Forthcoming Events

Stephanie Cole
in Conversation

THURSDAY
30th AUGUST 2012,
7.30pm

Wickham Theatre
University of Bristol
Tickets £10

ALL WELCOME!

New Accessions

Recent highlights include:

BOV Sound Recordings
[on loan from Bristol Old Vic]

Joe Davis Archive
[donated by Mrs Davis]

Motley Set Models and
Motley School Material
[donated by Sophie Jump]

Stephanie Cole Archive
additions: Coronation Street ma-
terial and radio work
[donated by Stephanie Cole]

The Hull Time Based Arts Archive
[donated by David Priestman
and Gillian Dyson]

Stephanie Cole
additions: Coronation Street ma-
terial and radio work
[donated by Stephanie Cole]

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 mailing
list. 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 mailing list,
please contact us.

The Director, University of Bristol Theatre Collection,
Department of Drama, Cantocks Close, Bristol BS8 1UP
Tel: 0117 33 15086  Email: theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk
Website: www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollection

As many of you will already know, we are currently in the
middle of building works at our main site at the Drama
Department.

This work is to replace the old air conditioning system in the
strong rooms and extend the climate control to cover all our
archive stores. This has meant that we have moved out all our
collections into secure storage during the refurbishment period.

The library material is available, and an exhibition is still running,
so we are operating a reduced service for visitors. The TC office
is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays, with the rest of the time
being spent at our off-site store, unpacking the Mander &
Mitchenson Collection. More news on this inside.

We aim to re-open fully to researchers in early October, and
although the changes may not be visible to visitors, the
archives will be stored in much improved conditions!
Theatre in the Garden

The Bristol Old Vic Young Company performed extracts from their latest work, *The Life After*, on 16th June in the gardens of Vanessa Stevenson’s Concrete House in Westbury-on-Trym. Vanessa is on the Council of the Friends the Theatre Collection and kindly allowed us to display a banner and leaflets to publicise the Friends.

It was an amazing afternoon with some 50 young people, aged between 11 and 18, completely ignoring the stormy wind and rain to perform with marvellous energy, enthusiasm and emotion. There is no doubt that the poor weather affected audience numbers but we still enjoyed cream teas and Pimms and meeting members of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Club who support the Young Company.

Rosemary Silvester, Friend

Unlocking the Collections

We have been working to explore potential research collaborations between academics across the Faculty of Arts and the Theatre Collection.

On 3rd May the University hosted a very successful event entitled ‘Unlocking the Theatre Collection’. Morning presentations were given by the Faculty of Arts Deputy Research Director Professor Robert Bickers, Theatre Collection Director Jo Elsworth, and academics with experience of working with the Theatre Collection archives.

The afternoon session comprised a ‘circus’ workshop at which academics from a variety of Art and Humanities departments had the opportunity to explore and discuss a diverse selection of Theatre Collection materials, objects and artwork including items from the Mander & Mitchenson Collection, the John Vickers Archive, and the Stephanie Cole Archive. The ensuing discussions highlighted several areas of research potential, which are currently being followed up as pilot projects.

Any questions ...?

The Theatre Collection dealt with 246 research enquiries from October 2011 – April 2012, including 9 regarding the Live Art Archives. Subjects of the enquiries ranged from requests for copies of sheet music, to the Old Vic Company tour of Cairo, and from Samuel Beckett to eighteenth-century portraits and tightrope walkers. Family History researchers constitute a large number of the enquiries.

We have continued to receive a large number of picture enquiries through our arrangement with ArenaPAL (see website for more details). We welcome all enquiries and give each the same care and attention.

We also had 420 visitors in the Reading Room during the same period. All researchers are encouraged to use our online search facility: www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollection in the first instance.

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, especially as our holdings are split across two sites, it is advisable (but not essential) to make an appointment with us, either by phone (0117 33 15086) or e mail (theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk). We can then discuss your requirements and retrieve any archival material requested in time for your arrival.
One From the Archive...

The Mander & Mitchenson Collection continues to disclose hidden gems, including a recent journal finding that is far earlier than other runs in the Collection.

Copies of *The Dramatic Censor; or, Weekly Theatrical Report* from March 1800 contain illuminating insights into the productions and performances at Drury Lane and Covent Garden that season.

