

Annotated Bibliography: Archiving Theater Materials

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This annotated bibliography is intended to help support research on the archiving of theater materials. The intended audience includes theater practitioners, researchers, and archivists in the Boston area that are interested in how theater materials are organized, preserved, and made accessible. Subtopics include information on organizing, managing, and preserving theater collections, examples of theater ephemera and collections, performing arts research, and theater history. The call numbers reflect those used at the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library.

1. Balloffet, Nelly, and Jenny Hille. *Preservation and Conservation for Libraries and Archives*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2005.

Call #: Z701.B234 2005

For the performing arts librarian or library student, *Preservation and Conservation for Libraries and Archives* is a detailed 214-page manual on preservation and conservation best practices for library and archival materials. Topics most useful for the librarian working with performing arts collections include rehousing materials, setting up work-spaces, designing exhibitions, and compiling a disaster plan. The wealth of clearly drawn images and photographs of preservation materials and techniques make this a particularly valuable resource.

2. Billington, Michael. *The Guinness Book of Theatre Facts & Feats*. Enfield, Middlesex: Guinness Superlatives, 1982.

Call #: PN2037.B54 1982

Michael Billington's *The Guinness Book of Theatre Facts & Feats* contains 240 pages of facts, statistics, and commentary on a wide range of theater related material. The book is divided into chapters on theater origins, theatres, actors and actresses, plays and playwrights, musicals, the laughter makers, makers of theatre (companies and directors), critics and criticism, and final curtain. This resource has an international scope, with self-proclaimed Anglo-American bias and ends in early 1982. Billington acknowledges in the preface of the book how notoriously bad the theater has been at keeping records, which explains the many indiscrepancies in theatre facts and statistics the book is hoping to address. Although much of the book is based on fact, there are some subjective opinions, including a personal list of best American plays since 1940. The topics covered are varied and contain such colorful entries as "Spectacular British Musical Failures of Recent Years," "Macbeth Stories on Our Own Century" and "The First American President to be Featured in a Musical" (President Wilson in the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1919*.) Statistics include the ten longest running musicals on Broadway and the winters of the Evening Standard award for best performance by an actor and an actress." Besides the pleasure that is obtained from reading this book, there are also many excellent performance photographs and images to look at. There are appendices for productions staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company (9 pages), the National Theatre (4 pages), and the English Stage Company (10 pages) as well as an index of names, titles, and subjects (13 pages).

3. Blum, Daniel. *A Pictorial History of the American Theatre: 1860-1985*. 6th ed. New York: Crown, 1986.

Call #: PN2266.B585 1986

Daniel Blum's updated edition of *A Pictorial History of the American Theatre: 1860-1985* contains 473 pages of black and white photographs of actors and actresses in different roles and headshots arranged chronologically. Amidst the wealth of photographs are blocks of written information about the stars and performance for each year between 1860 and 1985. There is also a 16-page index of actors and actresses. This is an excellent resource for theater archivists looking for photographs of actors represented in their collection.

4. Ellis, Ellen, and New Zealand Theatre Archive. *Caring for Your Theatre Archives*. Wellington, N.Z.: New Zealand Theatre Archives, 2005.

(Not available at The Boston Public Library. Available through interlibrary loan from the Widener Harvard Depository; Hollis #009790423)

Despite the obvious New Zealand bias, *Caring for Your Theatre Archives* is rich with practical guidance to best practices for surveying, organizing and preserving theater materials. For the archivist/theater practitioner, there is a user-friendly guide to setting up an archives program, including information on collection, appraisal, records management, documentation, and preservation. There are helpful definitions of archival terms for the beginner. In the index, the user will find several useful documents that can be incorporated into their archival project, including a comprehensive survey of theater archives, a sample archives policy, a sample records retention and disposal schedule, an inventory sample, and sample rules for the archives.

