New Accessions
Recent highlights include:

- Arts Council England Live Art and Performance Archive
- H B Irving and Dorothea Baird Correspondence Collection (donated by Hugo and Barnabus Brunner)
- John Fox and Sue Gill Archive
- Ruth Dunning/Jack Allen Archive (donated by David Simeon)
- Welfare State International Archive

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Talk by Marion Reed - Playhouse Creatures: 18th Century Actors and Theatres in Bath and Bristol.
  12 September 2007, 2.00 pm. Brandt Cinema, University of Bristol Drama Dept. Afterwards there will be an opportunity to see relevant items from the Theatre Collection. Presented in conjunction with the Bristol Magpies.

- Talk by Sir Christopher Frayling - Museums without Walls: the Image of the Museum in Movies.
  2 November 2007, 6.30 pm. Friends have the opportunity to attend an event organised by Bristol Magpies to celebrate their 30th anniversary. Charge £10.00 (but a discount is available for groups of ten or more).

THEATRE COLLECTION MAILINGS

Please note: if you have received this newsletter by mail it means that your name and address are stored on the Theatre Collection contacts database. These details may be used by the Theatre Collection, and also more widely by the University of Bristol. Should you wish your details to be removed from the database, please contact us.

The Keeper, University of Bristol Theatre Collection,
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Tel: 0117 3315086 Email: theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk
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50th Anniversary of The Room

Harold Pinter’s first play, The Room, received its world premiere at the Drama Studio in the University of Bristol Wills Building in May 1957. To celebrate the 50th Anniversary, final year Drama Department undergraduates staged a new production directed by Simon Reade. The production returned to the original venue and focused on the aesthetics of the space. The Theatre Collection worked closely with the students sourcing relevant Theatre Collection archive material, including photographs, reviews, interviews, the theatre model and script. The students used much of this material to curate a complimentary exhibition for the play. They also contacted the original cast and recorded an oral history interview. The combination of archive and practice based research proved particularly stimulating. The production was recorded by the British Library as part of their Theatre Archive project. The DVD of the recording is held in the TC archives and can be viewed on request.
The Grand Designs project to catalogue the Julia Trevelyan Oman archive was completed in March 2007. The archive is one of Europe’s most comprehensive and detailed theatre design archives and over the past year, the Theatre Collection has catalogued more than 200 boxes of archive material. The archive illustrates the design process in its entirety – from initial concepts and first ideas through the design process to the completed production. Usually, much of this process remains unseen but by taking one production, The Merchant of Venice, and digitising more than 150 items which cover the full range of visual material associated with it, we hope we have brought the design process to life for all our online users. The collection was publicised by a well-attended, illustrated talk given to the Friends of the Theatre Collection by Amanda Good, the Project Archivist, and the transcript can be viewed online at http://www.bris.ac.uk/theatrecollection/jto_talk.html.

Amanda Good, Project Archivist and Sir Roy Strong receiving a copy of the finished printed catalogue.

The Theatre Collection was happy to welcome Sir Roy Strong, the archives’ donor, to view the catalogued archive and online material on the 8th March 2007 and are pleased to report that he was delighted with the resource. Thanks to the University of Bristol Annual Fund for funding this project.

STOP PRESS
Centenary Campaign
In 2009 Bristol University will celebrate its Centenary, and to mark the occasion it has just launched the Centenary Campaign. The £100m Campaign is the University’s most ambitious initiative to date and it will transform how Bristol develops throughout the next century. The Theatre Collection is one of just twenty-one projects chosen to be supported by the Campaign. It aims to raise £1.5m towards a purpose built theatre museum, specialised archive storage and improved research facilities. Additionally, teaching and research activities generated by the proposed new building will help the department to maintain its position at the forefront of drama theory and practice. In the longer term, the purpose built strong rooms will ensure our world class archives are protected for future generations. The Centenary Campaign will provide seedcorn funding for this ambitious programme of works. For more information contact Jo Elsworth.

Staff News
The Theatre Collection is sad to say goodbye to Amanda Good, Project Archivist on the Glynne Wickham Archive and the Julia Trevelyan Oman Archive, and to Hannah Hervé-Petts, Imaging Officer for the Visualising Theatre and Illumination Projects. We would like to thank them for all their hard work and wish them well for the future.