While the famous comic actress Mrs Jordan “commanded universal applause by her exquisite acting”, the staging of *The Belle’s Stratagem* at both theatres was “very badly got up”, with the Covent Garden actress Mrs Mattocks evincing far “too much vulgarity and coarseness”!

One from the Archive...

Drama Dept Update

The Theatre Collection (TC) has been working with the second year drama students on one of their modules, where they are introduced to the TC holdings and use what they encounter as inspiration to create new work.

The TC staff ran a seminar to show students the range and wealth of collections held, including tours of the strong rooms. This was followed up with the students conducting individual research into specific items that they were interested in and then they developed performances using these items as inspiration.

Ideas from the students were as diverse as the use of installation pieces from the Live Art Archives to 19th century melodrama.

Did you know?

During the refurbishment which is taking place in our strong rooms in the Drama Department, we are taking the opportunity to unpack more of the Mander & Mitchenson Collection.

Most recently, we have completed the ceramics collection - almost 400 items have been carefully unpacked from their boxes and placed in appropriate storage on the shelves in the Langford store.

A selection of these are featured in the new exhibition opening soon, covering the Mander & Mitchenson Collection more widely.

See the Theatre Collection website and Facebook page for more information.

Oral History Project Update

We are looking for volunteers to do oral history interviews. Training is provided and support is available. This is a fascinating opportunity to meet some interesting people and add to the Theatre Collection’s holdings.

We are also keen to ensure interviews are transcribed, and therefore made more accessible. This could be done by volunteers who cannot visit the Theatre Collection in person. You will need a computer or laptop with headphones or a speaker. You don’t need specialised knowledge as the transcription will be checked by other volunteers or staff with more knowledge and experience.

If you are interested in either of these volunteering opportunities please get in touch with the Theatre Collection. You can email the Oral History Project Co-ordinator Rosemary Silvester at R.Silvester@bristol.ac.uk or phone her on 0117 926 0990.
Live Art News

Update: ‘Into the Future: Sustainable Access to the National Review of Live Art Digital Archive’ Project

The project deadline has now been extended to 31st September 2012 and Astrid, a current Drama PhD student, has been employed to contact artists and clear all relevant permissions for publication of the video works online. Most of the responses received to date have been favourable and very supportive of the project. The project website development is also going well and it is anticipated that the site will be launched in mid-September.

This cutting-edge project has raised a number of complex legal and ethical issues which it is hoped will assist other researchers and projects in the future. Contact Bex for more information.

Live Art News

Performing Documents: Modelling Creative and Curatorial Engagements with Live Art and Performance Archives

This new project involving the Live Art Archives is now underway. A joint collaboration between the University of Bristol Drama Department, the University of Exeter and the Arnolfini arts centre, the project will run over the next three years and cover three strands: (1) artists using and re-using the archives of others (Remake); (2) artists revisiting their own archives (Redux); and (3) curatorial responses to archives (Replace).

Each strand will include workshops and symposia which will culminate in a 2 day conference during an 8 week archival exhibition at Arnolfini, together with the production of a website/wiki pages and the publication of a book and DVD.

Further information about the project is available on the project webpage at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/

New Archives

nationally since it began. The course was established by Stephen Arlen and Margaret ‘Percy’ Harris; its early pupils including Hayden Griffin, Carol Lawrence, Susie Caulcutt and Derek Nicholson.

The Theatre Collection has been given four large set models which were built for the Motley exhibition which toured America in the early 1990s, alongside archive material relating to the Motley School.

Procedures

A Reminder ….

It is vital that we keep a record of people using the Theatre Collection. Therefore, the TC has a system whereby 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.

Jo meets the Queen!

Jo was both privileged and delighted to be invited to a reception at Buckingham Palace on the 14th February 2012 to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Dickens. The event celebrated Dickensian scholars and those involved in the wider world of theatre and literature.

There are some tales to tell!

A Plea for help ….

Do you enjoy sewing? We are desperately in need of volunteers who can help us make up a variety of archival bags to store costumes and other items which won’t go into boxes. It would be simple machining and all materials provided. More details are available from Jo, Bex or Heather.
Joe Davis Archive

Acknowledged as the first real lighting designer, Joe Davis (1912-1984) was responsible for establishing the profession and co-founded the Association of Lighting Designers with Michael Northen.

