



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Gilda Navarra archives**

1926-2007

(S) \*MGZMD 450

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** Navarra, Gilda, 1921-

**Title:** Gilda Navarra archives

**Date:** 1926-2007

**Size:** 6.4 linear feet (22 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Gilda Navarra, 2012.

**Abstract:** Gilda Navarra (née Gilda Garcia Daubón, 1921-2015) was a dancer, choreographer, director, and mime. Navarra established the Taller Histriones Workshop in 1971 and held a professorship in theatre at the University of Puerto Rico. The Gilda Navarra archives, dated c. 1926 to 2007, are mainly scrapbooks that documents Navarra from childhood to her career as an artist in the performing arts. The collection holds clippings, certificates, letters, photographs, programs, posters, slides (in binders), sketches, and an artifact. The collection is mostly in Spanish.

**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>

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**Preferred citation:** Gilda Navarra archives, (S) \*MGZMD 450. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2016.

## Creator History

Gilda Navarra (née Gilda Garcia Daubón, 1921-2015) was a dancer, choreographer, director and mime. Navarra (stage name) was born on May 23, 1921, to Dr. Estaban Garcia Cabrera and Dona Angela Daubón in Puerto Rico. From an early age, Navarra and her sister Ana Garcia developed an interest in

ballet and Spanish dance.

During the years 1930 to 1950, Navarra traveled to the United States and Europe. She graduated from the College of Mt. Saint Vincent in New York; trained at the School of American Ballet, and toured with José Greco (1918-2000) in Europe. Returning to Puerto Rico Navarra and her sister Ana Garcia established the Ballets de San Juan in 1954.

After several years with the company, Navarra went back to the United States to study mime. By 1964, she returned to Puerto Rico to teach mime at the University of Puerto Rico, a position that she held for thirty years. Navarra also established the Taller Histriones (Histriones Workshop) a mime theatre in 1971. It was during this time, Navarra would become known as the "woman of silence," and "the storyteller without words." For fourteen years, the Taller Histriones performed many productions that include *Los Tres Cornudos*, *Asintota*, and *La Mujer del Abanico* (The Woman's Fan). After Taller Histriones ceased operations, Navarra would continue to participate in various productions.

Navarra died in Puerto Rico in 2015.

## Scope and Content Note

Navarra created four massive scrapbooks (three were previously dis-bound) to reflect her professional career in the performing arts, and to a lesser extent her family and social life. The scrapbooks hold clippings, certificates, letters, photographs, programs, posters, sketches, an artifact and slides. There are also three binders of slides.

Taller de Histriones is represented by two scrapbooks that document their first production *Los Tres Cornudas* (The Three Cuckooids), to one of their entitled *Polimnia*. A feature of the Taller de Histriones scrapbooks involves Navarra's use of borderless oversize photographs. This results with a dramatic close-up of the mimes. The production *La Mujer del Abanico* (The Woman's Fan) represents an example of behind-the-scenes. The makeup artist applies makeup similar to Kabuki dancers. Articles, reviews, and interviews of Navarra were also evident. Other productions include *Abelard and Heloise*, *Asintola*, *Esperando a Godot* (Navarra performed), *Ocho Y Mujeres*, and *La Olla*.

Another scrapbook spans Navarra's childhood through her professional career. Family photographs show a prosperous upbringing with her sister Ana Garcia and family portraits with their mother. Other photographs and printed matter include Navarra's professional debut at the end of World War II; traveling abroad with Jose Greco and troupe to Madrid and Paris, and extensive photographs of her stage wardrobe.

Navarra also retained materials from the productions of Ballets de San Juan such as newspaper advertisements for the shows, programs, and photographs of Navarra and her sister Ana Garcia. It was during this period in the 1950's that Navarra began to employ large borderless photographs of her in performance. These photographs show multiple stage movements of the dancers. Other photographs show Navarra enjoying social activities with her friends and fellow performers. The latter half of the scrapbook is similar to the last scrapbook (incomplete), and represents mostly the post-performance accomplishments of Navarra, accolades and social activities.

There is also a plaque and three volumes of slides of productions.

