New Accessions

Recent highlights include:
Caroline Scott Plummer
design archive
[donated by Alexa Scott
Plummer]
David Cockayne
design archive
[donated by David Cockayne]
Desperate Men Archive
[donated by Desperate Men]
Franko B Archive [additions]
[donated by Franko B]
Cyril Fletcher Archive
[donated by Jill Fletcher]
The Alastair Snow Archive
[donated by Alastair Snow]

Forthcoming Events

Friends & Guests Event
Visit to Sir Roy Strong’s
garden, The Laskett
Tuesday 6th September,
2.30pm
See insert for more details

InsideArts
University of Bristol
Festival of the Arts
and Humanities
18th-22nd October 2011
See inside for more details

Volunteers
Please contact us if you would like to join our team of volunteers.
Phone Jo, Bex or Heather on
0117 33 15086 or email
theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk

Theatre Collection
60th Anniversary

The Theatre Collection was formed 60 years ago this year, by Glynne Wickham, to provide the primary source material for the students and academics of the newly formed Department of Drama - launched at Bristol University in 1947, the first in the UK.

The role of the Theatre Collection has changed immensely in that 60 years - growing from a resource for the academic department in which it still sits, to a more outward facing research facility welcoming all with an interest in theatre who wish to view its holdings, as well as producing exhibitions and publications to raise its profile.

Key milestones include the acquisition of the London Old Vic archive in [date] and the Bristol Old Vic archive which followed in [date]. This year saw another major milestone with the transfer of the Mander & Mitchenson collection.
Tim West and Prunella Scales visit Bristol

The move
The Mander & Mitchenson collection is now in Bristol! The new store has been completed and 30 x 7.5 tonne lorries have traversed the motorways between Greenwich, Bristol and Langford in order to move the collection to its new home.

Between February and March this year, the Theatre Collection staff facilitated the transfer of this outstanding collection from its previous home at Trinity College of Music, Greenwich to its new purpose built home at the University’s site in Langford.

New Store
The new store is state-of-the-art, and complies with BS5454 - the British standard for the storage of archive material.

There is an air conditioning system which controls the temperature and relative humidity, along with an early warning fire detection and suppression system, and high security. All of which ensures the collection is safe and secure.

Launch
At Royal Fort House, on 7th June, the Vice-Chancellor and his wife are hosting a drinks reception to celebrate the transfer of the Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection to the University of Bristol.

A number of important theatrical names are attending, with links to Mander & Mitchenson, the University, and Bristol.

One From the Archive...
Osiris Rep Company
The Osiris Repertory Company (founded in 1927) flourished during the war and the early fifties. It played in every county in the UK and Ireland touring for nearly forty years.

The Director and leading force of Osiris was Nancy Hewins, the daughter of W.A.S. Hewins, the co-founder of the London School of Economics. Constance Allen, Henrietta Trend and Kay Jones supported her, as did Belgian Griffins and many other members. Under its unique contract actors were paid in kind with pocket money. Equity agreed to this, but finally Osiris utilized the Standard Touring Contract.

Osiris’s simple sets, specially designed costumes and amazing lighting worked in virtually any space where a play could be offered. The Company acted on planks laid on boxes, on billiard tables, in castle courtyards and gardens, and until the sixties, seldom on stages of adequate size.

One From the Archive...
Transport was in ancient Rolls Royces (though canoes, horses and an old ambulance were also commandeered); accommodation was on village hall floors, in digs, tents, and finally in caravans.

The repertoire of the company included twenty-two Shakespeare plays, Greek, eighteenth century, Victorian and modern plays. The aspiration of this all-female group was to take appropriate performances to audiences without easy access to live theatre.

Nancy Hewins in The Devil's Disciple
Grants

Renaissance SW project completed

A grant from Renaissance South West enabled the Theatre Collection to purchase a small copy stand for the purpose of photographing artwork and small objects.

Lucy, a volunteer who was on placement as part of her Museum Studies MA, took a number of photographs as part of this project, a selection of which can be seen here.

