

The American Theatre Archive Project:

Carrying the Record of the Past to the Future

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It would be pleasant to say that wherever there is a great theatre, active and creative over a long period of time, there will develop sooner or later a great collection of theatre material to carry the record and the inspiration of the past to the future, and that from time to time there will be men—theatre men with a collector's sense and something of the librarian's training—whose keen interest in the collection and sensitive appreciation of its value will express itself in a desire to organize the material and present it to the public in the form most suitable for the use of the theatre worker, student and scholar. (Freedley, 1)

George Freedley's comment in his thesis for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Drama at Yale University in 1936 continues to resonate (despite the gender reference) with 21st-century performing arts archivists and librarians, practitioners, and scholars. His notion is certainly at the root of the American Theatre Archive Project, an initiative by the American Society for Theatre Research to preserve the records of living theatre companies beginning in 2009.

As the first curator of the Theatre Division at the New York Public Library and first president of the Theatre Library Association (beginning in 1937), Freedley's work and publications provided a foundation on which generations of library and archives professionals have developed performing arts collections. Over the years, these collections, acquired through gift and purchase, have been arranged and described and made accessible to thousands of theatre practitioners, students, and scholars, as well as the general public. Freedley devel-

oped his collections in large part through his acquaintance with members of the New York theatre community—both theatre makers and private collectors—in the center of American theatrical activity. Throughout the 20th century, American historical society, academic, and public libraries built significant collections of materials documenting dramatic activity in major cities in the United States and abroad, and the playwrights, directors, actors, designers, and other personnel who created them.

The Little Theatre movement in the United States in the early 20th century introduced modern European playwriting, acting, and stagecraft to the American stage. The movement created not only an interest in locally-produced subscription and amateur theatre, but a desire to document it as well. Donations of programs, playbills, scrapbooks, posters, and other ephemera, as well as gifts and purchases of personal and theatre company archives were acquired by public and academic libraries and archives throughout the country. By mid-century, the regional theatre movement resulted in establishment of significant professional theatres in cities around the country. Alternative theatre of the 1960s and 1970s gave voice to the political issues of the period, and small theatre companies—many addressing issues of race, gender, the AIDS crisis, and the environment—were established in storefronts, lofts, and “found spaces” in many communities from New York to Austin to Seattle.

As these companies continued to proliferate into the 21st century, so did their records. Some of the theatre companies—typically larger, established companies—maintained their archives onsite with a staff archivist. Other companies developed a relationship with an archival repository that worked with the theatre to preserve and provide access to their records. But for the vast majority of companies, often underfunded, understaffed, and overworked in frequently cramped work spaces, the records were, and still are, maintained in a somewhat haphazard manner.

At the same time, libraries and archives were experiencing the demands of the “information age,” with an avalanche of publications, masses of manuscript collections representing existing as well as new disciplines, and the challenges of electronic data. Technology pro-

vided new ways of describing and providing access to these materials, including machine-readable cataloging and software for creating archival finding aids. The Internet offered new opportunities to publicize collections and disseminate finding aids and surrogates of collection material worldwide. However, frequent budget-tightening measures, brought about by competing institutional demands and financial crises had significant ramifications. Funding for collections, staff, and supplies was reduced, which for many institutions resulted in the inability to acquire new collections and/or to process previously-acquired collections in a timely fashion. Some institutions that had formerly maintained separate reading rooms for performing arts collections integrated them into general special collections units.¹

In the mid-1950s, American theatre scholars established the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) with the goal of "the fostering of knowledge about theatre, and the creation of a climate and a framework for service to the needs of American theatre historians in the practice of their profession." (Marshall, 124) The ASTR membership has grown to include dramaturgs, theatre practitioners, librarians, archivists, and others. At their joint conferences, ASTR and Theatre Library Association (TLA) members have shared developments in the fields of performing arts scholarship and librarianship. The importance of documenting the work of theatre companies has been a frequent topic of discussion since the two organizations began meeting together in the 1950s.

