

The Crossroads Theatre Collection

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Introduction:

The Crossroads Theatre Collection is a collection of play scripts, newspaper articles, internal memos and documents, photos, negatives, and slides spanning from the creation of the Crossroads Theatre in 1978 to 2004. The collection was housed in the Crossroads Theatre until February of 2017, when it was transferred to the New Brunswick Free Public Library, due to the construction of a new building. This building, which will take the place of both the Crossroads Theatre and the George Street Playhouse on Livingston Avenue in New Brunswick, NJ, is part of the revitalization efforts for downtown New Brunswick. Previous to this construction project, the Theatre moved from a location on Memorial Parkway in New Brunswick to the Livingston Avenue location in 1991. The collection was not specifically organized when it was housed in the Crossroads Theatre, and had multiple copies of many documents, such as newspaper articles and internal memos. It also required an organizational overhaul so that it could be stored and accessed in a clear and orderly manner.

Historical Context:

Crossroads Theatre was established in 1978 with a goal of adding African American voices to the chorus of Regional Theaters in the United States. Co-founders Ricardo Khan and Lee Richardson, both Rutgers University graduates, were stymied by the lack of opportunity for African American actors in theater and were therefore determined to create a theater that would be dedicated solely to African American playwrights, performers, and artists. Beginning as an offshoot of the George Street Playhouse, and with the funding from a government grant, the Crossroads Theatre Company opened their first season in 1978 with the play "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show," and continued to grow from there. Originally located on Memorial Parkway in New Brunswick, the Theatre relocated in 1991 with financial help from the City of New Brunswick and from Johnson and Johnson, a prominent company located in New Brunswick that is dedicated to fostering

local culture and arts. The new location on Livingston Avenue, where they remained until March 2017, is in the heart of the downtown district and is surrounded by other theaters, including the George Street Playhouse. In 1991, Crossroads was praised in the House of Representatives for their production of "Black Eagles," for bringing "to public attention these long neglected American heroes, the Tuskegee Airmen, and their heroic exploits as they defended their country and fought for freedom."

Grammy and Tony winning playwright August Wilson has praised Crossroads Theatre as a model for other African-American theaters across the country. In 1999, Crossroads Theatre won the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in the United States, the first and only African American theater to receive this prestigious award. Soon after, however, the Theatre ran into financial trouble and had to close for the 2001-2002 season. After raising the adequate funds, the Theatre reopened in 2003 and has remained open ever since. Crossroads Theatre has been acknowledged nationally for its dedication to spotlighting African American voices in theater. Crossroads productions have toured nationally, and have caught the attention of presidents, civil rights activists, and nationally renowned artists, actors, and playwrights.

Scope and Content:

The Crossroads Collection spans from 1978-2004. It is comprised of internal memos, financial documents, resumes, headshots, grant information, meeting minutes, contracts, mailing lists, play scripts, production notes, photos, slides, negatives, advertisements, posters, and playbills. The documents were produced and are concerned with the two locations of the Crossroads Theatre, 320 Memorial Parkway and 7 Livingston Avenue, both in New Brunswick. The documents are split into a few separate themes of plays, finances, grants, internal memos and external correspondence, and resumes. These documents were given to the New Brunswick Free Public Library, and are only a portion of the full collection owned by Crossroads Theatre.

Access Points:

- 1) Seasons of Plays (1979-2000s)
- 2) Financial Information (organized by fiscal year)
 - a) Grants
 - b) IRS
- 3) Internal Documents/External Correspondence (organized by legal year)
 - a) Memos
 - b) Meetings Minutes
 - c) Letters

Box Contents:

1. Boxes #1-14
 - a. Plays
 - b. Scripts
 - c. Advertisements
 - d. Awards
 - e. Photos
 - f. Playbills
 - g. Newspaper Clippings
 - h. Press packets
2. Boxes #15-23
 - a. Grant Information
 - i. Proposals
 - ii. Acceptances
 - iii. Rejections

- b. Organizational Information
- c. Resumes
- d. Fundraiser Information
- e. Season Planning
- f. Long Range Business Plan
- g. IRS Forms and Legal Documents
- h. Newspaper Clippings
- j. Bills
- k. Stabilization Plan
- l. Music sheets

3. Box #24

- a. Mailing List Information
- b. Newsletters
- c. Group Rate Information
- d. Receipts for Group Purchases

Plays Scripts, Photos, Ads, Playbills, Video and Audio Tapes by season and title:

- 1. Season 1978-1979
 - a. Love and Other Strangers-Box 1
- 2. Season 1979-1980

- a. Slow Dance on the Killing Ground-Box 1
- b. Eden-Box 1
- c. For Colored Girls-Box 1
- d. On the Corner-Box 1

