New Accessions

Recent highlights include:

The Hope Centre Archive
[donated by Sue Stops for the Hope Centre Community Association]

Liliane Clopet and Kathleen Freeman play scripts and short stories
[donated by Rachel Anderton, Keeper of Social History, Newport Museum and Art Gallery]

The Henry Marshall Collection
[donated by Emma Battock]

Additions to the
Stephanie Cole Archive
[donated by Stephanie Cole]

The Franko B Archive
[donated by Franko B]

Forthcoming Events

Friends Events:

Saturday 21st June (Matinee)
Crown Matrimonial
Theatre Royal Bath

Saturday 19th July (Matinee)
Portrait of a Lady
Theatre Royal Bath

Wednesday 9th July
Topless Mum
Tobacco Factory

Wednesday 24th September
10 - 11.30am
Highlights from the
Theatre Collection 1575 - 2008.
Theatre Collection Reading Room
Booking Essential

Volunteer Sessions:

24th June 10am - 12.30pm
16th July 2 - 4.30pm
10th September 10 am -12.30pm
24 September 2 - 4.30pm

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.

Donation of the Franko B Archive

Photos courtesy of Manuel Vason

The Theatre Collection is delighted to announce that the internationally renowned live art artist Franko B has donated his personal archive to the Theatre Collection Live Art Archives. Born in Milan, Franko has been creating work across video, photography, performance, painting, installation, sculpture and mixed media since 1990. The archive covers the last 20 years of Franko’s work, and includes material in a wide variety of formats related to his performances, screenings, exhibitions, collaborations, mentoring, books and visual art. The exciting acquisition of Franko’s interesting and comprehensive archive not only ties the Theatre Collection into the Drama Department’s active research interests, but also poses a number of challenging conservation issues due to the nature of some of the material. For more information see http://www.bris.ac.uk/theatrecollection/liveart/liveart_FrankoB.html.
A Celebration of the Life and Work of Professor George Brandt

8th June 2008
2.30 - 4.30 pm

George worked in the Drama Department from its early days in 1951 until his retirement in 1986. He introduced practical film and television studies to British Universities. After his retirement he was a staunch Supporter of the Friends of the Theatre Collection.

There will be a celebration of George’s life and work in the Department on 8th June 2008 (2.30-4.30pm).

Please note that numbers are limited and admission will be by invitation only. To request an invitation, please send an e-mail to gb-celebration@bristol.ac.uk or phone the Drama Department office (0117 954 5481).

Can you help?

The Theatre Collection needs your help to date this production of The Passion Play performed in the Great Hall of the Wills Memorial Building, Bristol University. The photographs are particularly interesting because they show the Great Hall in its gutted state after it was hit by an incendiary bomb in 1940 and prior to its 1959 restoration. A very similar production was directed by Glynne Wickham and performed by the Bristol University Drama Department at Tewkesbury Abbey on Palm Sunday in 1957. Perhaps you appeared in the production or know someone who did, in which case the Theatre Collection would love to hear from you. Please email theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk or telephone 0117 331 5086.

Staff News

Goodbye Rachel

After just over 4 years in the Theatre Collection, Rachel Hassall is moving on to work on the Penguin Archive Project housed in the University of Bristol’s Special Collections department. Our loss is their gain and she will be greatly missed.”

Marion Reed
On behalf of the Friends of the Theatre Collection,
April 2008

Also …………

Goodbye and thank you to Holly Parsons, our regular volunteer, who has now taken up a temporary post at the Empire and Commonwealth Museum.

Hello to Luke Pomeroy and Nick Triggs, new regular Theatre Collection volunteers who are helping out with a range of work in order to give them experience of the museum and archive profession.

Thank you to Sarah Cuthill, who has joined the Theatre Collection team temporarily to assist with our work towards museum accreditation.

Dedication to the task of cataloguing and making the collection available online.

We wish her every success in her new post as archivist on the Penguin Archive Project housed in the University of Bristol’s Special Collections department.

Our loss is their gain and she will be greatly missed.”