In 2009, following an informal meeting at the November ASTR-TLA conference, an ad hoc committee was formed by Tracy Davis, the current president, and Rhonda Blair, incoming president of ASTR, to address a concern among members that many records of 20th- and 21st-century American theatrical activity were being lost.² As scholars were investigating the history and productions of 20th-century theatre companies, they were becoming aware that many company records were not available. The archives had either not been acquired by manuscript repositories or had not been processed and cataloged; or they were not accessible through the theatre because staff members were unprepared to make them available; or records had been destroyed due to accidents, natural disasters, or the

theatre's inability to maintain them when the theatre closed or moved.

After lengthy discussions, the committee agreed on an initial set of goals for a project to help remediate this problem: to prepare archival guidelines for theatre companies, so they would become aware of the value of their records to their own personnel as well as to scholars and the general public; to assist company staff in maintaining their records in-house or making contact with archival repositories that might be interested in acquiring their archives; to find out how theatre archives are used in an academic setting; and how theatre and library school students might become involved in assisting companies with their archives.

Two members of the ad hoc committee, Ken Cerniglia, dramaturg and literary manager of the Disney Theatrical Group in New York and Susan Brady, an archivist at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, drafted the initial plans for presentation to ASTR's executive board. The board approved the plan, and the American Theatre Archive Project (hereafter referred to as ATAP) was officially inaugurated at the ASTR annual conference in November 2010. Cerniglia and Brady were appointed co-chairs of the project.

The committee recognized the efforts made by numerous archivists in academic and public repositories who have, through the years, conducted outreach projects in order to develop collections of materials of previously underrepresented social, political, and cultural groups. These projects have typically focused on specific geographic areas, and have enabled the repositories to acquire important records for their institutions.³ However, ATAP's main focus would be on raising awareness among the theatre community and on the education of theatre company staff to ensure the immediate preservation of their records, and not necessarily on the acquisition of records for specific institutional repositories. A grassroots effort, ATAP devised a plan to create regional teams of activist archivists and librarians, dramaturgs, and theatre scholars who would serve as ATAP representatives throughout the country. With their combined knowledge and skills, team members would reach out to local and regional theatre communities and offer assistance in establishing company archives.

Team members might have institutional affiliations, but these institutions would not be directly supporting ATAP.

For those theatres that were not able or interested in maintaining their records in-house, team members would help identify repositories that would potentially accept their records. Funding from national and local sources would enable ATAP to pay an honorarium to team members for conducting preliminary assessments, preparing reports, and training staff in basic archival practices.

A critical aspect of the project was ATAP's coordination of its activities with other organizations. The project benefited from the previous work of the Dance Heritage Coalition, an organization whose members include institutions with major repositories of dance archives that assist dancers, choreographers, and dance companies with preserving their work, and the New Zealand Theatre Archive Trust, a small organization based at Victoria University of Wellington, which supports theatres in New Zealand with information on how to archive their records, provides a list of repositories that might accept their records, and maintains a database of theatre archives.⁴

ATAP also contacted and received enthusiastic support from the Theatre Library Association, Society of American Archivists Performing Arts Roundtable, Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, Theatre Communications Group, and the Broadway League. A call was sent out for team volunteers using listservs of these organizations, and the response was immediate.

By late fall 2010, city and regional teams throughout the United States and one in Canada had been established. The newly-formed teams gathered information regarding theatres in their area whose archives are held by libraries and archives or who might have contacted repositories for assistance or placement of archives in the past; current or past theatre-related projects that have had goals or methods similar to ATAP's; and names of others in their region who might be interested in volunteering. The teams began meeting, sharing information, and establishing working relationships.

At the project administrative level, Steering, Training, Communication, and Advisory Committees were established, meeting via conference calls and e-mail exchanges. Their work resulted in creation of

a strategic plan, project brochure, team member handbook, and an initial website.⁵ Early in 2011, the New York team was given the opportunity by team member Abigail Katz, literary manager of the Atlantic Theatre Company, to have the Atlantic serve as an assessment test case. New York City Team and Training Committee members and archivists Tiffany Nixon of the Roundabout Theatre and Sharon Lehner of the Brooklyn Academy of Music conducted an initial assessment and prepared a draft of an ATAP preliminary assessment tool. Martha Steketee observed the process and posted a case study to the website. The assessment and report they produced enabled ATAP to refine the process and plan for future assessments.

