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Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the
AIDS Theatre Project records

1987-2004 (bulk 1988-2001)

*T-Mss 1997-042

Compiled by John Calhoun and Susan Malsbury, February 2012

Summary

Creator: AIDS Theatre Project

Title: AIDS Theatre Project records, 1987-2004 (bulk 1988-2001)

Size: 15.92 linear feet (39 boxes)

Source: Donated by Kevin Frazier, Michael Letvin, Paul Lockwood, Jim Murello, and Ray Steehler from 1997-2005.

Abstract: The AIDS Theatre Project (ATP) was formed in New York City in 1987 and sought to provide a creative outlet for people with AIDS while educating the public on HIV/AIDS by performing original theatrical productions. This collection documents over fifteen years of performances produced by ATP and the reception they received from schools, community groups, and other host organizations.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photography and photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Preferred citation: AIDS Theatre Project records, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Custodial history: The records were compiled as a result of the efforts of former member, Ray Steehler, and were maintained by Steehler and other company members prior to donation.

Processing note: A small portion of these records (2.92 linear feet) were initially processed in 2005. These records have been reprocessed and combined with this collection. Material was reboxed and refoldered as necessary. Original arrangement and folder titles were retained when apparent.

Creator history

The AIDS Theatre Project (ATP) was formed in New York City in 1987. ATP sought to provide a creative outlet for people with AIDS (PWA's) while educating the public on HIV/AIDS by performing original theatrical productions for local and national schools, community groups, and other host organizations.

The ATP grew out of the People With AIDS Theater Workshop (PWATW), which was formed in 1987 under the leadership of playwright and acting instructor Seth Glassman, who had previously been a buddy at the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC). Glassman wrote the company's first script *People With AIDS*, a series of monologues based on Glassman's experience as a buddy at GMHC that demonstrates the real experiences of a PWA and the social and political environment that surrounds their lives. While some of the original members were professional actors, many others found themselves on stage for the first time.

The first performance took place that year at the Greenwich Village Arts Festival at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Greenwich Village. It was well-received and the company continued to perform around New York City for the rest of the year. In 1988, the company split. The offshoot group retaining the PWATW name and wanted to focus more on performing in cabarets and nightclubs. The remaining group members, with Glassman serving as artistic director, renamed the company AIDS Theatre Project (ATP) and sought to do outreach to schools and community centers. ATP was established as a nonprofit organization with a Board of Directors.

Over the next few years, ATP performed *People with AIDS* before dozens of local school, church, and community groups, traditionally following the one-hour performance with a question and answer session with audience members asking the performers questions, ranging from virus transmission to what it was like living with AIDS. Hosting organizations that could afford to do so paid the company a fee, and the performers, still a mix of HIV-positive professionals and amateurs, sometimes received a small stipend. Media coverage of ATP ranged from NBC and CBS news to *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*.

In 1992, a second play, *This AIDS Thing*, was developed collectively in workshops by company members under the direction of Bill Partlow, who succeeded Glassman as ATP artistic director. *This AIDS Thing* was based more directly on the lives of the cast members. At least partly due to HIV-related illness, however, cast turnover was always high, and substitutions were frequent. But ATP managed to extend the scope of its outreach, traveling to Ohio, Indiana, Colorado, Georgia, Washington DC, and other locations to perform its work.

Through the 1990s, ATP gave hundreds of performances, and held annual benefits at New York theatres like the Minetta Lane and Roundabout to help fund its non-profit activities. ATP also hosted bi-monthly open mike nights at CB's Gallery in Greenwich Village that functioned as both a fundraiser and to provide outreach. The company continued to develop new works, including *The Common Ground*, *The Waiting Room*, a play which focused on women with AIDS, and *Moment to Moment*, a concert piece that including poetry, monologues, and song. Following Partlow, artistic directors of the company included Letitia Guillory, Connie Winston, and Drew Picard. In addition to performances, the ATP would routinely host writing workshops

In the early years of the 2000s, ATP experienced increasing challenges with funding, along with other problems. The company was finally disbanded in 2003.