5. Haskins, Scott M. *How to save Your Stuff from a Disaster: Complete Instructions on How to Protect and save Your Family History, Heirlooms and Collectibles*. Santa Barbara, CA: Preservation Help Publications, 1996.

Call #: Z701.4.U6 H37 1996

How to save Your Stuff from a Disaster is a fun and easy to use 204-page manual for disaster management complete with photographs, images, and funny cartoons. These instructions are helpful for the theater practitioner looking to protect their institution's records and materials from potential disaster, including contact information for suppliers of preservation materials in the U.S. Also highlighted is practical advice for what to do if disaster does indeed strike, in the form of flooding or fire, for example. The information on photographs and negatives, paper items, art on paper, old cloths, and furniture are particularly relevant for theater collections. Definitions and fun facts along the margins make this an appropriate read for the non-professional archivists.

6. Henderson, Mary C. *Broadway Ballyhoo: the American Theater Seen in Posters, Photographs, Magazines, Caricatures, and Programs*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1989.

Call #: PN2226 .H46 1989

Mary C. Henderson, former curator of the Theatre Collection of the Museum of

the City of New York has compiled an excellent resource for the theater practitioner or archivist researching theater ephemera in *Broadway Ballyhoo: the American Theater Seen in Posters, Photographs, Magazines, Caricatures, and Programs*. Each chapter in this 184-page book contains information on a specific type of theater ephemera: posters, photographs, magazines, caricatures, and programs. Under each material, there is a description of its history and color photographs of examples. There is also information about key players in the creation of these materials (ie. notable theater photographers), descriptions of what the type of ephemera was used for, and the process for creating such materials (ie. type of paper, printing, and design elements.) There is also a two-page annotated list of public and commercial institutions with American theater ephemera collections, a two-page bibliography, and five-page index. The examples of ephemera were pulled from the Museum of the City of New York, Harvard Theatre Collection, Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, University of Texas Art Collections, and the Hoblitzelle Theatre Collection at the University of Texas with the help of the curators on duty. This is an excellent resource for describing theater ephemera and placing it in context of its time.

7. Henderson, Mary C. *Theater in America: 250 Years of Plays, Players, and Productions*. New York: Abrams, 1996.

Call #: PN2221.H38 1996

In *Theater in America: 250 Years of Plays, Players, and Productions*, Mary C. Henderson brings us up to date from her previous publication: *Theater in America: 200 Years of Plays, Players, and Productions*. There are 352 pages of the history of theater professions and their key players, including producers, playwrights, directors and choreographers, actors, designers, and architects. There is also a chronology of theater in America, a bibliography (11 pages) and a combined index of people, productions, and subjects (14 pages). Many quality images and photographs of key theater players, productions, and theater materials such as playbills and posters, make this a unique resource.

8. Hischak, Thomas S. *The Theatergoer's Almanac: A Collection of Lists, People, History, and Commentary on the American Theatre*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1997.

Call #: PN2266.H53 1997

The Theatergoer's Almanac, with its whimsical layout, is rich with statistics, timelines, and personal thoughts about all things theater. The intention is that the reader will follow Thomas S. Hischak's train of thought over 287 pages for a personal and unique exploration of theater facts. For the performing arts librarian who is not interested in browsing or reading the book cover-to-cover, there is a lengthy index to find desired entries. The topics range from objective ("Broadway Ticket Prices") to subjective ("Best Broadway Musicals") and are broken down into the following categories: Broadway, Plays, Players, Playwrights, Playmakers, Musicals, Awards, and Theatrical Odds and Ends. The entries for each topic are short, ranging from a few sentences to a paragraph, so users looking for in-depth research on these topics should look elsewhere.

9. Makepeace, Chris E. *Ephemera: a Book on Its Collection, Conservation, and Use*. Aldershot, Hants., England: Gower, 1985.