In preparation for training theatre staff, Nixon, Lehner, Cerniglia, and Brady prepared a workshop "script" that would provide theatre company staff with a basic understanding of archival theory and practice. Following review by a number of ATAP archivists throughout the country, the revised prototype workshop was presented to twelve New York City-area archivists (with and without theatre archive experience) and other NYC team members in fall 2011. In addition to getting more feedback, the exercise made the Training Committee aware that a workshop for archivists would enable ATAP to broaden its volunteer base and include those who might otherwise feel unprepared to work with theatre company records. Since 2011, ATAP workshops have been conducted in Albuquerque, Austin, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the Pacific Northwest.

In order to obtain critical information about the current state of records within theatre companies, the Steering Committee drafted a survey. When funding was secured, ATAP would disseminate the survey through Theatre Communications Group, an organization whose members include hundreds of professional, university, and community theatres in North America. So, while the regional teams were gathering information, the Steering Committee co-chairs investigated funding at a national level. Since federal agencies that support archival projects typically restrict their funding to institutions, the Steering Committee prepared a National Endowment for the Arts Access to Artistic Excellence grant (focusing on its goal of "documentation, preservation, conservation, and dissemination of America's

theatrical heritage"), which the Steering Committee had been encouraged to submit after speaking with an NEA program officer. The grant would support ATAP's work with theatre companies as well as fund administrative support and a webmaster. Despite an unsuccessful first attempt at NEA funding, the program officer was very supportive and encouraged ATAP to resubmit. Having made much progress with the project, the Steering Committee was confident that ATAP's second NEA application for what had been renamed Art Works grants would be much stronger. Unfortunately, with a very limited budget and enormous competition, once again NEA did not fund the project. While the Steering Committee was investigating alternative national funding prospects, team leaders across the country were identifying local sources of funding that would move the project forward.

In New York City, the Lucille Lortel Foundation, which supports off-Broadway theatres in various ways through their grant program, became aware of ATAP's work, and invited the New York team to apply for a grant to assist Off-Broadway theatres. The successful application not only provided archival assessments for the Atlantic Theater Company, Cherry Lane Theater, and New York Theatre Workshop, it also resulted in the New York team establishing a local funding model which has been used in other regions.

From the beginning, the Steering Committee recognized that ATAP would be working with theatres and repositories throughout the country that would vary widely in their staff size, financial status, and age. The committee knew that a cookie-cutter approach would not work, and that each team would find ways of meeting ATAP's goals based on each theatre's specific needs and abilities. Brian Herrera, currently at Princeton, but formerly a professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and New Mexico team leader, initiated a plan to introduce ATAP to theatre representatives under the auspices of the Albuquerque Theatre Guild, an umbrella organization that supports both professional and community theatre in New Mexico. Through a New Mexico Humanities Council grant, the New Mexico ATAP team developed a forum which included a presentation by Herrera on the history of New Mexico theatre, and an ori-

entation to ATAP and archival basics by Cerniglia and Brady. A similar event based on the Albuquerque model and funded by the University of Texas' Oscar G. Brockett Center for Theatre History and Criticism was held with the Austin ATAP team in fall 2013. Helice Koffler and the Pacific Northwest Team obtained funding for a variety of ATAP-related activities that will be described later in this article. ATAP's Funding Committee views these kinds of local and regional projects and funding models as having great potential for furthering the project's work, as it continues to pursue funding at the national level.

In 2012, as the Steering Committee was preparing to conduct its national survey of theatre companies, committee members learned that the University of Minnesota Libraries Performing Arts Archives, headed by Cecily Marcus, in collaboration with St. Paul's Penumra Theatre Company, was drafting a similar survey as part of an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant project. ATAP took advantage of this opportunity to combine efforts, and through the generosity of Theatre Communications Group, a jointly-prepared online survey was disseminated via TCG's membership list in spring 2012. The results of the survey provided a snapshot of current archival practices and helped ATAP identify theatres in immediate need of assistance, as well as areas where additional teams were needed.