We would like to warmly welcome Dr Catherine Hindson who has recently joined the Drama Department and whose research work will actively use and benefit the Theatre Collection Archives.

Any Questions ..... ?

The Theatre Collection dealt with 120 enquiries from January to June 2007. Subjects included Peter O’Toole, Equus, Commedia dell’Arté, and the songs of Joyce Grenfell. We also had 1358 visitors.
More and more graduates like me are actively seeking out volunteer work in archives as a pathway to postgraduate education.

I started as a volunteer in the Theatre Collection at the end of January of this year, and since then have gained a valuable insight into the nature of archive work.

One of the more interesting projects I have had the chance to work on involved researching information relating to a series of glass plate photographs of Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1853-1917), the renowned actor manager, in various theatrical roles. The originals were extremely delicate, so I worked with scanned copies. I used the Theatre Collection library along with a related collection, and was able to identify the majority of the photographs, one of which was already among the Theatre Collection holdings in a smaller format, and two of which were reproduced in books. A degree of ingenuity (and plain guesswork!) was required - could you tell if someone was playing Sven-gali or Fagin from their beard alone? Performing archival detective work like this has been a highlight of my time here.

My advice to any potential volunteers would be to have a clear idea of what you wish to gain from the experience, and to discuss this with the Theatre Collection staff before you start. It is also necessary to be realistic about the nature of archival work – interesting projects are likely to be interspersed with more routine tasks, such as sorting and numbering items. If you bear these points in mind, you are likely to find your volunteer work a lot more rewarding.

Holly Parsons

Did you know that the Theatre Collection archives contain over 400 magic lantern slides?

Until recently, these have been un-viewable, but an exciting project, funded by Bristol Institute for Research in the Humanities and Arts (BIRTHA) and the Arts Faculty Research Directors Fund has now enabled their conservation, cataloguing and digital preservation, including the development of on-line access to this amazingly important visual resource.

The magic lantern slide show was used to educate, entertain and mystify audiences in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the early years of the nineteenth century showmen with lanterns travelled around the country giving shows in the places they stopped. The show subjects would relate to biblical, moral and current events, theatre and stories, as well as sights from foreign lands. The slides the showmen used therefore covered a remarkable range of subject matter: drama and performance, history of art, classics, archaeology, geography, social history and theology. As magic lanterns became cheaper to buy, and readily available in shops, people could create lantern shows for themselves at home.

A 19th century magic lantern slide is a very fragile item, made up of a positive image on glass and a cover glass bound together. The first magic lantern slides were hand-painted images while from 1849 onwards photographic (albumen emulsion) magic lantern slides developed. The Theatre Collection contains examples of both types of slides and we are delighted to have been able to preserve them and to make them available for everyone to enjoy.

A selection of the digitised lantern slides can be viewed through the Theatre Collection News web page, and the full collection can be searched via our online catalogue.
Visualising Theatre Project and Exhibition

The Visualizing Theatre project has unlocked the Theatre Collection's archive for free educational use using digital technologies. An online, accessible picture library now enables researchers, students and other users to view visual items via the internet. The Theatre Collection’s catalogue searches now include images, with currently over 1,000 in digital format and more are being added as projects allow. The images cover a wide range of theatrical subjects, including stage and costume design, 18th, 19th and 20th Century prints and local production photographs; of special interest we have one photograph from each production for the Bristol Old Vic dating from 1946 to 1986.

To celebrate the start of this new and exciting resource the Theatre Collection ran a launch event, and a supplementary exhibition accessible to university staff, students and the public from 22nd December 2006 - 23rd February 2007.

Exhibition poster/invitation. Design by Hannah Hervé-Petts

The exhibition proved popular, and the Theatre Collection can report that the image bank is being extensively utilised by a wide range of users.

Friends News

Recruit a Friend

Did you know ……….? If we placed all the boxes and drawers of archival material in the Theatre Collection end to end, they would stretch for over 5 miles!