Marion Reed
On behalf of the Friends of the Theatre Collection,
April 2008
Did you know ..........?

The earliest item held in the Theatre Collection archives dates back to 1572. This map of London, taken from 
*Civitates Orbis Terrarum* published by G Braun and F Hogenberg (Cologne 1572) is also known as the Hoefnagel map. It shows the position of bear baiting pits on the site which was to become home to the original Globe Theatre in 1599.

Research Centre News

Consultation Meeting

Tuesday 20th May

10.30 am - 12.00 pm

In the Theatre Collection Reading Room

Plans are progressing well with the proposed new Drama Research Centre and associated redevelopment of the Theatre Collection. This year will see the development and refinement of the brief. It is a key stage in the project, and gives us an opportunity to ensure our users’ requirements are met.

We plan to have a dedicated museum gallery space, a suite of archive strongrooms specifically designed to store paper, film, objects and digital material, and enhanced library and reading room facilities.

We would like to take into account the views of our users and invite you to a discussion meeting on Tuesday 20th May from 10.30am - 12.00 pm in the Theatre.

Need a special card?

Snowdrop costume design by Wilhelm, Red Riding Hood, Prince’s Theatre, Bristol, 1885

Don’t forget that the Theatre Collection offers a range of cards and postcards for sale which have been produced from original designs held in the archive. Prices start at 5 cards for just £1. For full details see our website.
Exhibitionists - Unlocking the Theatrical Archive through Performance

On Friday 18th and Saturday 19th January 2008, The Wickham Theatre played host to a glittering Revue inspired by original material from the Theatre Collection. Drama Department final year students worked hard with award winning director Anna Farthing, Co-director of the International Museum Theatre Alliance, to produce a performance of non-stop sparkling entertainment where the archive was truly brought to life with a Revue that fulfilled its promise to ‘dust off and dig’ into theatrical memorabilia from the interwar period, which was described through ‘sketches, song and dance’.

The students used material from a number of collections, including those of Arnold Ridley, Eric Jones Evans and John Perry, and the creative influence of items such as Olivier’s gloves from The Entertainer, old make-up boxes, production photographs, and programmes from the Intimate Reviews staged at The Ambassadors was clearly evident.

Congratulations to all involved!

Photographs courtesy of Graham Burke Photography

The Theatre Collection dealt with 58 research enquiries from October to the end of December 2007. Subjects included photographs of John Barrowman in the London Old Vic's 1993 production of 'Hair'; information on the actress, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies who made her acting debut in Beerbohm Tree's 1911 production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at His Majesty's theatre; Arnold Ridley’s first world war career; the evacuation of the London Old Vic Theatre School in 1941 to a farmhouse in Little Wolford, Warwickshire; Mary Anne Hall’s 1866 portrait of the 19 year old Ellen Terry; Henry Irving’s preparation book for a production of 'Faust' at the Lyceum Theatre, London in 1885; the playwright Sylvia Rayman, and the designers, Owen Paul Smyth and Alan Tagg.

We also had 1079 visitors in the quarter.

Any questions …?

The Theatre Collection Opening Hours

Monday
11 am - 4.45pm

Tuesday to Friday
9.30 am - 4.45 pm

We are closed at weekends and on Bank Holidays and University holidays. We may very occasionally close for other reasons - please phone us on 0117 33 15086 or check our website for any forthcoming closure dates.

In order to make the most of your visit to the Theatre Collection archives, it is advisable to make an appointment with us, either by phone (0117 33 15086) or email (theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk). We can then discuss your requirements and retrieve any archival material requested in time for your arrival.

We look forward to seeing you!
Medieval Plays in Modern Performance
28th January 2008

Pam King, Professor of Medieval Studies at the University of Bristol worked closely with material from the Theatre Collection and with Jo to host an informative and productive day for a number of respected international scholars. The day aimed to explore a range of issues concerning the archives of twentieth century productions of Medieval plays. The day was sponsored by the Worldwide University Network and hosted by the Institute of Advanced Studies.

