

# Concordia University Library, Special Collections

## Finding Aid - Black Theater Workshop fonds (F034)

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# Black Theater Workshop fonds

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## Table of contents

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Summary information .....	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch .....	3
Scope and content .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Notes .....	4
Access points .....	5
Physical condition .....	4
Series descriptions .....	5
F034/A, Administration, 1942 ; 1964-2008 ; 2016 .....	5
F034/A1, History and constitution .....	6
F034/A2, Meetings and committees .....	7
F034/A3, Human resources .....	7
F034/A4, Planning .....	8
F034/B, Financial records, 1973-2008 .....	8
F034/B1, Accounting .....	9
F034/B2, Funding .....	9
F034/C, External relations, [1940]-2007 .....	10
F034/D, Productions / Programming, 1971-2008, 2011 .....	11
F034/D1, General audience .....	11
F034/D2, Theater for Young Audiences program .....	12
F034/D3, Youthworks .....	13

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Concordia University Library, Special Collections
<b>Title:</b>	Black Theater Workshop fonds
<b>ID:</b>	F034
<b>Date:</b>	[1940]-2016, predominant 1972-2007 (date of creation)
<b>Physical description:</b>	6.27 m of textual records 3738 photographs 69 drawings 18 poster 12 sound recordings 10 collages 3 objects 3 moving images 1 graphic 1 map
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Language:</b>	French
<b>Dates of creation, revision and deletion:</b>	Created 2019-05-31 Revised 2019-10-08

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

The Black Theater Workshop (BTW), also known as the "Theatre B.T.W.," is an English-speaking theatre company located in Montreal, Quebec that "is committed to reflecting Black culture and community by developing and providing visibility for Black Canadian artists."

Incorporated in 1972 as a non-profit organization, the BTW is the oldest Black theater company in Canada. Beginning in 1965 as the Trinidad & Tobago Association (TTA) Drama group with the goal of becoming a theatre for the whole Montreal community, the TTA drama group became the Black Theatre Workshop in 1971 with the presentation of *How Now Black Man*, written by Lorriss Elliott and directed by Jeff Henry. To respect the rules of French language use in Quebec, the Workshop officially changed its name to "Theatre B.T.W." in January 1984.

The mission of the BTW "is to encourage and promote the development of a Black and Canadian Theater, rooted in a literature that reflects the creative will of Black Canadian writers and artists, and the creative collaborations between Black and other artists." The Black Theater Workshop primarily stages the work of Black Canadian playwrights and selects plays that deal with themes relevant to Black communities in Canada. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the Black Theater Workshop annually runs school tours as part of its regular season.

One of the 35 founding members of the BTW is Clarence Bayne, who also served as both president and artistic director during the first years of the theatre. Since 1991, he has been Vice-President of the organization's Board of Directors. As Artistic Director, Clarence Bayne was followed by Errol Sitahal (1970s), Terry Donald (1970s), Dwight Bacquie (1983-1984), Lorena Gale (1984-1985), Don Jordan (1985-1988), Winston Sutton (1988-1994), Fleurette Fernando (1994-1996), Nancy Delva (1997-1999), Kate Bligh (1999-2001), Rachael Van Fossen (2001-2005), and Tyrone Benskin (2005-2011). Since 2011, Quincy Armorer has been Artistic Director at the BTW. The BTW is governed by a board of Directors, which is presently formed by Jacklin Webb (president), Dr. Clarence Bayne (vice-president), Dr. Horace Goddard (secretary), Phylicia Burke (treasurer), Yvonne Greer (member), and Allison DaCosta. The BTW is the recipient of numerous awards, including various Montreal English Theatre Awards (META) and several Montreal's English Critics Circle Awards (MECCA). From 1976 to 1985, the BTW used Montreal's Centaur Theatre performing space. In 1984, BTW opened its first administrative office, and started performing in a space rented from L'Atelier Contenu. In the 1990s, offices were located at 1827 Ste Catherine West. Since 2003, the workshop is using the spaces of the Montréal Arts Interculturels (MAI) Centre, located at 3680 rue Jeanne-Mance.