ATAP's workshops and presentations to potential team members and theatre companies provided the Training Committee with useful feedback that contributed to continued development of programs and tools to assist theatre companies in preserving their archives. After further review and revision, in August 2013 ATAP published *Preserving Theatrical Legacy: An Archiving Manual for Theatre Companies*,⁶ available at no cost on the ATAP website. In addition to providing a basic step-by-step guide to the archival process, the manual includes a glossary of basic archival and ATAP-specific terms with which theatre staff may not be familiar. The manual is being used not only by ATAP teams directly assisting specific theatres, but by theatres and other performing arts companies in the United States and abroad (including a university theatre company in Bangladesh) where ATAP teams have not yet been established. ATAP archivists also provide consulta-

tions by e-mail and telephone to theatre staff who have questions as they work through the manual.

After several iterations of presentations for theatre companies, the ATAP Initiation Program was developed. Local teams offer theatre companies an initial ATAP information presentation, "The Pitch," in order to provide basic information on ATAP and to help companies determine if staff is ready, willing, and able to establish their archives. Theatres may apply for the program by completing an application on ATAP's website. After theatres commit to establishing an archival program and secure funding for the process,⁷ an archivist and a "documentarian" (a dramaturg, scholar, or another archivist who will write a report documenting the process of establishing the theatre's archives) from the local ATAP team begin their work with the company. The Initiation Program consists of an Orientation which serves not only to familiarize the entire staff with the archival process, but enables the ATAP team to become better acquainted with the culture of the company, and identify staff members who have interest and ability to work with the archivist on the project.

Next, a Preliminary Assessment is conducted by the archivist, who interviews staff, tours the facilities, and surveys records. Following the onsite assessment, the archivist prepares a report that details the findings of the assessment and outlines a plan for moving forward. The objective of the Workshop segment of the Initiation Plan is to create a specific, realistic plan for establishing the theatre's archives. The archivist and documentarian review the findings of the assessment with staff, promote basic archival practices, and help them determine how to proceed. Discussion of records retention schedules, collection policies, storage options and preservation, long-term goals, arrangement and description, and issues of public access, making records available online, and institutional support help staff become more knowledgeable about the process.

As the company begins its work, the archivist and documentarian serve as consultants, assisting them as staff work through the archival plan. The documentarian's report provides a narrative summary of the company's progress throughout the Initiation Program and its plan for the future of its archives. In addition to the Initiation Pro-

gram, local teams may also offer special “hot topic” workshops, such as the presentation offered by the New York Team on audiovisual formats in fall 2014. A script and accompanying slideshow (which can be customized for specific cities or regions) was developed to train ATAP teams in conducting Initiation Programs throughout the country.

In early ATAP discussions, the Steering Committee envisioned that ATAP theatres could benefit from the work of students in graduate archival and theatre programs. A number of graduate students responded to ATAP’s initial call and began working with several teams. For example, archives students at Simmons College were able to combine their coursework with work with the Boston ATAP team and provide preliminary assessments for several Boston-area theatres, co-present ATAP workshops for archivists, and work on the ATAP manual and training tools.⁸ The participants in the Austin training session consisted primarily of graduate students from the School of Information Studies and the Department of Theater and Dance, with Theater faculty members Charlotte Canning and Andrew Carlson, and graduate student Russell Dembin coordinating and hosting the session. The Brockett Center subsequently provided funding for groups of these students, under the guidance of archivist Helen Baer of the Harry Ransom Center, and the administrative support and Austin team leadership of Dembin, to assist three Austin theatres—Rude Mechanicals, Teatro Vivo, and ZACH Theatre—in establishing their archives through the ATAP Initiation Program. (In addition to the work graduate students have conducted directly with ATAP programs, Dembin’s internship at Theatre Communications Group during summer 2014 had an unexpected benefit to ATAP, as his discussion of the project with staff member Nicole Estvanik Taylor resulted in her article highlighting the project in TCG’s *American Theatre* magazine). (Estvanik Taylor, 64–65)

Funding from ASTR in 2014 supports a new ATAP part-time graduate position, providing much-needed administrative support to the work of ATAP’s committees, as well as invaluable experience for the student. To more formally integrate ATAP’s work with academic programs, the Training Committee is working to collaborate further with

administrators of graduate and undergraduate programs to create student internship positions. New York Team member Claudia Case, theatre professor at Lehman College, City University of New York, has been working with members of the ATAP Training Committee to develop guidelines for student internships. In these ways, ATAP is contributing to the professional development of the next generation of performing arts archivists, dramaturgs, and scholars.