The Friends of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection have chosen several designs from the archives for a selection of new greetings cards and notelets. Details of the new designs and how to order will be given in the next newsletter.

PYGMALION

The Friends of the Theatre Collection arranged to see this sparkling new production of Pygmalion by Sir Peter Hall’s company at the Theatre Royal Bath. With an opportunity to glimpse behind the scenes, and experience a bit of theatre history with an enthusiastic guide before the performance, and an exclusive talk by TIM PIGOTT-SMITH, who played Henry Higgins, afterwards, it proved a highly successful event.

Friends Event

PYGMALION

Theatre Royal Bath
2.30pm, Saturday 21st July

For further information, pick up one of our Friends leaflets, or talk to one of the Theatre Collection team. If every member was able to recruit a Friend, we would double our membership!
Volunteer Afternoons

Why not come along and help out in the Theatre Collection while meeting other Friends?
The next practical work session is on:
26 September 2007
2.00-4.30 pm
The volunteer work will be to sort theatre programmes
Tea and cake are provided.
Phone Jo on 0117 33 15086 for more details.

Marion Reed
Friend of the Theatre Collection
June 2007

Friends News

Friends will be sad to learn that Philippa Neaverson, our current secretary is moving on to pastures new.
We would like to express our sincere thanks to her for all her hard work for the Friends and wish her every success for the future.
If you are interested in taking on Philippa’s role, or know anyone who may be, please contact the Theatre Collection on 0117 33 15086.

Marion Reed
Friend of the Theatre Collection
June 2007

NRLA Digitisation Project

In February, the team digitising the video archive of the National Review of Live Art travelled to Glasgow to attend the annual NRLA festival. Members of the team took part in filming the vast range of performances on offer. They also hosted a well attended and very lively breakfast debate about documenting performance, with speakers from across the British, European and American Live Art scene. Highlights of the festival included Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s poetic cross-dressing shamanic ritual “Mapa Corpo”, a five-day group performance installation by Black Market International, and Marcia Farquhar’s “Acts of Clothing: 7up”, which tells the story of her life through the contents of her wardrobe. Footage of all these unique events can now be viewed in the Theatre Collection Live Art Archives.

Great Western Research Fellowship

The Theatre Collection is pleased to announce that the University Drama Department has appointed a Research Fellow for a three-year project ‘Performing the archive: the future of the past’. Dr Paul Clarke will work closely with the Live Art Archives in conjunction with our colleagues at Arnolfini and the University of Exeter Drama Department. The project begins on 1st Sept 2007.

The Arts Council England Live Art and Performance Archive

The Theatre Collection is delighted to have been gifted this archive which is a valuable addition. It contains performance related material from when the discipline of Live Art was in its infancy to the present day in a variety of formats, including video.
comical sentences. In portraying love, look with a sweet winning expression, eyes gaze with rapture on the adored one; speak in a low tone, and always gently when on this subject. If rejected, still speak pleadingly until the last. For revenge, the voice would be in a low tone, teeth almost closed, eyes drawn closely in a frown, the whole expression very fierce, hands clenched convulsively. To assume fear, eyes must look dilated, lips apart, breath gasping, hands thrown out partly in front of face, a horrified look generally. To assume a haughty appearance, the head must be held high, shoulders thrown well back, figure erect, lips set firm. For pathos, speak in subdued tones, eyes look sorrowful, almost tearful; the whole body must appear dejected, and actions slower than usual.

These are a few of the principal gesticulations; and again I say, if one would only think of nature more when acting there would be no difficulty in portraying the correct expressions and actions.

Extract taken from “Secrets of Making Up”, c.1900

It is said that an actor is not made, but to those who have not the natural talent of acting a few hints will be of assistance.

When making your appearance guard against nervousness; address the audience generally; do not set your eyes on one special person, but look at all equally, neither too much to one side or the other. The eyes play an important part as well as the hand in acting.

Each action of the arm should be made gracefully from the shoulder. No jerky movements from the elbow; remember curves are prettier than points. The action should be before the word, not after it. For instance, to show “joy”, the face must brighten up, eyes fully opened, a broad smile showing the teeth, almost laughing. This same expression would be assumed for any