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## Scope and content

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The Black Theater Workshop fonds is composed of materials created and compiled by the Black Theater Workshop (BTW) and contains materials documenting the activities and operations of the BTW from its founding in 1972 until its 2007-2008 season. Documents are also reflective of the BTW's contributions to Montreal's Black communities and to theater in Canada. Textual records and other materials document the BTW's administration, finances, awards, plays, programming, promotional activities, communications, and facilities, among other things.

The fonds is divided into the following series :

F034/A Administration

F034/B Financial records

F034/C External relations

F034/D Productions / Programming

The fonds is composed of textual records, including without limitations financial documents, grant applications, board meeting minutes, reports, play scripts, newspapers and newspaper clippings, promotional material, and correspondence; graphic materials as photographs, posters, logos, drawings, and others, sound recordings, moving images, and a T-shirt.

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## Notes

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### Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the content of the fonds.

### Physical condition

The documents are in good condition.

## Immediate source of acquisition

The Black Theater Workshop fonds was donated to Concordia University Library's Special Collections in April 2019 and was transferred to Concordia on May 29, 2019.

## Arrangement

In most cases, materials are arranged in the order of receipt.

## Conditions governing use

In most cases, reproductions are allowed for the purpose of research and private study. Other uses of the materials, including the reproduction of documents in a publication, may only be done with written consent of the copyright owner(s).

## Finding aids

Box listings are available.

## Accruals

Further accruals are expected.

## Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Status description:** Draft
- **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).

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## Access points

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- Multiple media (documentary form)
- Theater (subject)
- Blacks in Quebec (subject)

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## Series descriptions

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### Series F034/A: Administration

Date: 1942 ; 1964-2008 ; 2016 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series documents the historical and organizational development of the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW), from its beginnings in 1965 as the Trinidad & Tobago Association (TTA) Drama group,

through its incorporation as the BTW in 1972, to today. This series contains materials concerning the work of the Board of Directors and related committees. It also documents the planning and the management of human resources at the BTW.

The series is divided into the following sub-series :

F034/A1 History and constitution

F034/A2 Meetings and committees

F034/A3 Human resources

F034/A4 Planning

The series contains, among other documents, letters patent, programs, newspaper clippings, a constitution, historical outlines, photographs, play scripts, letterheads, logos, poster, newsletters, membership lists, briefs, mission statements, correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, lists of board members, organizational charts, job descriptions, meeting notes, grant applications, and contracts.

Physical description: 67 cm of textual records

37 photographs

2 posters

1 graphic

1 object

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Object (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

### File / item list

#### **Subseries F034/A1: History and constitution**

Date: 1942 ; 1964-2003 ; 2016 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This sub-series documents the historical development of the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW), from its beginnings in 1965 as the Trinidad & Tobago Association (TTA) Drama group, through its incorporation as the BTW in 1972, to today. It also contains material pertaining to the Negro Theatre Guild, formed by members of the Montreal Black community in the early 1940s.

The sub-series contains, among other documents, letters patent, programs, newspaper clippings, a constitution, historical outlines, photographs, notes, play scripts, letterheads, logos, poster, studies, a newsletter, membership lists, briefs, mission statements, and correspondence.

Physical description: 9 cm of textual records

37 photographs

2 posters

1 graphic

1 object

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Object (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

**File / item list****Subseries F034/A2: Meetings and committees**Date: 1974-2008 (date of creation)Scope and content:

This sub-series provides insight into the administration and organizational structure of the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW). The BTW is governed by a Board of directors, to which all committees and directors report. It includes documents related to meetings of the Board of Directors; Executive Committee; Management Committee; and the Planning and Priorities committee. It also contains documents concerning General meetings and meetings of temporary committees.

This sub-series contains, among other documents, meeting minutes, reports, correspondence, lists of board members, organizational charts, job descriptions, meeting notes, and various documents presented or discussed at the meetings, as well as newspaper clippings, and grant applications.

Physical description: 53 cm of textual recordsAccess points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

**File / item list****Subseries F034/A3: Human resources**Date: 1983-2000 (date of creation)Scope and content:

This sub-series documents the management of human resources, including the rights and duties of staff working at the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW) in the 1980s and 1990s. It also provides insight into summer employment programs in which the BTW participated, including the Work Orientation Workshop, organized by the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Black Community Association.