Scope and content note

This collection documents over fifteen years of theatrical performances produced and performed by The AIDS Theatre Project (ATP) and the reception the performances received from a diverse range of audience members. The records consist of administrative files, development files, financial records, production files, and photographs. Other than an early script for *People With AIDS*, the first year of the ATP, then called the People With AIDS Theater Workshop, is not represented in the collection.

Arrangement

The AIDS Theatre Project records are organized into the following series:

Series I: Administrative Files, 1988-2002

Series II: Development Files, 1990-2004

Series III: Financial Records, 1990-2003

Series IV: Production Files, 1987-2002

Series V: Photographs, 1992-2001

Key terms

Subjects

AIDS (Disease) and the arts

AIDS activists

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

Places

Greenwich Village (New York, N.Y.)

Names

AIDS Theatre Project

Glassman, Seth

Partlow, Bill, 1960-1996

People with AIDS Theatre Workshop

Special formats

Artifacts

Photographs

Scripts

Container list

Series I: Administrative Files, 1988-2002

Series I is arranged alphabetically by subject and includes correspondence, subject files, materials relating to outreach and publicity, and the Board of Director files. The ATP's staff was small. Paid staff included a part-time managing director, resident director, and creative director. All administrative work was done by volunteers, often high school or college interns. Correspondence includes letters between staff members, performers, and other interested parties. Memoranda and facsimile cover sheets were filed together and reflect the day-to-day communication within the office. Thank you cards are from schools, churches, and other organizations where ATP performed and reflect how the performances were received. The Board of Directors was active in ATP's administration, raising and managing funds, and providing support to staff and company members. The Board of Director files include budget reports, proposals for special projects, and provide a good overview of ATP's activities for a given year. The outreach files are mass mailings, letters to potential sponsors, and information packets. ATP occasionally collaborated with other organizations, providing professional expertise on portraying a PWA for DaWa Movies film *The Visit*, and co-producing the film *Facing Up to People with AIDS* with the pharmaceutical company Roche Laboratories.

- b.1 f.1-5 Adolescents, 1992-2001
- b.2 f.1 AIDS and HIV, 1990-2001
- b.2 f.2 AIDS Prevention, 1996-1998
- Board of Directors
- b.2 f.3 Ballot, 1991
- b.2 f.4 Contact Sheets, 1996-1997
- b.2 f.5 Correspondence, 1993-2001
- Minutes
- b.2 f.6-9 1990-1997
- b.3 f.1-3 1998-2001
- b.3 f.4 Recruitment, 1994-1997
- b.3 f.5 By-laws, 1990
- b.3 f.6 Conferences, 1997-2000
- b.3 f.7 Contracts, 1992-1995
- Correspondence
- b.3 f.8-9 General, 1991-2001
- b.4 f.1 General, 1991-2001
- b.4 f.2-3 Memoranda and Facsimile Cover Sheets, 1992-1995
- b.4 f.4-5 Thank You Letters, 1989-1995
- b.4 f.6 Expenditures, 1991
- Film Collaborations
- b.4 f.7 *Facing Up to People with AIDS*, 1992
- b.5 f.1 *The Visit*, 1998-1999
- b.5 f.2 Forms, undated
- b.5 f.3 Gay Pride March, 1991
- b.5 f.4 History, undated

Series I: Administrative Files, 1988-2002 (cont.)