Grants

HEFCE Funding

It has been confirmed by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) that the grant to the Theatre Collection from the University Museums section of their funding, will continue at its current rate for the next financial year 2011/12.

In the current economic climate with cuts in the arts abounding, this is great news for the Theatre Collection.

Procedures

A Reminder ....

It is vital that we keep a record of people using the Theatre Collection, therefore, the TC has a system where all external researchers (including those only using the library) will be asked to complete a researcher’s form. A visitor’s card will then be issued and must be produced when signing in each day.

M&M

Tim West and Prunella Scales are two of those whose long-standing connection to Mander & Mitchenson and Bristol make them ideal visitors to celebrate the collection’s permanent new home.

A small selection of items chosen to show the range of the collection are to be displayed for the first time since the move, including Noel Coward’s dressing gown and other artefacts/drawings by the great man.

Other items include a helmet, complete with feathers, worn by Herbert Beerbohm Tree as Macbeth at His Majesty’s Theatre, [date].

M&M

Oil Paintings

A number of pieces of art from both the Mander & Mitchenson collection and the existing Theatre Collection artwork collection are being permanently displayed at Royal Fort House. These are oil paintings, contemporary with the house which was built 1758-1762 for Thomas and Alicia Tyn dall. These paintings have been in storage for many years and deserve to be on display where they can be seen by members of the
gun on contacting those people who will be interviewed for the Case Study and it is planned that interviews will take place in July.

- Discussions are ongoing on the use of the interactive elements for the website, e.g. STARS and almost all the issues over clearance and copyright have been dealt with.

NEW! THE ALASTAIR SNOW ARCHIVE

The Theatre Collection is delighted that Alastair Snow has generously donated a significant amount of material relating to his work over the years to the Live Art Archives. Alastair is an artist, writer and specialist adviser in art and design in the public realm. He has performed at the Edinburgh Festival (Fringe First Award), Glasgow Garden Festival, Brighton Festival, Hippodrome Night Club, Serpentine Gallery, the NRLA and Modern Art Oxford. He is a trustee of Arnolfini and of New Moves International and a director of a-n, the Artists Information Company.

More details coming soon!

Any questions …?

The Theatre Collection dealt with 147 research enquiries from January - April 2011, including 24 regarding the Live Art Archives.

Subjects of the enquiries ranged from family history researchers trying to find information on their ancestors, to academics researching, and including requests for information on Lilian Baylis, Marina Naiska, Arthur Miller’s The Crucible and Sarah Kane’s monologues.

We welcome all queries and give each the same care and attention.

We also had 298 visitors in the Reading Room during the same period.

Researchers are encouraged to use our online search facility: www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollection as a first point of reference.

Theatre Collection
Opening Hours

Monday 12.00pm - 4.45pm
Tuesday to Friday
9.30 am - 4.45 pm

We are closed at weekends and on Bank Holidays and University closure days. We close for 2 weeks in early September for collections management and 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, it is advisable (but not essential) 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 soon!
Independent Study

“My independent study model b presentation, part of my final year work for my BA Drama degree in the department, took place in the Theatre Collection on Friday 6th May 2011.

The presentation looked into the relationship between fiction and evidence in performance documentation and into how documents can perform, presenting as well as representing a previous event.

Thanks to the willingness of the Theatre Collection staff, my work has become a genuine accession into the Theatre Collection’s archives raising interesting possibilities for how documents can perform and events can extend into, and become realised through, documentation.”

Tim Bishop

New PhD student

A student who has recently completed the MA in Performance Research and who has been a volunteer in the Theatre Collection has won a scholarship from the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to undertake a PhD.

Sophie Johns will be starting her studies in September, based in the Drama Department. The focus of her studies will be the archives held in the Theatre Collection and looking into how this can inform performance.

We are delighted that Sophie will be using the collections for her studies and wish her the best of luck.

Sophie Johns

Journals Update

Since taking in the Mander & Mitchenson Collection, the Theatre Collection has increased the number of journal runs in its holdings from 141 to over 185.