This sub-series contains, among other documents, contracts, agreements, and correspondence.

Physical description: 3 cm of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

**File / item list****Subseries F034/A4: Planning**Date: 1984-1990 (date of creation)Scope and content:

This sub-series documents planning and development of the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW). It also provides insight into the search of a permanent location for the BTW in the 1980s, and the proposal for the establishment of a festival honoring Martin Luther King.

This sub-series contains, among other documents, 3-year-plans, action plans, newspaper articles, a proposal, and correspondence.

Physical description: 2.5 cm of textual recordsAccess points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

**File / item list****Series F034/B: Financial records**Date: 1973-2008 (date of creation)Scope and content:

Series provides an overview of the Black Theatre Workshop's (BTW) financial situation throughout the years, from its beginnings in the early 1970s to 2008. In addition to documenting the BTW's expenses, the series contains materials pertaining to the financial support received by the BTW by way of grants and fundraising campaigns. Materials concerning the BTW's annual Vision Celebration (or Vision Gala) are found in this series. At this event, which has taken place every January since 1987, an important member of the community is honoured with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award.

This series is divided into the following sub-series :

F034/B1 Accounting

F034/B2 Funding

This series contains, among other documents, financial statements, expense reports, budgets, ledger pages, invoices, grant applications, reports, newspaper articles and newspapers, fundraising plans, presentation folios, correspondence, photographs, invitations, and programs

Physical description: 1.56 m of textual records

190 photographs  
3 moving images

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Moving images (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

#### File / item list

### **Subseries F034/B1: Accounting**

Date: 1973-1988, 1994-2008 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This sub-series provides an overview of the Black Theatre Workshop's (BTW) financial situation from the early 1970s to 2008. It also provides insight into the resources required to produce plays and other programming at the BTW.

This sub-series contains financial statements, budgets, ledger pages, invoices, and other financial documents related to the activities of the BTW.

Physical description: 17 cm of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

#### File / item list

### **Subseries F034/B2: Funding**

Date: 1974-2008 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This sub-series provides insight into the financial support received by the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW) from the 1980s to 2008. It documents the BTW's two major sources of income: government support received by way of various grants and fundraising campaigns. Materials related to fundraising

campaigns document both the financial and social aspects of these events. The sub-series contains materials related to the BTW's annual Vision Celebration (or Vision Gala), which has taken place every January since 1987. At this event, an important member of the community is honoured with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award. The first of these awards was given to musician Oscar Peterson, followed by Oliver Jones, Daisy Peterson-Sweeney, and Dorothy Wills, among many others. The sub-series contains biographical information of all award recipients from 1987 to 2008. The sub-series contains grant applications, reports, newspaper articles and newspapers, fundraising plans, presentation folios, correspondence, photographs, invitations, programs, expense reports, and financial statements, among other documents.

Physical description: 1.39 m of textual records

190 photographs

3 moving images

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Moving images (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

#### File / item list

### Series F034/C: External relations

Date: [1940]-2007 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series provides information on the relationship between the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW) and other cultural, political or social organizations. The series contains documentation pertaining to the relationships between the BTW and other organizations working within the Montreal Black community, including Union United Church. It is also composed of materials that provide insight into the relationships between the BTW and organizations and suppliers working within or supporting theater and the arts in Montreal. Among others, you will find information about other theater groups, including the Centaur Theater and the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and a number of humanitarian organizations. Several documents in this series are related to the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission or Black History Month. One folder illustrates the history of Union United Church. The series also includes a brief about visible minorities' art and culture and a report about grants given to theatre companies.

The series contains, among other documents, promotional material, photographs, correspondence, newsletters, newspapers and newspaper clippings, play scripts, study proposals, leases, permits, reports, programs, and briefs.