- b.5 f.5 Internships and Volunteers, 1992-2001
- b.5 f.6 Leadership Training, undated
- b.5 f.7-8 Leases, 1992-2001
- b.5 f.9 Logo, undated
- Memorial Donations
- b.5 f.10 General, 1995-2000
- b.5 f.11 Chabernaude, Leonce, 1993
- b.5 f.12 DeMars, Ivan, 1993
- b.5 f.13 Lee, Don, 1994
- b.6 f.1 Navarro, Willy, 1992
- b.6 f.2 Vidal, Lillian, 1993
- b.6 f.3 Weinstein, Ivan, 1992
- b.6 f.4 Wilkins, Baker, 1994
- b.6 f.5 Mission Statement, 1993-2002
- b.6 f.6-8 New York City HIV/AIDS Resource Guides, 1997-2002
- b.6 f.9 News Clippings, 1989-2000
- b.6 f.10 Notes, 1997-1998, undated
- b.7 f.1 Open Mike Nights, 1997-2001
- Organizations, 2001
- b.7 f.2 AIDS Service Organization Management Institute (ASOMI), 2001
- b.7 f.3 Black and Latino AIDS Coalition, 1997
- b.7 f.4 Black Leadership Coalition on AIDS, 1994
- b.7 f.5 Board of Cooperative Educational Services, 1996-2000
- b.7 f.6 Body Positive, 2000-2001
- b.7 f.7 Center for Disease Control (CDC) Prevention Network, 1996-2000
- b.7 f.8 Community Resource Exchange (CRE), 1999-2001
- b.7 f.9 El Guapo, 2001
- b.7 f.10 Generation Safe, 2001
- b.7 f.11 Girls Talk!, 2000-2001
- b.7 f.12 Global Health Organization (GHO), 2001
- b.7 f.13 Housing Works, 2001
- b.7 f.14 Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York, 2000-2001
- b.7 f.15 Ohio Foundation for AIDS Services, 1993
- b.7 f.16 Oral History Center, 2000
- b.8 f.1 Planned Parenthood, 2001
- b.8 f.2 Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, 1990-1992

Series I: Administrative Files, 1988-2002 (cont.)

Organizations, 2001 (cont.)

- b.8 f.3 World, 1997-2001
- b.8 f.4-6 Unsorted, 1992-2001
- b.9 f.1 Unsorted, 1992-2001
- b.9 f.2-5 Outreach, 1990-2001
- b.10 f.1 Outreach, 1990-2001

Publicity

- b.10 f.2-3 Advertisements, 1992-1998
- b.10 f.4 Fliers, 1988-1999
- b.39 Posters, 1997-1998
- b.10 f.5-7 Press Clippings, 1989-2002
- b.11 f.1-3 Press Clippings, 1989-2002
- b.11 f.4 Press Releases, 1992-1998
- b.11 f.5 Rape, undated
- b.11 f.6 Relationships, undated
- b.11 f.7 Resolution 33, 1992
- b.11 f.8 Rules and Regulations, 1995-1998, undated
- b.11 f.9 Season Calendar, 1996-2002

Staffing

- b.11 f.10 General, 1996-2001
- b.12 f.1 Contact Sheets, 1991-2000
- b.12 f.2-4 Payroll, 1995-2001

Performers

- b.12 f.5 General, 1995-1998
- b.12 f.6 Bodrick, Jonathan, 1998
- b.12 f.7 Frazier, Kevin, 1996-2002
- b.12 f.8 Freedman, Lisa, 1995-1996
- b.12 f.9 Hines, Alvin, 1995-1996
- b.12 f.10 Kinlock, Paul, 1998
- b.12 f.11 Kuhn, Patrick, 1997
- b.12 f.12 Lambert, Garret, 2000
- b.12 f.13 Martell, Laryza, 1996
- b.12 f.14 Ott, David, 1999
- b.12 f.15 Porter, Kathy, 1996-2001
- b.12 f.16 Rees, Gareth, 1996
- b.12 f.17 Rivera, Wilma, 1996-1998
- b.12 f.18 Rodgers, Linwood, 1998

Series I: Administrative Files, 1988-2002 (cont.)

Staffing (cont.)

Performers (cont.)

