theatre and its productions. The photographs often include identifying information about the title of the production and the actors in the cast. Photographs are occasionally accompanied with press releases, programs, contact sheets, and two production books.

**Arrangement:** The arrangement: photographs, playbills, posters, prompt books, reviews and artifacts.

### **Key Terms**

#### **Occupations**

Actors (performing artists)  
Producers and directors

#### **Subjects**

African American actors  
African American theatrical producers and directors  
Theater -- United States

#### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Artifacts (object genre)  
Photographs  
Playbills  
Prompt books

#### **Names**

Andrews, Bert  
King, Woodie, Jr., 1937-

## Container List

### Photographs

#### Productions

- b. 5 f. 1 *Aid to Dependent Children* 1974  
Play written by Umar Ben Hassan and produced by Woodie King, Jr., at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. File includes contact prints.
- b. 1 f. 1 *Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death* 1971
- b. 1 f. 2 *The Amen Corner* 1979
- b. 5 f. 2 *Ameri/Cain Gothic* 1985  
File includes contact prints and negatives.
- b. 1 f. 3 *Anna Lucasta* 1978  
Pictured: Debbie Allen.
- b. 5 f. 3 *The Balm Yard* 1991  
See also: Playbills.
- b. 1 f. 4 *Behold! Cometh the Vanderkellens* 1971
- b. 1 f. 5 *Bessie Smith, Empress of the Blues* 1975, 1982, 1983  
Other productions about Bessie Smith pictured were *Champeen*, 1983, and *Me and Bessie*, 1975.
- b. 5 f. 4 *Bessie Speaks* 1994
- b. 5 f. 5 *Black Girl* 1994-1995  
File holds single contact print.
- b. 1 f. 6 *Black Nativity* 1961
- b. 5 f. 6 *A Black Quartet* c. 1968
- b. 5 f. 7 *A Black Woman Speaks*  
Beah Richards stars in a one-woman show.
- b. 1 f. 7 *The Blacks* 1961  
Picture includes Cicely Tyson and Louis Gossett, Jr.
- b. 1 f. 8 *The Blood Knot* 1964  
Pictures includes Louis Gossett, Jr.
- b. 1 f. 9 *Blue Boy in Black* 1963  
Pictured: Cicely Tyson.
- b. 5 f. 8 *Boogie Woogie and Booker T* 1987  
File includes contact prints and a negative.
- b. 5 f. 9 *Brothers Berg* 2000  
Pictured: Doug Olear and Davis Hall.
- b. 5 f. 10 *Candidate* 1974  
Play by Charles Fuller.

Photographs (cont.)

Productions (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 10 *Carry Me Back to Morningside Heights* 1968  
Pictured: David Steinberg, Cicely Tyson, Louis Gossett, Jr., Diane Ladd, Johnny Brown and Sidney Poitier.
- b. 1 f. 11 *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men* 1974
- b. 5 f. 11 *Christchild* 1992  
Contact print only.
- b. 5 f. 12 *Christopher Columbus* 1998  
See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 13 *Conjure Man Dies. A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem* 2001  
File includes press releases.
- b. 1 f. 12 *Coriolanus* 1979  
Pictured: Gloria Foster, Morgan Freeman.
- b. 5 f. 14 *Daddy or the Prince of Darkness* 1977  
Play by Ed Bullins. Pictured: Nathan George. File includes a negative.
- b. 1 f. 13 *Daddy Goodness* 1968, 1979  
Photographs were taken from two different productions.
- b. 3 f. 10 *The Dance and the Railroad* 1981  
Playwright David Henry Hwang. The play premiered as part of a commission by the New Federal Theatre and professionally debuted at the Joseph Papp Theatre.
- b. 5 f. 15 *Dance on Widows' Row* 2000  
See also: Playbills
- b. 1 f. 14 *Dark of the Moon* 1959  
Pictures include Roscoe Lee Brown, Cicely Tyson, and Clarence Williams III.
- b. 1 f. 15 *Daughters of the Mock* 1979
- b. 1 f. 16 *Day Of Absence, Happy Ending* 1965
- b. 5 f. 16 *Day Out of Time* 1988
- b. 5 f. 17 *December Seventh* 1986  
Play by George Rattner. File also holds negatives.
- See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 18 *Defending the Light* 2000  
See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 19 *Diss Diss and Diss Dat* 2003  
See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 20 *Do Lord Remember Me* 1997  
See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 21 *Don't Let It Go to Your Head* 1972  
Play by J.E. Gaines and directed by Gilbert Moses. Photograph may have been taken from production at Theater de Lye.