Several of the new titles are from the 1800’s and early 1900’s, including ‘The Monthly Mirror’ from 1801 and ‘The Curtain or English Entr’acte’ from 1847. We also have bound copies of ‘The Tomahawk’ from 1867.

In addition, the new acquisitions have enabled us to fill gaps in our existing holdings and we now have a complete run of ‘Theatre World’ from 1925 to 1965 when it merged with ‘Plays and Players’.

The new and updated runs are in the process of being catalogued onto the library system, but in the meantime, the current list of available titles is available on the Theatre Collection website at https://www.bris.ac.uk/theatre_collection/periodicals.html.

Shakespeare Volumes

A number of beautifully illustrated volumes of the Works of Shakespeare, such as the one above, have been discovered in the London Old Vic Archive here at the Theatre Collection and are now catalogued on the University library system. The books are held in the ‘Reserved Books’ section of the TC library and are available to view on request.
Medieval Plays in Modern Performance

When theatres re-opened in the reign of Charles II, certain types of material were excluded from the repertoire and remained so until the 1960s saw the end of the Lord Chamberlain’s censorship of the British theatre.

There was an embargo on impersonating the deity – God the Father or Jesus Christ – which meant that much of our native medieval heritage was neither performed nor properly understood for 300 years.

This exhibition, and the study of which it forms part, explores the pioneering activities in the twentieth century of those who brought medieval religious drama back into performance.

The exhibition features the work of universities, community groups and professional acting companies, including the Medieval Players.

The exhibition was opened on March 7th 2011.

Workshops

The exhibition forms part of a project being run by Pam King, Professor of Medieval Studies at University of Bristol, in conjunction with the Theatre Collection and funded by Worldwide Universities Network.

Another aspect of this project will see Professor King, along with project and Theatre Collection staff run a workshop at the International Medievalists Conference being held at Lancaster University in May.

This is a great opportunity to introduce the work of the Theatre Collection to a new audience.

Oral History Project

This project looks to record the memories of those involved in theatre, whose recollections may otherwise be lost forever. As well as theatre professionals this includes others less directly involved: from performance scholars to the general theatre-going public. The project aims to:

- Build up an oral history archive to compliment the collections held here;
- Provide an enhanced research resource;
- Provide an alternative way for our supporters to contribute to the development of the Theatre Collection.

Want to get involved?

We need help to conduct interviews, transcribe recordings, or even financially sponsor an interview. We are also keen to interview those involved in the theatre in any way.

More details can be found at www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre_collection/oral_history_leaflet.html.

In 2000 the Theatre Collection contributed to a project established by TIG (Theatre Information Group) to make available Collection Level Descriptions of theatre based archives online.

This was done via a search engine called ‘Backstage’. The Theatre Collection contributed collection level descriptions (general information about a whole of a collection rather than each item within it) of its most important collections.

The Backstage software failed but TIG has now succeeded, in partnership with Collections Trust, to migrate this data into a new system - ‘Culture Grid’.

“The Culture Grid is a new and unique online service from Collections Trust, the UK’s independent organisation for collections. It enables more people to find out about and go on to visit and engage with the wonders within UK collections: improving the visibility, impact and value of all kinds of collections.”

www.culturegrid.org.uk.
Volunteer News

A big thank you goes out to Heather, a returning volunteer, who spent her Easter break at the Theatre Collection. She was sorting through programmes and has made a huge impact on the London theatre material in our collection, ensuring that these items are now available to researchers.

Another volunteer, Liz, has organised a ‘Wrapathon’ in early June to help with her project of re-packaging the John Vickers glass plate negatives. The event will involve a number of volunteers preparing acid-free enclosures and repacking the fragile and invaluable negatives in this archive.

We have been pleased to welcome new and returning volunteers including Michael, Andrew and Mervyn and always appreciate the time and effort all our volunteers give in helping us.

Volunteer News

We Need You!

The Theatre Collection always welcomes new volunteers and with the recent acquisition of the Mander & Mitchenson Collection we would be especially appreciative of any help with the significant amount of work that is needed to organise the material and make it accessible to researchers as soon as possible.

