



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

Guide to the

Ernest "Tad" Truesdale papers

1945-1987

Sc MG 103

Summary

Creator: Truesdale, Ernest Tad, 1926-1988

Title: Ernest "Tad" Truesdale papers

Date: 1945-1987

Size: 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes, 1 oversize folder)

Source: Gift of Charlotte Evans, 1988-1991.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Ernest Truesdale, whose stage name was Tad Truesdale, was a dancer, choreographer, actor, writer, producer, and director. This collection primarily documents the performer's professional career and includes biographical information, playscripts, news clippings, reviews, programs, correspondence, and financial records.

Preferred citation: [Item], Ernest "Tad" Truesdale papers, Sc MG 103, 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: Accessioned by Diana Lachatanere, 1988, and processed through the Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: posters and sketches.

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio materials. For more information, please contact the division at schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org or 212-491-2270.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Related Materials:

American Negro Theatre records, Sc MG 70, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

American Negro Theatre scrapbook, Sc MG 363, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Creator History

Ernest Truesdale, whose stage name was Tad Truesdale, was a dancer, choreographer, actor, writer, producer, and director. He studied acting at the New School for Social Research, and dance with Charles Weidman and the Katherine Dunham School. A versatile performer, Truesdale's career dealt mostly with African, calypso, and African American aspects of theater. His work primarily was in New Jersey and New York City. As a dancer, he had two dance acts in the 1950s, Truesdale and Francine and Truesdale and Theral; he also danced in Broadway musicals, including *St. Louis Woman* and *Carmen Jones*, and toured Europe and Asia with a variety of shows, including the Harlem Blackbirds. He was a student member of the American Negro Theatre Company and appeared in the Broadway production of *Anna Lucasta*. Truesdale also performed in several Off-Broadway productions and on television, and he made recordings. From 1975-1984, he worked with La Mama Experimental Theatre Club in New York City as playwright and director. He also was active with dramatics in the public schools.

Scope and Content Note

The Ernest "Tad" Truesdale papers primarily document the performer's professional career and include biographical information, playscripts, news clippings, reviews, programs, correspondence, and financial records. There are contracts (1949-1953), a script, letters and news clippings related to the American Negro Theatre; programs and news clippings related to Truesdale's career as a dancer; letters and news clippings pertaining to the Harlem Blackbirds and their performances in Ceylon (1952); and news clippings about his performance in New York City's African Room with the Richie Havens Trio. Additionally, the collection includes information about the CAN DO festival, of which Truesdale was director (1966), held in New Jersey, and his involvement with the La Mama Theatre. Scripts include those he wrote or performed, including *Daddy! Daddy!*, which he authored and was performed at La Mama; *The Godsong*, a gospel rock revival of James Weldon Johnson's *God's Trombones* (1975); *The Journeychain Show* (1976); *Nine Days of Ilo* (1976); and *The Manhattan Paul Revue* (1984). Of interest is a portfolio entitled "Back to the ANT on the Hill" referring to Truesdale's theatrical origins with the American Negro Theatre. The portfolio consists of programs, news clippings, photographs, tickets, and press releases (1945-1987). Several of Truesdale's high school papers and yearbooks complete this collection.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American actors
African American dancers
African American dramatists

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

Names

Truesdale, Ernest Tad, 1926-1988
American Negro Theatre
La Mama Experimental Theatre Club

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