In 2014, American Society for Theatre Research made ATAP an official standing committee of the organization with a modest budget allocation that enables the project to further its progress. As noted above, the budget provides funding for a graduate student administrative assistant to support the work of ATAP's volunteer committees. To expand ATAP's work throughout the country, ASTR funds on an annual basis an ATAP workshop for potential local team members, as well as an Initiation Program award to a theatre in the city in which ASTR's annual conference is held. The first of these was awarded to the Baltimore Theatre Project during the ASTR-TLA conference in Baltimore in November 2014.

ATAP holds a working session at the annual conference, providing a forum for archivists, librarians, scholars, and graduate students interested in the project's work, and who want to contribute their ideas for incorporating ATAP into courses they are teaching. As an ASTR standing committee, ATAP's internal committees are appointed to two-year terms assuring the project a regular infusion of fresh ideas and energy.⁹ A member of ASTR's executive committee serves on ATAP's Steering Committee, providing a direct line of communication with the Society's leaders.

While ATAP has made significant strides in developing an administrative infrastructure and network of resources at the national level, much of the work that has informed these developments has happened in the field through experimentation put into practice by local teams. In the next section, ATAP Northwest team leader Helice Koffler provides some examples of how the team has tried to adopt a "participatory approach to archiving" (Flinn, 17) in attempting to forge connections between local theatre companies and special collections libraries and archives. Through dialogue it has fostered and

partnerships it has begun to cultivate among practitioners, repositories, and funders, the Northwest team has made some particularly meaningful contributions to ATAP's advancement.

The national response to the original call for ATAP volunteers during summer 2010 was enthusiastic. By that fall, a very small team had been formed in the Pacific Northwest. It was composed mainly of archivists, librarians, faculty, and students from the Seattle-Tacoma area (each of whom was connected in some way with either the University of Washington or University of Puget Sound), with a sole representative from Oregon, then based at the University of Oregon. Much of the group's initial energy coalesced around the 2010 ASTR meeting, which was held in Seattle that November. During breaks between sessions at the conference hotel, several team members in attendance scrambled to meet face-to-face for the first time.

Following the conference, the team tried to meet regularly and began to evolve as it expanded. Because there are relatively few archivists dispersed throughout the large region the team was aspiring to represent, members believed it made more sense to remain a Pacific Northwest group rather than develop separate state or city teams. Sara Freeman, who moved from University of Oregon to a position at University of Puget Sound (UPS), was instrumental in recruiting several more members from Oregon, who joined Debra Griffith of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Archives in representing the state. Gaining in size and geographic diversity, the team soon shifted away from trying to meet in person in Seattle (with the Oregon members participating by speaker phone), and began experimenting with online meetings, eventually establishing a regular monthly schedule and coming to rely on Adobe Connect for conducting meetings.

During this "inventory taking" stage of ATAP, some members of the Northwest team focused on reaching out to their local communities. For example, Joseph Gilg of University of Oregon investigated the status of the archives of Eugene-area theatre companies and met with staff from local cultural heritage organizations to make them aware of ATAP. Debra Griffith made similar efforts in her region of southern Oregon. Some internal and institutional stock-taking began

to occur. With the archives of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA) residing in the offices of her UPS colleague Geoff Proehl, Sara Freeman began a dialogue with staff at the Collins Memorial Library in hope of finding a permanent home for the LMDA records.

Since the University of Washington Special Collections is one of the largest archival repositories in the Pacific Northwest, and it already held significant materials documenting theatre in the Puget Sound region, team members affiliated with UW determined it would be beneficial to compile a comprehensive inventory of these holdings. Such preparatory work appeared necessary in order to gain a better sense of what Special Collections already held, evaluate the completeness of those collections, and determine whether any barriers existed to accessing these materials. Another anticipated outcome of this project would be to assess the ability of UW Special Collections to acquire additional theatre records if companies ATAP began to approach expressed interest in forming a relationship with a collecting repository.

