Collaborations with Performing Arts Organizations: Collection Processing & Exhibit Curation

Natalia Fernández, OMA Curator
Oregon Multicultural Archives (OMA)
Oregon State University

Lightning Talks Part I
NWA Conference
Spokane, WA
May 30, 2014
The OMA was established in 2005 with a collection focus of four ethnic communities within Oregon: African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos.
OMA Location: Corvallis, Or and part of OSU’s Special Collections & Archives Research Center

http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oma
Milagro (officially known as the Miracle Theatre Group) is a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon. Its mission is to “provide extraordinary Latino theatre, culture, and arts education experiences for the enrichment of all communities.”

Milagro is an organization that was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1985 dedicated to the Hispanic arts and community. It produces a broad array of programming that includes public performances as well as specialized touring and education projects that currently encompass all of the Western states.
The Obo Addy Legacy Project (OALP) is a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon, with the mission to “offer authentic experiences with the music and dance of Ghana, West Africa, and to create cultural awareness and understanding through educational offerings, an annual festival, and performing groups that tour the world.”

The OALP was originally established in 1986 as the Homowo African Arts and Cultures organization by Obo and Susan Addy, who served as artistic and executive directors.

Obo Addy was a Ghanaian master drummer who performed all over the world, wrote music, and taught at both the K-12 and college level. Addy passed away in 2012; however, led by Susan Addy, the OALP is committed to continuing his legacy of creating, performing, and teaching African arts.
Relationship Building

Development of the relationship with Milagro and the OALP
October of 2012 – connection made via a colleague at OSU who had met Milagro’s Executive Director
February of 2013 – connection made via Milagro with OALP’s Executive Director
Milagro and OALP fit within the mission / the collection scope of the OMA

How did the project came about
Several meetings with EDs, including me viewing the materials and the EDs viewing our archives space
Discussions of the organizations keeping the collections vs. donation to the archives; the pros and cons
Issues of preservation of the collection and access for the public
Issue of access for the organization staff since they are both “living” organizations
Example – OSF has it’s own onsite archive
Discussions about what materials can be donated vs. what materials need to stay with the org. active vs. inactive records
Processing the Collections

OALP
- Materials transferred to the OMA (cargo van; storage room pick up) in the summer of 2013
- Intern began the initial intellectual arrangement of the collection and in the late fall and winter terms another student physically arranged and described the collection

Milagro
- Theatre Admin wanted the collection to stay in Portland for processing; Portland-based MLIS student with an interest in performing arts archives used the collection processing as her capstone project.
  - Benefits: intern she could consult with the staff; theatre staff were pleased with the arrangement
  - Cons: I did not have as much control over the process; intern was very experienced and a great match for the project
- She began in late summer; I transferred portions of the collection in sections as she completed them; there is still a section left: grants and financials and scripts
- As part of her internship she developed a records management plan for the theatre which includes their electronic records
Collection Contents

OALP

- Quantity: 19 cubic feet, including 1510 photographs, 172 videotapes, and 50 CDs and DVDs; 20 boxes, including 2 oversize boxes
- Arrangement
  Subgroup 1 (Obo Addy Materials) consists of 4 series:
  Subgroup 2 (Homowo African Arts and Cultures Materials) consists of 6 series:
  Subgroup 3 (Obo Addy and Homowo Media) consists of 4 series:

Milagro

- Quantity: 21 cubic feet, including 2,250 photographs, 118 videotapes, 130 CDs and DVDs, 20 cassettes, and 151 floppy disks (21 boxes, including 2 oversize boxes, and 4 map folders)
- Arrangement
  Series I. Administrative, 1985-2012
  Series II. Board, 1988-2012
  Series III. Building, 1966-2009
  Series IV. Company, 1989-2012
  Series V. Events, 1992-2010
  Series VI. Organizations, 1985-2011
  Series VII. Outreach and Education, 1988-2012
  Series VIII. Projects, 1992-2013
  Series IX. People, 1987-2013
  Series X. Productions, 1984-2014
  Series XI. Photographs and Slides, 1990-2007
  Series XII. Audiovisual, circa 1980-circa 2014
  Series XIII. Electronic Records, 2002-2013
  Series XIV. Posters and Artwork, 1996-2006
- To be added: grants, financials, scripts (July 2014)
Donor Form: Copyright and Permissions

- Both Milagro and the Obo Addy Legacy Project retained the literary rights and copyright to all of the materials in the collections. Any requests for use of materials are to be reviewed by the OMA. Requests for commercial reproductions from the collection must be approved by the organizations and other requests may be subject to approval.

- While all materials in the collection can be physically viewed, due to copyright, contractual restrictions, or creative asset value, specific materials in the collection cannot be made digitally available without prior consent from the organizations.

- Any materials in the collection required by Milagro or the OALP to continue as active organizations shall be returned in a digital or analog copy form whenever possible. Original materials may be returned temporarily for a specified length of time.

- Periodically, both organizations and the OMA agree to review and amend the donor amendment agreement as need be.
Exhibit Curation

- Design and curation: winter term 2014; January – March
- Large Panels; no original content in the exhibit
- Requested items for loan: instruments and fabric from OALP AND props and costumes from Milagro
- A/V Component: TVs with selected performances that play on loop; headphones attached
Exhibit Curation

Exhibit Reception for Donors and Interns
Next Steps

Oral Histories

Collections Use

Digitization and Online Access

Traveling Exhibit
Links to More Information about the Collections

bit.ly/milagro-archives

bit.ly/oalp-archives

Links = OMA blog posts about the collections