Photographs (cont.)  
Productions (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 17 *Dream on Monkey Mountain* 1971  
Produced by the Negro Ensemble Company. Pictured: Roscoe Lee Brown, Antonio Fargas and Robert Jackson (oversize photograph). A smaller picture features Roscoe Lee Browne and Ron O'Neal.
- b. 1 f. 18 *Eubie* 1980  
Pictured: Eubie Blake and cast celebrating his 97th birthday on-stage at the Ambassador Theatre in New York.
- b. 1 f. 19 *An Evening With Josephine Baker* 1980
- b. 1 f. 20 *The First Breeze of Summer* 1975
- b. 1 f. 21 *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When the Rainbow is Enuf* 1978, 1995  
See also: Playbills.
- b. 1 f. 22 *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* 1965  
Pictured: Arnold Soboloff and Godfrey Cambridge.
- b. 5 f. 22 *God's Trombone* 1989, 1990  
Photographs were taken at the New York and Philadelphia productions. Pictures include Ossie Davis and S. Epatha Merkerson. Files also include contact sheets and negatives.
- See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 23 *Goree* 1989
- b. 2 f. 1 *The Great MacDaddy* 1974
- b. 5 f. 24 *The Great Men of Gospel*  
Written by Elizabeth Van Dyke.
- b. 2 f. 2 *A Hand is on the Gate* 1966  
Pictured: James Earl Jones, Cicely Tyson, Gloria Foster, Leon Bibb, Josephine Premice, Moses Gunn, Ellen Holly, and Roscoe Lee Brown.
- b. 2 f. 3 *Home* 1979
- b. 2 f. 4 *Inacent Black and the Five Brothers* 1979
- b. 5 f. 25 *Incommunicado* 2001
- b. 5 f. 26 *In Dahomey* 1998-2002
- b. 5 f. 27 *Jelly Belly* 1989  
File includes contact prints.
- b. 2 f. 5 *Jerico-Jim Crow* 1964
- b. 5 f. 28 *Jika* 1987  
File includes contact prints and negatives.
- b. 5 f. 29 *Ladies in Waiting* 1972  
Contact print only.

See also: Playbills and prompt book.

Photographs (cont.)  
Productions (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 30 *A Last Dance for Sybil* 2002  
Pictured: Ruby Dee, Teagle Bougere and Earle Hyman.
- See also: Posters.
- b. 5 f. 31 *The Last Street Play* 1977
- b. 5 f. 32 *Lillian Wald at Home on Home at Henry Street* 1986
- b. 2 f. 6 *Long Day Journey Into Night* 1981  
Pictured: Earle Hyman, Peter Francis-James, Gloria Foster, and Al Freeman.
- b. 2 f. 7 *Lost in the Stars* 1972
- b. 2 f. 8 *Love to All, Lorraine* 1982  
Pictured: Elizabeth Van Dyke (playwright of play).
- See also: Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 33 *MacBeth* 1977  
See also: Posters.
- b. 5 f. 34 *The Matador on the First and Second* 1994-1995
- b. 5 f. 35 *The Meeting* 1987  
Contact sheets, photographs, negatives.
- See also: Artifact and Playbills.
- b. 5 f. 36 *The Mississippi Delta* 1987
- b. 2 f. 9 *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* 1962
- b. 5 f. 37 *My One Good Nerve* 1998  
See also: Artifacts.
- b. 5 f. 38 *Night Song*
- b. 2 f. 10 *The Ofay Watcher* 1969
- b. 2 f. 11 *Othello* 1964  
Pictured: James Earl Jones and Julienne Marie.
- b. 2 f. 12 *Paul Robeson* 1977  
Pictured: James Earl Jones.
- b. 2 f. 13 *The Premise* 1960  
Pictured: Jo Ann Le Compte, Al Freeman Jr., and Diane Sands.
- b. 5 f. 39 *Prodigal Sister* 1974
- b. 2 f. 14 *Prodigal Son* 1965
- b. 2 f. 15 *The Reckoning* 1969
- b. 2 f. 16 *The River Niger* 1972  
Pictured: Douglas Ward Turner and Roxie Roker.
- b. 5 f. 40 *Sheila's Day* 1990  
Performed at the Crossroads Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- b. 3 f. 12-13 *Showdown Time* 1976
- b. 2 f. 17 *Sisyphus and the Blue Eyed Cyclops* 1975

Photographs (cont.)