Davis lit hundreds of productions to high acclaim, creating subtle and beautiful effects for a range of productions including dramas, Shakespeare and musicals both in the UK and on Broadway.

He designed Marlene Dietrich’s concerts in 1967 and 1968 at the Mark Hellinger Theatre and Lunt-Fontanne Theatre on Broadway, afterwards becoming her bespoke lighting designer.

Davis’s work in the West End included productions for directors Peter Brook and Lindsay Anderson and Arthur Laurents. A plaque commemorates him at the actor’s church, St. Paul’s in Covent Garden.

The archive has been donated by Joe’s widow in its entirety and serves as an intriguing insight into the work of this seminal lighting designer - a side of theatre not often recorded.

Motley Design Archive

The Motley Group of Designers consisted of Margaret Harris, her sister Sophia Harris, and Elizabeth Montgomerie, who designed sets and costumes from 1932 to 1976 for plays by Shakespeare and modern classics, opera, ballet, and motion pictures. Their designs were used in productions in the West End of London, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the English National Opera, and in the United States on Broadway and the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

The Motley Theatre Design Course was founded in 1966, to train new designers and has been highly regarded nationally and internationally.

Live Art News

The Theatre Collection has recently acquired the Hull Time Based Arts (HTBA) Archive.

HTBA emerged in 1984 from the underground activity of artists, filmmakers, theorists and musicians interested in presenting and promoting their work and the work of others.

Through festivals, bursaries, commissions, residencies, screenings and exhibitions, HTBA supported and promoted the work of artists using video, sound, live performance and new technologies.

Further information will be available soon.

Funding

We have once again been successful in the first round of the National Cataloguing Grant Scheme. We resubmitted our application from last year to catalogue the reference boxes from the Mander & Mitchenson Collection.

This was successful in the first round but not the second. We are hoping to go one better this year, with the second round application being submitted in October.

We also have a number of academics from across the Faculty of Arts working with the Theatre Collection, who have been awarded seedcorn funding from the University, to develop ideas which will lead to full research grants, which will allow more of our collections to be catalogued and made accessible, alongside academic research being carried out into them.
The PCF is photographing the nation’s oil painting collection and making it accessible through a series of printed catalogues and the Your Paintings website. The Theatre Collection has contributed to the Bristol catalogue with its oil, acrylic and gouache paintings.

The art collection forms an integral part of the Theatre Collection’s holdings. In theatre, where everything is so ephemeral and so little remains to represent the performance event itself, artwork takes on an additional significance.

Alongside these individual masterpieces, much of the art collection’s content is characterised by its eclecticism. It includes pieces that have been purchased or, more frequently, donated purely on the grounds of their artistic merit; pieces that are significant because of the integral and important theatrical information they convey and individual items that form part of the larger archives of directors, actors, companies, designers, historians and photographers that we hold.

Some of the more interesting paintings in our collection include the rather haunting Charles Kean as King Lear by William Etty (our first formal acquisition in 1957), the paintings by William Hamilton R.A. of Sarah Siddons in The Tragedy of Isabella and her brother John Philip Kemble in Richard III, and the Mather Brown’s Romeo and Juliet showing a happy ending with the lovers emerging from the tomb!

The Theatre Collection has recently purchased the Axiell Software ‘CALM’.

This is a Collections Management software package which will bring together a total of 12 existing, separate databases and spreadsheets into one system.

The new software package will enable all collections processes within the Theatre Collection to be undertaken via one system which will make the process seamless and coherent.

Work is currently being undertaken to map the existing data into the new system, following which Axiell will complete the data transfer and then the work on checking and validating the data in the new system can begin!

This will eventually lead to a new online catalogue which it is hoped will go live in 2013, along with a whole new website! In the meantime the collections information can still be accessed in the current manner.

As part of the Theatre Collection’s new visual identity we have produced a new suite of leaflets, as seen here.

Look out for our new newsletter, which is the next to receive this treatment and which we hope to launch with our next edition and will feature a new layout!
This exhibition was created by MA History of Art and MA Performance Research students at the University of Bristol in collaboration with the Theatre Collection, and was formally launched on 20 March.

The exhibition comprised materials for two major productions at Her Majesty’s Theatre in 1898, *Julius Caesar* and *The Musketeers*. It included music scores, extracts from Tree’s personal notebook, set and costume designs, character portraits, scripts, and ephemera including a commemorative menu for the 100th performance of *The Musketeers*, letters, programmes and press cuttings.