Physical description: 0.5 m of textual records

184 photographs

<p><u>Publication status:</u></p> <p>Published</p>
<b>File / item list</b>
<p><b>Series F034/D: Productions / Programming</b></p> <p><u>Date:</u> 1971-2008, 2011 (date of creation)</p> <p><u>Scope and content:</u></p> <p>This series documents the various plays produced by the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW) from its beginnings in the early 1970s to 2008.</p> <p>This series is divided into the following sub-series :</p> <p>F034/D1 General audience  F034/D2 Theater for Young Audiences program  F034/D3 Youthworks</p> <p>This series contains photographs, programs, press releases, newspapers and newspaper clippings, drawings, floor plans, collages, project proposals, reports, entrance tickets, box office records, correspondence, promotional material, educational material (teachers' guides), financial records, contracts, booking sheets, performance evaluations, sheet music, play scripts, meeting notes, communications, schedules, and sound recordings, among other documents.</p> <p><u>Physical description:</u> 3.5 m of textual records  3503 photographs  69 drawings  16 poster  12 sound recordings  10 collages  2 objects  1 map</p> <p><u>Access points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple media (documentary form)</li> </ul> <p><u>Arrangement:</u></p> <p>Documents related to the annual Vision Celebration fundraiser can be found in Series B2 – Funding.</p> <p><u>Publication status:</u></p> <p>Published</p>
<b>File / item list</b>
<p><b>Subseries F034/D1: General audience</b></p> <p><u>Date:</u> 1971-2008, 2011 (date of creation)</p> <p><u>Scope and content:</u></p>

This sub-series documents plays produced by the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW) from the early 1970s until the 2007-2008 season. It also illustrates other events organized by the BTW, including festivals, workshops, and poetry jams, among others. It also documents the professional career of several actors involved with the BTW.

This sub-series contains photographs, programs, press releases, newspapers and newspaper clippings, drawings, floor plans, collages, flyers, project proposals, reports, invitations, entrance tickets, play scripts, meeting notes, box office records, correspondence, schedules, budgets, drafts, goboes, and the first issue of the Black Theatre Workshop News, among other documents.

Physical description: 2.1 m of textual records

2983 photographs

39 drawings

10 poster

10 collages

5 sound recordings

2 objects

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

Rights:

In many cases, the graphics used for the posters and programs created in the 1970s were done by Leon Llewellyn.

#### File / item list

### **Subseries F034/D2: Theater for Young Audiences program**

Date: 1985-2008, 2011 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This sub-series provides insight into The Black Theatre Workshop's (BTW) contribution to education at the primary and secondary levels and contains documentation pertaining to The Theater for Young Audiences Program, which was first implemented in 1983. A number of plays were produced exclusively for this program and were shown to both elementary and secondary school audiences. These were generally presented in schools in the Greater Montreal area, but also shown in Nova Scotia and the United States among other locations. The sub-series contains documents pertaining to school tours, which took place from 1986 to 2011. Many of these tours took place during Black History Month. Materials document the plays that were part of the series, necessary preparatory work, the schools that hosted the performances, and finances, along with feedback from teachers, students and actors.

The sub-series contains correspondence, photographs, drawings, promotional material, educational material (teachers' guides), play scripts, project outlines, reports, financial records, contracts, booking

sheets, schedules, performance evaluations, newspaper clippings, and sheet music, among other documents.

Physical description: 1.25 m of textual records

423 photographs  
30 drawings  
2 sound recordings  
6 poster  
1 map

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published

### File / item list

#### **Subseries F034/D3: Youthworks**

Date: 1984, 2002-2011 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The sub-series provides insight into the Black Theatre Workshop's (BTW) many initiatives to support young performing artists. A first attempt to install a program to support young artists was the Beginners' Workshop, which took place in January and February 1984, followed by an 11-week project known as the Summer Theatre, which took place during summer of the same year. The idea was revived with the installation of the Youthworks Program, which existed from 2002 to 2013. This workshop series offered free specialized theatre training for Montreal teenagers from 12 to 25 years old, who envisioned a career in the performing arts. Each spring the workshop series finished with the presentation of a play, as there were, among others, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* ; *Death of the Bourgeois Dream* ; *What If?*, and *Urban Legends / The Procrastin8r*.

The sub-series contains play scripts, brochures, meeting notes, reports, program outlines, communications, photographs, schedules, photographs, and sound recordings, among other documents.

Physical description: 15 cm of textual records

97 photographs  
5 sound recordings

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Sound recording (documentary form)

Publication status:

Published
<b>File / item list</b>