- b.12 f.19 Russell, Glen, 1998
- b.12 f.20 Steehler, Ray, 1996-1998
- b.12 f.21 Walker, Michael, 1992
- b.12 f.22 Winston, Connie, 2000
- b.13 f.1 Recruitment, 1996-2000
- b.13 f.2 Strategic Planning, 1997-2001
- b.13 f.3 Website, 2000
- b.13 f.4 Workshops, 1999-2000, undated
- b.13 f.5 World AIDS Day, 1996-2001

Series II: Development Files, 1990-2004

Series II is divided into general files, benefit files, and foundation and corporate donor files. ATP did the majority of its fundraising through benefits and grants, supplementing these funding streams by participating in GMHC's annual AIDS Walk and by selling commemorative ribbons. The majority of the benefits were held at the Roundabout Theatre Company or the Minetta Lane Theatre and consisted of a performance and reception. In 1997, ATP also hosted *Love Action!* a fashion show benefit, and *Twisted!*, a dance party. Benefit files are arranged in chronological order and include correspondence, donor lists and invitations, programs, schedules, scripts, and prompt books. Ribbon sales contain samples of the red ribbons sold by ATP members and supporters.

General, 1990-2004

- b.13 f.6 AIDS Walk, 1991-2001
- b.17 f.3 Correspondence, 1994-1999
- b.17 f.4 *Finding Funds for AIDS Projects in New York City*, 1990 (With holograph notes.)
- b.19 f.7 Grant Committee Meeting Minutes, 1997
- b.20 f.1 Grant Drafts, 1997-2004
- b.20 f.2 Holiday Mailings, 1995-1997
- b.20 f.3 Ribbon Sales, 1994-1995

Benefits

- b.14 f.1-2 1992 (*Ovation '92*)
- b.14 f.3 1993 (*This AIDS Thing*)
- b.14 f.4-6 1994 (*Moving Forward, Glancing Back*)
- b.14 f.7 1995
Facing the Journey (originally called *I'll Dance As Long As I Can*)
- b.15 f.1-5 1995
- b.16 f.1-2 1996 (*Moment to Moment*)
- b.16 f.3-5 1997
Ten Years, Love Action!, and *Twirl!*.
- b.16 f.6 1998
Benefit screening of film *Parallel Sons*.

Series II: Development Files, 1990-2004 (cont.)

Benefits (cont.)

b.17 f.1 1999 (*ATP: Unplugged*)

b.17 f.2 2001 (*ATP: Hope*)

Foundations and Corporate Donors

b.17 f.5 The Aaron Diamond Foundation, 1991-1992

b.17 f.6 Allstate, 1993-1994

b.17 f.7 American Foundation for AIDS Research, 1993

b.17 f.8 ART/New York, 2002

b.17 f.9 Broadway Cares, 2000-2003

b.17 f.10 Citizens Committee for New York City, 1992-1993

b.17 f.11 Design Industries Foundation for AIDS (DIFFA), 1992-2001

b.17 f.12 Fund for the City of New York, 2002

b.17 f.13 Funding Exchange, 1992

b.17 f.14 HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council, 1993

b.17 f.15 The J. M. Kaplan Fund, 1994

b.17 f.16 Lily Auchincloss Foundation, 1998-2000

b.17 f.17 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, 2000-2001

b.17 f.18 National Endowment for the Arts, 1993

b.18 f.1 The New York City AIDS Fund, 1994

b.18 f.2 New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 1991-1993

b.18 f.3 New York Community Trust AIDS Fund, 1997-2001

b.18 f.4 New York Foundation for the Arts, 1997-1999

b.18 f.5 NYNEX Foundation, 1993

b.18 f.6-7 North Star Fund, 1999-2001

b.18 f.8 Office of the President of the Borough of Manhattan, 1992

b.18 f.9 The Paul Rapaport Foundation, 1990-1992

b.18 f.10 Playboy Foundation, 1992

b.18 f.11 Puro Corporation of America, 1994

b.18 f.12 Stadtlander's Pharmacy, 1994-1995

b.18 f.13 Stonewall Community Foundation, 1997-1999

b.18 f.14 Stop the Violence Fund, 1994

b.19 f.1 United Hospital Funds, 1990-1992

b.19 f.2 United Way of New York City, 1994

b.19 f.3-6 Unsorted, 1990-2002

Series III: Financial Records, 1990-2003

Series III is arranged by fiscal year and contains budgets, monthly and yearly reports, cash disbursement statements, invoices, papers relating to ATP's non-profit status, and tax forms.