3. Season 1980-1981

- a. One Monkey Don't Stop No Show-Box 1
- b. My Sweet Charlie-Box 1
- c. Purlie-Box 1
- d. Ceremonies in Dark Old Men-Box 1
- e. Medal of Honor Rag-Box 1
- f. The Owl and the Pussycat-Box 1, Box 7

4. Season 1981-1982

- a. Norman, Is That You?-Box 1
- b. The Amen Corner-Box 1
- c. Paul Robeson-Box 1
- d. Home-Box 1

5. Season 1982-1983

- a. Meetings-Box 1
- b. Sty of the Blind Pig-Box 1
- c. Raisin-Box 1
- d. To Be Young, Gifted, and Black-Box 1

- e. The Blood Knot-Box 1
- f. Staggerlee Brown-Box 1

6. Season 1983-1984

- a. It's Showdown Time-Box 1
- b. Zooman and the Sign-Box 1
- c. Langston-Box 1
- d. Pantomime-Box 1

7. Season 1984-1985

- a. Steal Away-Box 1
- b. American Buffalo-Box 1
- c. Zora-Box 7
- d. Sweet Daddy Love-Box 1

8. Season 1985-1986

- a. One Mo' Time-Box 1
- b. Tamer of Horses-1
- c. Black Nativity-Box 1, Box 12
- d. Roads of the Mountaintop-Box 1
- e. Agnes of God-Box 1

9. Season 1986-1987

- a. The River Niger-Box 1
- b. Alterations-Box 1

c. Eubie!-Box 1

d. Williams & Walker-Box 1

10. Season 1987-1988

a. Spell #7-Box 1

b. Wowza Albert!-Box 1, Box 7

c. Sophisticated Ladies-Box 1, Box 7

d. Lady's Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill-Box 1

e. West Memphis Mojo-Box 1

f. Wet Carpets-Box 1

g. 1987 Summer in the Part-Box 12

11. Season 1988-1989

a. Mojo and the Sayso-Box 5, Box 7

b. The Rabbit Foot-Box 5, Box 7

c. The Playboy of the West Indies-Box 5, Box 12

d. Spooks-Box 7

12. Season 1989-1990

a. Sheila's Day-Box 5

b. Spunk-Box 5

c. And Further Mo'-Box 7

d. Black Eagles-Box 1, Box 13

e. Tod, The Boy Tod-Box 5, Box 9, Box 13

f. Genesis Festival-Box 7

13. Season 1990-1991

a. The Beautiful LaSalles-Box 5

b. Benji's Journey-Box 5, Box 12

c. Buses-Box 5, Box 9, Box13

d. Genesis-Box 5

e. Sangoma-Box 5

14. Season 1991-1992

a. Bill Cosby Live-Box 12

b. Black Orpheus-Box 1

c. Oak and Ivy-Box 1

d. The Love Space Demands-Box 1

e. The Talented Tenth-Box 1, audio Box 8

f. Genesis-audio Box 8

g. A Family Affair-audio Box 8

15. Season 1992-1993

a. Slow Dance on the Burning Land-audio Box 8, Box 12

b. Betsey Brown-audio Box 8, Box 12

c. The Disappearance-audio Box 8, Box 12

d. Mothers-audio Box 8, Box 12

e. The Late Great Ladies of Blues and Jazz-Box 5, Box 12

f. Genesis-audio Box 8

16. Season 1993-1994

a. Flyin' West-Box 6, Box 12

b. Telltale Hearts-Box 12

c. And the World Laughs With You-audio Box 8, Box 12

d. Home-Box 12

17. Season 1994-1995

a. Tamer of Horses-Box 1

b. Harlem Nocturne-Box 5, audio Box 8, Box 12

c. To Be Young, Gifted and Black-Box 12

d. Harriet's Return-Box 12

e. Two Hah Hahs and a Homeboy-Box 5, audio Box 8, Box 12

f. Genesis-Box 12

g. Genesis Box 12

18. Season 1995-1996

a. The Piano Lessons-Box 12

b. Sheila's Day-Box 8, Box 12

c. Jelly Roll-audio Box 8, Box 12

d. Fear Itself-Box 12

e. Nothamemba-Box 12

19. Season 1996-1997

a. Coming of the Hurricane-Box 4, Box 12

b. The Meeting-Box 12

20. Season 1997-1998

a. The Darker Face of the Earth-Box 4

b. Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope- Box 4, Box 23

c. Spirit North-Box 4

d. Crumbs from the Table of Joy-Box 4, Box 12

21. Season 1998-1999

a. Blues for an Alabama Sky-Box 4

b. Ain't Nothing But the Blues-Box 4

c. Ali-Box 2, Box 4, Box 5, Box 9,

d. Lost Creek Township-Box 2, Box 4, Box 14, Box 17

22. Season 1999-2000

a. Homework-Box 4

b. Play On-Box 4, VHS Box 12

c. Venice-Box 4, VHS Box 12