In spring 2012, Helice Koffler, Manuscripts and Special Collections Materials Cataloging Librarian at University of Washington and ATAP Northwest team leader, and Angela Weaver, Head of the UW Drama Library, applied for a small grant from University of Washington's Friends of the Libraries to cover the costs of hiring a student assistant to survey the collections and create an inventory. In fall 2012, a graduate student from the University's iSchool started work on the project, which involved systematically searching online and print resources to gather information about theatre company records and manuscript collections relating to theatre held by Special Collections.¹⁰ Based on the varied search results, a master inventory spreadsheet was compiled, which helped identify archival collections that might be candidates for additional levels of processing, preservation, and description.

The student had the opportunity to learn to use the popular LibGuides software and helped create a reference guide to *Seattle Theatre Archives*.¹¹ Organized around several categories of material, the guide includes: brief descriptions (linked to online finding aids, when

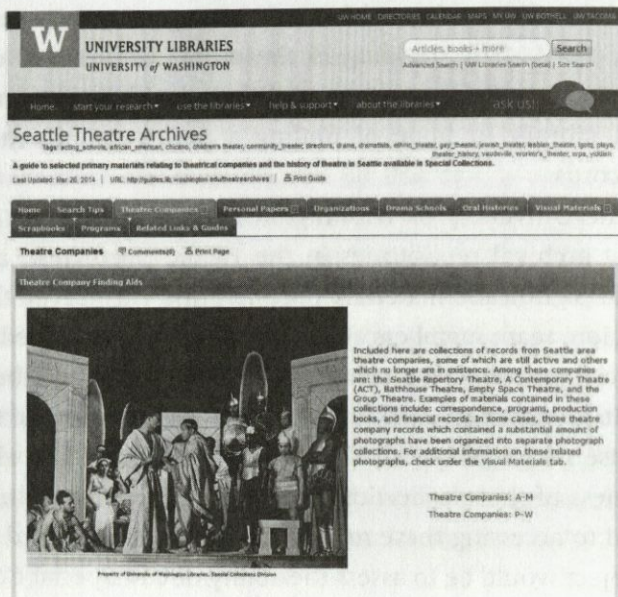


Figure 1. Screen shot of online *Guide to Seattle Theatre Archives*, captured March 2015. Credit: University of Washington Libraries

available) of theatre company records; personal papers of actors, playwrights, directors, or others involved in Seattle theatre; as well as institutional records of local training programs such as the UW School of Drama and Cornish College of the Arts. It also has tabs arranged around various physical formats, such as oral histories, visual materials, scrapbooks, and programs. [Figure 1] In her final weeks on the project, the student began scanning some of the extensive box and folder lists from existing paper finding aids and appended those files to the much briefer EAD descriptions available online in the UW finding aids database.¹²

As a result of this project, a useful snapshot emerged. The survey revealed great strengths in UW Special Collections' theatre holdings, such as the history of vaudeville and a "through line" of radical and political theatre in the 20th century. Also notable was the degree to which significant theatre materials were sometimes contained, but partially hidden in other archival collections that had been assembled originally or acquired for other purposes.¹³

In addition, the survey revealed that UW Special Collections contains the records of several of the most well-known mid-size theatre companies founded during the regional theatre “boom” of the 1970s and early 1980s, all of which had ceased to operate by the early 2000s. These five companies include: Bathhouse Theatre (1980–1999), Empty Space Theatre (1971–2006), Seattle Group Theatre (approximately 1978–1998), Pioneer Square Theater (1980–1989), and the Alice B. Theatre (1985–1997), Seattle’s first company to produce exclusively the work of lesbian and gay playwrights.¹⁴ While it was exciting to be able to demonstrate that Special Collections held some of the raw materials that could be used by students and scholars interested in this vital period in Seattle theatre history, it was also somewhat dismaying that the survey revealed that some of these collections are very fragmentary, and that much processing work remained to be done to make them more fully accessible to researchers. The presence of audiovisual materials in at-risk formats in particular loomed as a preservation challenge.