Series III: Financial Records, 1990-2003 (cont.)

- b.20 f.4 Fiscal Year 1990
- b.20 f.5 Fiscal Year 1991
- b.20 f.6 Fiscal Year 1992
- b.20 f.7-8 Fiscal Year 1993
- b.21 f.1 Fiscal Year 1993
- b.21 f.2-3 Fiscal Year 1994
- b.21 f.4-5 Fiscal Year 1995
- b.22 f.1-2 Fiscal Year 1996
- b.22 f.3 Fiscal Year 1997
- b.22 f.4 Fiscal Year 1998
- b.22 f.5 Fiscal Year 1999
- b.23 f.1 Fiscal Year 1999
- b.23 f.2-3 Fiscal Year 2000
- b.23 f.4-5 Fiscal Year 2001
- b.23 f.6 Fiscal Year 2002

Series IV: Production Files, 1987-2002

Series IV is divided into general files, bookings, and scripts. Booking files make up the bulk of this series and reflect ATP's extensive bookings at schools, churches, businesses, and community centers. These files are arranged in chronological order by season and consist of correspondence, contracts, performance work sheets that detail each performance, programs, and audience evaluation forms. ATP also regularly appeared on *Youth Pulse*, a teen-based radio show on station WBAI. The 1996-1997 Season file on Piscataway High School contains apology letters regarding the students' rude behavior during the performance. Scripts include multiple iterations.

General

- b.37 f.7 Artifacts
 - John Jay High School AIDS Walk N. Y., 2000 May (pin)
 - This AIDS Thing*, undated (condom)
- b.24 f.1 Casting, 1992-2000
- b.24 f.2 Notes, undated
- b.24 f.3 Production Requests, undated
- b.24 f.4-5 Programs, 1990-2002
- b.24 f.6 Rehearsal Sign-In Sheets, 1992-2001
- b.37 f.5 Student Questions, 2000
- b.37 f.6 Unsorted, undated

Bookings

- b.24 f.7 1989-1990 Season (Includes material from spring 1989.)
- b.24 f.8 1990-1991 Season

Series IV: Production Files, 1987-2002 (cont.)

Bookings (cont.)

- b.24 f.9 1991-1992 Season
- 1992-1993 Season
- b.25 f.1-3 General
- b.25 f.4 Brooklyn Historical Society
- 1993-1994 Season
- b.25 f.5-7 General
- b.26 f.1 General
- b.26 f.2 Brooklyn Historical Society
- 1994-1995 Season
- b.26 f.3-6 General
- b.27 f.1 Byram Hills High School
- b.27 f.2 DePaul University
- b.27 f.3-5 1995-1996 Season
- 1996-1997 Season
- b.27 f.6-7 General
- b.28 f.1-5 General
- b.28 f.6 The Birch Family Camp
- b.28 f.7 DC 37
- b.28 f.8 The Harvey Milk School of the Hetrick-Martin Institute
- b.28 f.9 High School for Environmental Studies
- b.29 f.1 Piscataway High School (Apology letters)
- b.29 f.2 Wagner College
- 1997-1998 Season
- b.29 f.3-6 General
- b.30 f.1 Sirovich Senior Center
- 1998-1999 Season
- b.30 f.2-5 General
- b.31 f.1 General
- b.31 f.2 Baldwin High School
- b.31 f.3 Canceled Bookings
- b.31 f.4 Concordia College
- b.31 f.5 Convent of the Sacred Heart
- b.31 f.6 Gallaudet University
- b.31 f.7 Halsey Middle School
- b.31 f.8 Hastings High School
- b.31 f.9 Immaculate Conception High School

Series IV: Production Files, 1987-2002 (cont.)

Bookings (cont.)

1998-1999 Season (cont.)