**Arrangement:** The scrapbooks and the slides are chronologically arranged.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Certificates  
Clippings (information artifact)  
Color slides  
Photographs  
Posters  
Programs (documents)  
Sketches

### **Occupations**

Choreographers -- Mime  
Dance teachers  
Dancers

### **Subjects**

Dance  
Dance -- Puerto Rico  
Mime  
Pantomime

### **Geographic Names**

Puerto Rico  
Puerto Rico -- Social life and customs

### **Names**

Daubon, Ana Garcia  
Garcia, Ana  
Greco, Jose\_  
Ballets de San Juan  
Taller Histriones

## Container List

### Scrapbooks 1926-2007

#### Taller De Histriones

##### Scrapbook 1 1972-2007

The scrapbook includes the following productions: *Los Tres Cornudos*, *La Olla*, *Ocha Mujeres* (an interpretation of Garcia Lorcas's work), *The House Of Bernanda Alba*, *Esperando A Godot*, *La Historia del Soldado*, *Asintota*, *Abelardo Y Eloisa*, *El Circulo de Tiza Caucasiona*, *Polimnia* and *Taller Sintesis* (The Festival de Teatro Alternative, 1996). The scrapbook also contains articles featuring Navarra, programs of pantomime festivals, and an exhibit of costumes and props for *Las Sillar*. See also: Boxes 10, 11 and 12 for loose items.

b. 1 1972-2007

b. 22 1972-2007

b. 2 Scrapbook 2 1974-1985

The scrapbook includes the following productions: *Un Guingol*, *Fragmentos*, *Atibon*, *Ogu*, and *Erzuli* (triple-bill), *La Mujer Del Abanico*, *Ocho Mujeres*, and *Metamorfosis*. The scrapbook also holds photographs from the 10th anniversary celebration of the company, and printed material from their tour to the United States and the Virgin Islands.

##### Scrapbook 3

This extensive scrapbook includes many photographs of Navarra and her sister's childhood in Puerto Rico that includes a single photograph of her family visiting the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. Other photographs and printed matter include photographs of her training to become a dancer and Navarra's emergence as a professional dancer. Related material includes photographs and programs of Navarra dancing with her sister, extensive images of stage costumes, Ballets de San Juan, and tours in Europe. The latter part of the scrapbook holds articles featuring Navarra's influence on the the training of young performers and how her influence has spread beyond Puerto Rico.

b. 3 3 Part 1 1926-1944

b. 4 3 Part 2 1950-1956

b. 5 3 Part 3 1956-1960

b. 6 3 Part 4 1960-1988

b. 7 3 Part 5 1988-1991

b. 8 3 Part 6 1990-2004

b. 9 Scrapbook 4 1990s-2007

The scrapbook is incomplete and lacks pages numbered 1 to 320. See also: Box 10 for loose items

#### Scrapbook Items

Loose materials from the scrapbooks.

##### Scrapbook 1

###### *Abelardo Y Eloisa* 1978

A pen and ink sketch. Scrapbook one

b. 10 f. 1 Mask

A pen and ink sketch.

b. 12 f. 1 Photograph

b. 11 f. 1 *El Circulo De Tiza Caucasiono* 1978

Poster.

##### Gilda Navarra

b. 11 f. 2 Navarra Sculpting In Clay c. 1978

Photograph

b. 11 f. 3 Watercolor c. 1970

Scrapbooks (cont.)

Scrapbook Items (cont.)

Scrapbook 1 (cont.)

- b. 10 f. 2 *Homar, Susan. Taller De Histriones. Gilda Navarra's Eloquent Discourse of Silence* c. 1990  
Review
  - b. 10 f. 3 *Ocho Mujeres* 1974  
Poster.
  - b. 10 f. 4 Printed Matter/Writings 1959-2007
- Scrapbook 4
- b. 10 f. 5 Doctors of Arts 1995  
Diploma
  - b. 10 f. 6 El Institute Cultura Puertorriquera 1995  
Plaque
  - b. 10 f. 7 Graduation Program 1995
  - b. 10 f. 8 *Triptico Die Kela* 1996  
Photographs

Slides of Productions 1972-1994

- b. 13 1972-1978
- b. 14 1978-1984
- b. 15 1984-1994

Item Inventory for Scrapbooks

- b. 16 1
- b. 17 1 - 2
- b. 18 3
- b. 19 3
- b. 20 3
- b. 21 3