Armed with insights gleaned from this survey, a second round of Friends funding was pursued in 2013 to support hiring a part-time student outreach assistant to promote use of the collections, as well as underwrite costs for one theatre to participate in the newly-branded ATAP Initiation Program. An Allen Endowment award was received in 2013 to cover the costs of hiring another student to conduct a more detailed, item-level condition survey of audiovisual materials contained within theatre-related collections, as well as to reformat and create access copies of a small sample of these video and audio recordings.¹⁵

In 2013, the Northwest team began to gain significant momentum in other ways as well. In February, team members Jeff Katz (Corvidae LLC), Helice Koffler, and Rachel Kinsman Steck (Willamette University) gave presentations in a forum on Archiving for the Arts in Portland, organized by that city’s Small and Mid-Sized Arts Coalition (SMAC) and held at El Centro Milagro. [Figure 2] José González, Executive Artistic Director and Co-Founder of the Miracle Theatre Group, a Latino/a theatre in Portland approaching its 30th anniversary, had begun thinking about the legacy of the company, and



Figure 2. ATAP Meeting Group: Participants at Archiving for the Arts forum, El Centro Milagro, February 28, 2013. Credit: Mike Dicianna

reached out to colleagues for advice about how to organize and safeguard its archives. He contacted the Oregon Multicultural Archives (OMA) at Oregon State University, where Natalia Fernández serves as Oregon Multicultural Librarian.

During summer 2012, González had the opportunity to attend the IMLS-funded forum in Minneapolis and had responded to the TCG-distributed survey, requesting a follow-up response from an ATAP member, which in turn led to development of the Portland event. Fernández, who already had begun discussions with González about Miracle's archives, had approached ATAP independently for advice about dealing with performing arts collections and gave a presentation in Portland as well. Miracle Theatre Group subsequently decided to establish a relationship with OMA (as did the Obo Addy Legacy Project, another Portland performing arts group whose representative attended the program). Through the use of interns, Fernández was able to offer Miracle assistance getting the company's records surveyed and processed onsite. The collection was transferred to OMA, where an exhibit celebrating Milagro's history was on display during spring 2014.¹⁶ Natalia Fernández also joined ATAP Northwest, and

Miracle became something of an unofficial sponsor of the team, hosting a training session and mini-retreat in summer 2013.

Other significant developments took place in the Pacific Northwest during the 2013–2014 academic year. An agreement for the LMDA records to be formally accessioned by the University of Puget Sound was reached, and a processing plan developed. The physical transfer of archival material to UPS Archives & Special Collections began in summer 2014, and processing started in the fall. “Celebrating Theatre Arts,” a related exhibit on the history of the UPS Department of Theatre Arts, opened at Collins Memorial Library in February 2015. Andrew Ryder, Chair of Theatre, Seattle Pacific University (SPU), joined the team in fall 2013. In addition to visiting UW Special Collections, students from Ryder’s undergraduate theatre history class received basic instruction in archival processing from the SPU archivist, and each worked on organizing a small set of theatre department records.

Finally, having gathered information and laid the groundwork, in summer 2013 team members approached 4Culture, “the cultural services agency for King County, Washington,” with a proposal to support the ATAP Initiation Program.¹⁷ 4Culture agreed to provide funding to cover costs of participation for up to five theatre companies. Using the mailing list of local service organization Theatre Puget Sound (TPS), a brief questionnaire was distributed to member companies and received a good response. In May 2014, ATAP Northwest team members gave a “Pitch” session at a meeting space provided by TPS in the Seattle Center. As a result of this gathering and other individual meetings, three companies—ArtsWest Playhouse and Gallery, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and the Seattle Shakespeare Company—were selected as the first participants in the Initiation Program. A second Northwest team training session was organized for members who joined after the first training session. Archivist-documentarian teams were then assigned to each company and preliminary assessments were begun during summer 2014.