Dicks’ Standard Plays

In the nineteenth century, John Dicks, of 313 Strand, London, produced printed play scripts that could be performed ‘without risk of infringing any rights’, and at the cost of one penny, they were affordable to the working class. The Theatre Collection holds over 300 of these plays in its archives, and nearly all of the plays have an illustration on their cover such as the one above on Bears Not Beasts, which dates from around 1822. With play titles such as Rule a Wife, and Have a Wife and Wept of the Wishing-Ton-Wish they make a very interesting read! All the plays have now been catalogued and are available for viewing.

Luke Pomeroy, April 2008
Theatre Collection Volunteer

Irving Exhibition
21 April 2008 onwards
Monday – Friday
10am – 3pm
at 21 Park Row, Bristol

Henry Irving (1838 – 1905) was an actor and theatre manager who dedicated his life to the theatre. He was a perfectionist, striving to raise the standards of late Victorian theatre. Success did not come quickly or easily for Irving. But Irving defied critics of his unique voice and mannerisms, and overcame both his mother’s and wife’s contempt for his profession, becoming the first actor to receive a knighthood.

A selection of the Theatre Collection’s broad range of artworks and objects relating to Irving will be on display, as this exhibition explores aspects of both his public and private lives. Highlights include the set of hand-bells and money belt used by Irving in the Lyceum’s 1871 production of The Bells, in which he first gained recognition, in the role of Mathias. A pair of portraits by William Rothenstein of Irving and Ellen Terry, who shared close a professional and personal relationship, will be on display. Additionally, Irving’s death mask, cast by Sir George Frampton, which is one of only two ever made, will be exhibited.

Henry Irving’s duelling pistols (donated by John Irving)

Exhibition mounted by Anna Fineman, Theatre Collection Volunteer
Live Art Archives News

Digitisation continues to progress well in the “Capturing the past, preserving the future: Digitising the National Review of Live Art Video Archive” project. A total of 950 video files (81% of the archive) have now been captured as uncompressed archival masters and have been transcoded into compressed access versions. This figure includes all cassettes from the NRLA festival years 1986–7, 1993, 1996–2006. Copyright clearances are also steadily being obtained.

Farewell and thank you!

December 2007 saw the retirement of Barry Smith, Principal Investigator on the NRLA Video Archive Digitisation project and founder of the Live Art Archives. The Theatre Collection would like to wish him a long and happy retirement and say a big thank you for collecting, developing and donating the Archives to us.

NRLA 2008 archive ready!

The footage from this year’s NRLA festival is now available for viewing. A list of the tapes can be found on the Live Art Archive’s NRLA webpage at http://www.bris.ac.uk/theatrecollection/liveart/liveart_NRLA.html. Please contact Bex for further information and/or to arrange an appointment.

Staging London’s Cultural Life: Herbert and Maud Tree.
University Study Day

Working closely with the Theatre Collection, Dr Catherine Hindson hosted a very successful study day at the University on Wednesday 23rd January 2008.

The Beerbohm Tree collection is one of the major archives held by the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. The actors Herbert Beerbohm Tree and Maud Tree were located at the core of the late-nineteenth and early-20th century eclectic social and artistic milieu. Using material from the archive, which is unusually diverse, the study day stimulated discussion about the cultural location of the Tree’s productions from across disciplines, research interests and methodologies. Attended by around 30 scholars, the day will lead to a grant application which will enable researchers from different departments to work further with the collection. This, in turn, will lead to more study days, a conference and an exhibition.

Did you know …………?

The Live Art Archives hold a complete set of the 66 issues of Performance magazine, a UK-based European cross-artform journal and the key UK Live Art/Performance magazine from the late 1970s through to the early 1990s.

Thank you

The Theatre Collection would like to express their sincere thanks to Christine Bayliss of the Theatre Royal Bath for her continued support and annual donation of posters and programmes to the archive.
Painting History
The Theatre Collection’s holdings include a number of paintings and prints, including this picture by Paule Vézelay (Marjorie Watson Williams), the first and foremost English female abstract artist, who was born on May 14th 1892, in Clifton, Bristol.