Productions (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 18 *The Slave, The Toilet* 1964
- b. 3 f. 1 *Slave Ship* 1969
- b. 3 f. 2 *A Slow Dance on Killing Ground* 1965  
Pictured: Billy Dee Williams.
- b. 3 f. 3 *A Soldier's Play* 1982
- b. 5 f. 41 *Song of the Lusitanian Bogey* 1967
- b. 5 f. 42 *A Soul On Fire* 2000
- b. 5 f. 43 *Sovereign State of Boogedy Boogedy* 1986  
File also holds negatives.
- b. 3 f. 4 *Sty of the Blind Pig* 1971
- b. 5 f. 44 *Survival* 1977
- b. 5 f. 45 *Take A Giant Step* 1959
- b. 5 f. 46 *Tea* 1975  
Play by Erwin H. Lerner.
- b. 5 f. 47 *Testimony*
- b. 5 f. 48 *A Thrill a Moment* 1989  
The file contains contact prints only.
- b. 5 f. 49 *Tis the Morning* 1989  
The file contains contact prints only.
- b. 3 f. 5 *To Be Young, Gifted and Black* 1968
- b. 5 f. 50 *Toe Jam* 1971  
Playwright Elaine Jackson.
- b. 5 f. 51 *The Trial of One Short-Sighted Black Woman vs Mammy Louise and Safreeta Mae* 1999  
Playwright Marcia L. Leslie.
- b. 5 f. 52 *Trick the Devil* 1993
- b. 5 f. 53 *Trinity* 1987
- b. 5 f. 54 *Trouble in Mind* 1979
- b. 3 f. 6 *Trumpets of the Lord* 1963
- b. 6 f. 1 *Urban Transition: Loose Blossoms* 1998
- b. 3 f. 7 *What the Winesellers Buy* 1974  
The file also includes contact prints.
- b. 6 f. 2 *Wilderness Of Shur* 1981
- b. 6 f. 3 *Williams and Walker* 1986  
File also include negatives.

See also: Playbills.

Photographs (cont.)

Productions (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 4     *The Wiz* 1980  
              Pictured: Stephanie Mills and Hinton Battle. Opening night on Broadway. Photograph by Martha Swope.
- b. 6 f. 5     *Zion* 1990
- b. 3 f. 8     *Zora/When Chickens Come Home to Roost* 1981
- b. 3 f. 9     *Zooman and the Sign* 1981
- Performing Artists and Others 1970s-2000s  
              Many of the photographs are undated.
- b. 6 f. 6     Andrews, Bert  
              Photographer.
- b. 6 f. 7     Benjamin, Paul
- b. 6 f. 8     Caesar, Adolph
- b. 6 f. 9     Chisholm, Anthony
- b. 6 f. 10    Darden, Norma Jean
- Davis, Ossie; Dee, Ruby
- b. 3 f. 11    Undated
- b. 6 f. 11    Undated
- b. 6 f. 12    Dupois, Starletta
- b. 6 f. 13    Edwards, Craig Alan
- b. 6 f. 14    Eldor, Lonnie
- b. 6 f. 15    Evans, Estelle Bernice 1985
- b. 6 f. 16    Gentry, Minnie
- b. 6 f. 17    Glanville, Maxwell
- b. 6 f. 18    Jones, Duane  
              Director.
- b. 6 f. 19    Kenny, Leon
- b. 6 f. 20    King, Woodie 2001  
              Producer.
- b. 6 f. 21    McIntyre, Dianne
- b. 6 f. 22    Shabazz, Attallah
- b. 6 f. 23    Shepard, Duane Sr 2000
- b. 6 f. 24    Stubbs, Louise
- b. 6 f. 25    Sutherland, Yvonne
- b. 6 f. 26    Turman, Glynn and McGee, Vonetta
- b. 6 f. 27    Williams, Dick Anthony
- b. 6 f. 28-29   Events and Productions  
              Unidentified.