- b.31 f.10 Lehman College
- b.31 f.11 Mid-Atlantic Tour
- b.31 f.12 North Star Project
- b.31 f.13 Ramapo College
- b.31 f.14 Sayville High School
- b.31 f.15 Sustiva Launch
- b.31 f.16 West Babylon Senior High School
- b.31 f.17 *Youth Pulse*

1999-2000 Season

- b.31 f.18 General
- b.32 f.1-3 General
- b.32 f.4 Agouron
- b.32 f.5 Byram Hills
- b.32 f.6 Caribbean Women's Health Association
- b.32 f.7 Community Works
- b.32 f.8 Graymoor Spiritual Center
- b.32 f.9 Halsey Middle School
- b.32 f.10 John Jay High School
- b.32 f.11 Lehman College
- b.32 f.12 New York Foundling Hospital
- b.32 f.13 Newton High School
- b.32 f.14 Pace University
- b.32 f.15 St. Joseph's High School
- b.33 f.1 Washington D. C. Tour
- b.33 f.2 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)
- b.33 f.3 *Youth Pulse*

2000-2001 Season

- b.33 f.4 General
- b.33 f.5 Be Active in Self Education (BASE) Grants Conference
- b.33 f.6 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
- b.33 f.7 Bronx Helpers
- b.33 f.8 Bronx Youth in Action
- b.33 f.9 Canceled Bookings
- b.33 f.10 Center for Community Alternatives (CCA)
- b.33 f.19 College of Mount Saint Vincent
- b.33 f.11 Columbia High School

Series IV: Production Files, 1987-2002 (cont.)

Bookings (cont.)

2000-2001 Season (cont.)

- b.33 f.12 Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (FLAGS)
- b.33 f.13 The Harvey Milk School of the Hetrick-Martin Institute
- b.33 f.14 Hastings High School
- b.33 f.15 Hunter Tannersville
- b.33 f.16 Huntington High School
- b.33 f.17 Iris house
- b.33 f.18 Lutheran Family Services
- b.33 f.20 North County Community College
- b.34 f.1 Pace University
- b.34 f.2 Piscataway High School
- b.34 f.3 SAGE Queens
- b.34 f.4 St. Regis High School
- b.34 f.5 Together Our Unity Can Heal (TOUCH)
- b.34 f.6 Wagner Institute

2001-2002 Season

- b.34 f.7 General
- b.34 f.8 Friends Academy
- b.34 f.9 Oakwood Friends School
- b.34 f.10 Piscataway High School

Scripts

- b.34 f.11 Cuts and Deletions, undated
- b.34 f.12 Poems, undated
- b.34 f.13 *AIDS is Everybody*, undated (By John Mangano)
- b.34 f.14-16 *The Common Ground*, 1992, undated
Written collectively by ATP members. Includes development and working version.
- b.35 f.1 *Markings of the Soul*, undated (By Kerry Burns. Not produced.)
- b.35 f.2-4 *People With AIDS*, 1987 (By Seth Glassman.)
- b.35 f.5-7 *This AIDS Thing*, 1992-2001
- b.36 f.1-4 *This AIDS Thing*, 1992-2001
Includes development material and four-person version.
- b.36 f.5-9 *The Waiting Room*, 1998, undated (Includes study guide.)
- b.37 f.1 *What Did You Get?*, 1996
- b.37 f.2-4 Unsorted, 1994-1998

Series V: Photographs, 1992-2001

Series V includes group shots of the cast, as well as photographs of specific events and performances. Also in this series is an index created by donor Ray Steehler.

- b.38 f.1 Index, undated

Series V: Photographs, 1992-2001 (cont.)

- b.38 f.2-6 Company Members, 1992-2001
- b.39 Company Members, 1994-1995
- b.38 f.7 Halloween Celebration, 1996
- b.38 f.8 *Love Action!* Benefit, 1997
- This AIDS Thing*
- b.38 f.9-10 Agouron Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 1997-2000
- b.38 f.11 Halsey Middle School, 1997
- b.38 f.12 Walter Panus High School, 2000
- b.38 f.13 *The Waiting Room*--Infectious Disease Department of Hackensack University Medical Center, 1998