From re-boxing and packaging, to sorting and listing material or making bags for the new costumes that are arriving, there are a wide variety of projects available if you would like to join the team.

Of course, our programme sorting, Oral History and John Vickers photographic storage projects are also still ongoing.

Please phone Jo, Bex or Heather on 0117 33 15086 or email theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk for further information.

Events

Fortnight by Proto-type Theater

As part of Mayfest 2011, Proto-type Theater ran Fortnight - a treasure hunt around Bristol, designed to encourage participants:

“To peel back the layers of where you live.
To look for secrets
Surprises
To meet someone new.
Or hide in a crowd.”

Different venues were used for each day of the event, and included the Theatre Collection Library on Friday 6th May.

Participants were led to the Theatre Collection and then to a clue which involved them searching for an item in the library, which would, in turn, lead them on to another venue.

Events

The event was a great success, had an overwhelmingly positive response, and 25 new people visited the Theatre Collection.

For more information on the event and the Theatre Collection’s involvement, visit: http://www.fortnightproject.com/the-trail/day-five/.

Review

The Wickham Lecture

‘Thoughts on Acting’
Tuesday 10th May 2011

Harriett Walter
In conversation with Martin White

This year’s Wickham Lecture attracted a full house and everyone was delighted by Harriett’s witty and extremely entertaining stories of her acting exploits and thoughts on the profession.

Martin stimulated an interesting and agreeable conversation and all agreed that the event was most enjoyable.
**Festival of the Arts**

**University of Bristol Festival of the Arts and Humanities**

18th - 22nd October 2011

In 2011, for the first time, the University of Bristol is holding a festival to celebrate what it does in terms of the Arts, and to let the City and beyond participate in this.

The Festival will include an exhibition to be mounted at Royal Fort House, which will include items from the Theatre Collection and the newly acquired Mander & Mitchenson Collection, alongside the Penguin Archive and others.

There will also be keynote speeches, talks, and performances from the wide variety of arts and humanities departments at the University.

Keep an eye on the University website for more information as it becomes available.

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**Artist in Residence**

As part of our 60th anniversary celebrations in 2011 the Theatre Collection are delighted to announce our first Artist in Residence – Clare Thornton. The residency will begin in August/September and will respond to the collection’s holdings and encourage new audiences to engage with, and be inspired by, the archive and museum items we care for.

*Unfurl* photograph courtesy of Clare Thornton

Clare’s work for the past few years has particularly focussed on archival/archaeological impulses.

It is envisaged that the residency will lead to an exhibition in the Autumn, with a possible link to Bristol Doors Open Day 2011. There will also be an opportunity for workshops, talks and tours for students, but the key focus will be on developing new audiences, creating conditions for starting and sustaining new engagement with this world class collection.

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**Friends Event**

Visit to The Laskett Gardens

A visit to Sir Roy Strong’s private gardens has been arranged for the Friends of the Theatre Collection, on Tuesday 6th September 2011 at a cost of £25 per head.

For further details, please see the enclosed insert.

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**Friends News**

Have you received your card?

Just a reminder that all current Friends should now have received a membership number and card. If you haven’t, it may be because according to our records, your membership has lapsed. If you would like to rejoin, please contact us, or download the membership form from the website at https://www.bris.ac.uk/theatre-collection/friends_membership_form.pdf.

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**Did you know?**

Sarah Kane monologues

The Theatre Collection holds copies of Sarah Kane’s monologues Sick: What She Said, Starved, and Comic Monologue.

These were written during Sarah’s time as a student in the Drama Department and are some of the few pieces of Sarah’s work in existence. In accordance with the wishes of Sarah’s family, these scripts can be viewed, but not transcribed or copied in any way.

Please contact the Theatre Collection for more information.

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**A REMINDER**

Now that the Theatre Collections holdings are no longer housed entirely at Park Row, we highly recommend that you book an appointment and specify any material which you wish to view before visiting us as we require as much notice as possible to retrieve items from the Langford site.