Playbills

- b. 6 f. 30    *The Balm Yard* 1991
- b. 6 f. 31    *Boogie Woogie Landscapes* 1980



Playbills (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 32 *A Celebration of Duke Ellington* 1989
- b. 6 f. 33 *Child of the Sun* 1981
- b. 6 f. 34 *Christopher Columbus* 1998
- b. 6 f. 35 *The Conjure Man Dies. Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem* 2001
- b. 6 f. 36 *The Dance on Widow's Row* 2000
- b. 6 f. 37 *December Seventh* 1986
- b. 6 f. 38 *Defending the Light* 2000
- b. 6 f. 39 *Diss Diss and Diss Dat* 2003
- b. 6 f. 40 *Do Lord Remember Me* 1997  
The file also includes publicity material.
  
- b. 6 f. 41 *Dr. Du Bois and Miss Ovington* 2014
- b. 6 f. 42 *The First Breeze of Summer* 1975
- b. 6 f. 43 *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When the Rainbow is Enuf* 1978
- b. 6 f. 44 *God's Trombones* 1984
- b. 6 f. 45 *Grace in the Light* 1999
- b. 6 f. 46 *Grand Street* 1979
- b. 6 f. 47 *In Splendid Error* 1978  
The file also includes the flyer.
  
- b. 6 f. 48 *Jazz Set* 1982
- b. 6 f. 49 *Love* 1972
- b. 6 f. 50 *Love to All Lorraine* 1982
- b. 6 f. 51 *The Making of Miss Janie* 2006
- b. 6 f. 52 *The Meeting* 1987
- b. 6 f. 53 *My One Good Nerve* 2000
- b. 6 f. 54 *Real Black Men Don't Sit Crosslegged on the Floor* 2006
- b. 6 f. 55 *Season' Reasons* 1976  
The file includes a flyer.
  
- b. 6 f. 56 *Suspenders* 1979
- b. 6 f. 57 *Tea* 1975
- b. 6 f. 58 *A Thrill a Moment* 1989
- b. 6 f. 59 *The Trail of One Short-Sighted Black Woman vs. Mamy Louise and Safreeta Mae* 1999
- b. 6 f. 60 *Widows* 1981
- b. 6 f. 61 *Williams and Walker* 1986  
The file includes a flyer.

Posters

- b. 4 f. 1 *Checkmates* 1988  
Starring Paul Winfield, Ruby Dee, Marsha Jackson and Denzel Washington. Directed by Woodie King, Jr. Two posters.

Posters (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 2 *December Seventh* 1986  
Play by George Rattner.
- b. 4 f. 3 *Duplex. A Black Love Fable in Four Movements* 1971  
The New Lafayette Theatre.
- b. 4 f. 4 *It's Showdown Time* 1976  
Play by Don Evans. An adaptation of William Shakespeare *Taming of the Shrew*.
- b. 4 f. 5 *A Last Dance for Sybil* 2002  
Play by Ossie Davis. Starring Ruby Dee.
- b. 4 f. 6 *Macbeth* 1977
- b. 4 f. 7 *Zora Neale Hurston* 1990  
Starring Elizabeth Van Dyke. Produced by the National Black Touring Circuit, Inc. which was founded in 1974 by Woodie King, Jr.
- b. 4 f. 8 Woodie King's Love Affair With Black Theater Undated  
Photocopy featuring Woodie King, Jr. on the front page of *Sunday Morning Service and Leisure*.

Prompt Books

- b. 7 f. 1 *Ladies In Waiting* 1966, 1973  
Revised edition.
- b. 7 f. 2 *My One Good Nerve* 1976

Reviews

- b. 6 f. 62 *Black Medea* 1978
- b. 6 f. 63 *In Splendid Error* 1978
- b. 6 f. 64 New Federal Theatre 1976-1996
- b. 6 f. 65 *Take It From the Top* 1979
- b. 9 f. 67 Artifacts 1998  
The file holds four small metal discs promoting Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee's production *My One Good Nerve*.