Image courtesy of Sally Jarman

The painting is a view of the interior of Bristol Hippodrome, looking across the audience towards the stage. Vézelay’s niece, Sally Jarman, says that the narrow beams of light cast by the theatre spots fascinated Vézelay, and the relationship between lines and space was to become her most important artistic experiment. This painting illustrates an early awareness and interest in the idea. It is the earliest Vézelay painting in public hands and was recently exhibited at RWA.

IMTAL Europe AGM
5th/6th July 2008
Bath
The International Museum Theatre Alliance (Europe) invites members and guests to a special weekend of site visits, discussion and debate in Bath on their AGM weekend on 5th and 6th July. IMTAL supports and promotes best practice among museum theatre practitioners and actor-interpreters working in museums and at historic sites.
Visits include the Naturals Theatre company’s HQ, the Fashion Museum, the Roman Baths, and to the American Museum to see their re-enactors celebrating independence with a bang. There will be opportunities to meet those working with The Naturals and Past Pleasures, as well as IMTAL members working in a wide variety of heritage locations across Europe. Full details are downloadable from the IMTAL website at www.imtal-europe.org.

Live Art Archives News
Digitisation Project Case Study
Stephen Gray and Clare Thornton, together with Paul Clarke (GWR Fellow on the Performing the Archive project), have been working on a Case Study, which they hope will develop the usefulness of documents for users of the Live Art Archives. It focuses on a single video document, Richard Layzell’s ‘I Never Done Enough Weird Stuff’, performed at National Review of Live Art in 1996.

Interesting though it is, the video doesn’t fully represent the event, leaving some gaps; Layzell sometimes disappears out of shot and at points the image is too dark to make-out. The artist has been closely involved in the authoring of a new, enhanced record of the event. The team plan to produce a DVD which will include a commentary from Richard Layzell and digitised copies of videos he projected in the performance. They also plan to launch an online forum to host feedback from researchers, producers and audiences.

As a bonus, Richard has also donated a number of related objects to the archives.

Live Art Archives News
NRLA 2008
6th Feb-10th Feb
At this year’s festival, the project team presented a public screening programme of documentation from over twenty years of the NRLA Video Archive, featuring performers appearing in this year’s event. An interactive viewing station was also available throughout the festival.
My most recent project as a volunteer has been the cataloguing of Dorothea Fernandez Hodges’ collection of children’s glass magic lantern slides. Hodges was born in Ealing in 1892 and grew up in Kent. After leaving school she worked in Germany, where it is likely that she bought some of the slides for her younger brothers and sisters. Returning to England on the brink of the First World War, Hodges destroyed almost all mementoes of her time in Germany. The lantern slides survived, however, and proved a source of entertainment for her children and grand-children in the years to come. These slides illustrate a variety of fairytales, children’s literary classics, historical events and educational themes. Some slides have captions included in the image, but most would have been accompanied by printed readings, many of which are now held by the Magic Lantern Society. This collection is particularly interesting as it includes square, rectangular and more unusual circular slides. The majority of the slides were manufactured by W. Butcher and Sons of London and Ernst Planck of Nuremberg, Germany.

One interesting slide set illustrates the story of ‘Alice in Wonderland’ (TCP/LS/000036 series). The attractive colour images resemble the original book illustrations by Sir John Tenniel but have been altered for mass production, probably to avoid copyright problems. Holly Parsons, Dec. 2007

Theatre Collection Volunteer

Volunteer News

Volunteer News

Volunteer Sessions

Why not come along and help out in the Theatre Collection while meeting other Friends?

The next practical work sessions are on:

Tuesday
24th June 2008
(10.00am -12.30pm)

Wednesday
16th July 2008
(2.00 - 4.30pm)

Wednesday
10th September
(10.00am -12.30pm)

Wednesday
24th September
(2.00 - 4.30pm)

Booking is essential.

Tea and cake are provided.
Phone Jo on 0117 33 15086 for more details.

WANTED

The Friends are looking for a student representative to sit on the Friends Council. If you are a student who is interested in having a say in what the Friends do and want to get involved, please ask Jo or Bex for further information. We need you!

Friends News