Earlier in the spring, this exhibition celebrated J. M. Barrie’s classic story and theatre productions spanning the 20th and 21st centuries.

The exhibition showcased a number of items from the Mander & Mitchenson Collection, including copies of Barrie’s original stories, programmes and production photographs, and costumes from a 1954 American production. These were seen alongside projected lantern slide images from the early twentieth century and designs by John Elvery for the 1980s Bristol Old Vic production.

The next exhibition will showcase newly discovered items from the Mander & Mitchenson Collection.

A big welcome to our new volunteers Rachel, Laura, Steve and Helen.

Rachel has been busy listing the Herbert Farjeon letters and found the original proposal of marriage letter from Herbert to Joan!

Laura has been helping to list in detail the RSC programmes in our collection and is currently working hard on the library audit, while Steve and Helen have joined us out at Langford to work on the Mander & Mitchenson Collection.

Helen is currently undertaking a PhD relating to art history and her knowledge has proved invaluable in helping to sort the photographic prints from the Greenwich Theatre and other historical prints from the collection.

With the help of eleven volunteers we managed to wrap a further four boxes of glass plate negatives from the John Vickers Collection on April 18th.

We are now more than halfway through the 20,000 negatives gifted by John Vickers’ wife and daughter to the Theatre Collection!

Over delicious home-made cakes, John Park, a volunteer who has been working on the paper and photographic print archive, told us more about the life of John Vickers. A London-based photographer, Vickers was a “pupil” of Angus McBean. He taught Mario Testino, who started his career working for Vickers; quite a distinguished lineage!

Liz Bird – Volunteer
Friends News

**Visit to The Garrick Club, London**

The Garrick Club was founded in 1831 and houses the largest and most significant collection of British theatrical works of art with over 1,000 paintings, drawings and pieces of sculpture on display. Many of the major literary, theatrical and artistic personalities of the last 2 centuries have been members, including Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Henry Irving. It is still, of course, a “gentlemen only” club!

As well as viewing all the main rooms of the Club and highlights from the collection the visit included the Library with its rich collection of books, plays, prints and manuscripts.

“It was an unmissable opportunity; not just to see the great theatrical paintings, but also to hear our guide and host, Marcus Risdell revealing the secret world behind the club’s doors.

What to pick out? For me the two Zoffany portraits of David Garrick, a beautiful picture of Peg Woffington as Elvira, the Millais portrait of Henry Irving (once blackballed by club members) and a striking image of Dame Gladys Cooper by Sir John Collier.

Memorabilia abounded - David Garrick’s chair from the Drury Lane Theatre, a signed copy of Stephen Sondheim’s song book and the two display cabinets of delicate porcelain miniatures were an unexpected delight.

An embarrassment of riches, you might well say, and the whole collection brought to life by Marcus Risdell. As far as we were concerned Marcus, the Club’s curator, was the star performer on show that day. Congratulations to Rosemary Silvester for her organisation.”

Guy Thomas, Friend

Friends News

Friends Event

**STEPHANIE COLE - IN CONVERSATION**

**THURSDAY 30th AUGUST 2012, 7.30pm**

Wickham Theatre
University of Bristol
Tickets £10

Stephanie Cole is a stage, television, and film actress who trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and made her debut at Bristol Old Vic at the age of 17. Her long and varied career includes a formidable list of theatre credits and popular TV series such as *Tenko* and *Waiting For God*. Currently she can be seen on television as ‘Sylvia Goodwin’ in *Coronation Street*. Stephanie is also extremely well known to radio listeners.

Her extensive radio drama credits include *Cabin Pressure* and *Ed Reardon’s Week*. In 2002 she was given an honorary Master of Arts degree from the University of Bristol, and in 2005 she was awarded an OBE for her services to Drama, Mental Health and the Elderly. Stephanie is President of the Friends of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

Stephanie will be in conversation with Ray Price, Chairman of Bristol Old Vic Theatre Club. Early booking is advised!

This is a fundraising event for the University of Bristol Theatre Collection organised by the Friends of the Theatre Collection, reg charity no. 272392

For booking details see [www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollection/events.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollection/events.html) or email R.Silvester@bristol.ac.uk

**ALL WELCOME!**