The Northwest team developed the confidence and experience to work directly with theatre companies and approach external funders for support through a fairly lengthy process. Perhaps the most critical first step, however, was to take stock of the scope of UW Special Col-

lections' theatre-related holdings. Similar inventory projects could prove equally useful for other collecting repositories. It is a relatively small investment of time which can yield substantial results.

The American Theatre Archive Project has used 21st-century methods to accomplish much more than George Freedley could have foreseen in 1936. Actively engaged with the performing arts community, ATAP team members are creating an awareness of the importance of theatrical legacy and providing basic tools for the preservation of that legacy. Working with other performing arts and library and archives organizations has created and strengthened relationships that enable us to further our work. The Project has provided opportunities for graduate students to gain valuable hands-on experience and to present their work at academic and professional conferences. Team archivists and scholars not only assist local theatres in preserving company records, they also advocate for the preservation of performing arts records currently held in the repositories in which they work.

As ATAP continues to develop its programs and activities, it is addressing a number of challenges. Financial support continues to be a major issue. The Funding Committee (formed in 2013) is investigating further means of supporting the work of ATAP volunteer members who conduct training for archivists, oversee student internships, develop additional tools and resources for theatre companies and team members, and administer day-to-day activities.

ATAP's Initiation Program and other resources are becoming more widely known and requested by theatre companies. To sustain this momentum, the Project must continue to train and develop teams of performing arts archivists to support the growing needs of theatres. Through these efforts, ATAP will establish a sustainable path to carrying the record of the past to the future of the 22nd century.

ENDNOTES

¹ These include the Ransom Center at University of Texas at Austin, Firestone Library at Princeton University, and Houghton Library at Harvard University.

² Committee members included Susan Brady, Ken Cerniglia, Lesley Ferris, Stacy Wolf, and Harvey Young.

³ See, for example, Harvey, Kathryn and Michael Moosberger, "Theatre Archives' Outreach and Core Archival Functions." *Archivaria* 63 (Spring 2007), 35–54, and Keough,

Brian and Amy C. Schindler, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Documenting Environmental Activism in New York State." *Archival Issues* 28:2 (2003/2004), 121–135.

⁴ Dance Heritage Coalition, <http://www.danceheritage.org/>, and New Zealand Theatre Archive, <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/nzta/>.

⁵ <http://americantheatrearchiveproject.org>.

⁶ <http://americantheatrearchiveproject.org/atap-manual-preserving-theatrical-legacy>.

⁷ Currently the Initiation Program costs \$1000: \$400 honorarium to archivist; \$200 to documentarian; with \$400 earmarked for archival supplies.

⁸ Students included Jessica Green, Anne Mansella, and Elizabeth McGorky.

⁹ Colleen Reilly and Christa Williford currently serve as Steering Committee co-chairs, and Susan Brady and Ken Cerniglia now serve on the ATAP Advisory Committee.

¹⁰ Lydia Vernon worked on the project from October 2012 to March 2013.

¹¹ Koffler, Helice. "Seattle Theatre Archives." U of Washington Libraries, 2013. Web. 10 February 2015. <http://guides.lib.washington.edu/theatrearchives>.

¹² For an example of an EAD finding aid with a link to digitized material that was scanned and corrected as a PDF, see the online Preliminary Guide to the Pioneer Square Theater records: <http://digital.lib.washington.edu/findingaids/permalink/PioneerSquareTheater4067/>. The workflow for this process was developed by Labor Archivist Conor Casey.

¹³ For a fuller discussion see, Koffler, Helice. "Theatre Archives Survey: A Collaboration between ATAP and the University of Washington." *Easy Access* 39.3 (2013): 8, 21–23. Web. 16 March 2015.

¹⁴ UW Special Collections held records for five of the eight defunct companies cited in an article by influential Seattle director Arne Zaslove.

¹⁵ The students were Anna Sgarlato and MJ Loaiza, respectively.

¹⁶ Mike Dicianna and Katrina O'Brien worked as interns on separate phases of the Miracle Theatre Group processing project; for more information, see posts tagged "Milagro (Miracle Theatre Group)" on the OMA blog: <http://wpmu.library.oregonstate.edu/oregon-multicultural-archives/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.4culture.org/>.

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