Call #: Z688.P74 M35 1985

Ephemera: a Book on Its Collection, is a fantastic 247-page resource for the performing arts librarian or theater practitioner looking to organize, store, and preserve the various materials produced in the theater that fall into the catch-all category of ephemera (playbills, menus, tickets, questionnaires, etc.) A thorough 122 page alphabetical dictionary of ephemera ranging from questionnaires to gift vouchers will help the theater practitioner or archivist identify materials within the collection. They will also find the chapters on "The Storage and Conservation of Ephemera" and "Cataloging, Exploitation and Use of Ephemera" particularly helpful. For the non-professional, the language used is simple and the images of archival materials help make it an easy resource from which to learn.

10. Moore, Frank Ledlie., and Mary Varchaver. *Dictionary of the Performing Arts*. Chicago, IL: Contemporary, 1999.

Call #: PN1579 .M66 1999

More than 6,700 performing arts terms are defined over 565 pages in the comprehensive *Dictionary of the Performing Arts*, making it a helpful reference source for the performer, technician, student, writer, or researcher. The scope of this resource is international and includes foreign words, slang, abbreviations, and outdated terminology; related terms and cross references help provide context to each entry. Defined terms are broken down under different categories of performing arts with varying levels of specificity, including stagecraft, vaudeville, acting, theater, audio, and circus. Included at the beginning of the book is a helpful guide on how to use the dictionary, a pronunciation guide for the transliterations of foreign words and an 18-page appendix. The definitions provided are brief, but clear, and a few of the entries include images.

11. Norton, Elliot. *Broadway down East: An Informal Account of the Plays, Players, and Playhouses of Boston from Puritan times to the Present*. Boston: Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1978.

Call #: PN2277.B7N6x

For the theater and history lover, theater critic Elliot Norton give the theater enthusiast a dramatic look into the history of Boston theater in *Broadway down East*, published by the Boston Public Library. In 156 pages, the reader learns of Boston theater history from the Puritans to the Off Broadway and Off Off Broadway theaters of the 1970's. This fun and easy read includes images of primary sources, including newspaper clippings, production photographs, playbills, and posters. Theater practitioners in Boston concerned with the historic materials of such contemporary theaters as the Colonial, Wilbur, Shubert, Majestic, Globe, and Charles Theaters will enjoy unique anecdotes and a map of Boston theaters from 1972-1978.

12. Patterson, Michael. *The Oxford Dictionary of Plays*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Call #: PN1625.P38 2005

Michael Patterson has compiled records for 1,000 plays from all over the world “of most interest to the Anglophone theatergoer, reader, and scholar” (ix) in *The Oxford Dictionary of Plays*. The entries are in alphabetical order with cross-references from alternate and foreign language play titles to the English title entry. Patterson has excluded musicals and operas, unless they can be performed successfully without the music (ie. *The Threepenny Opera*) and film/novel adaptations, unless they have become significant in their own right, (ie. *The Bells*) Each entry, averaging about a half page, contains the play’s title/alternative titles, author(s), date of writing, date and place of first performance, date of first publication, date of first published translation into English, genre, number of acts or scenes, original language, whether in prose or verse, setting and time of action, composition of cast, brief synopsis, and brief commentary. Eighty of the plays are treated with more detail and given full-page entries, including Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* and George Bernard Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah*. There are two indexes: one for major characters (45 pages) and one for playwrights (15 pages). Also of interest is a one-page family tree of main characters in Shakespeare’s history plays.

13. Sheehy, Carolyn A. *Managing Performing Arts Collections in Academic and Public Libraries*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994.

Call #: Z688.P38M36 1994

Part of the Greenwood Library Management Collection, *Managing Performing Arts Collections in Academic and Public Libraries*, is an authoritative 225-page resource on the management of dance, film studies, music, and theater collections in libraries. It is targeted at librarians and perspective librarians working with performing arts materials in collections where it performing arts is perhaps not the focus of the institution or collection. Practical information is provided about managing personnel, collection development, politics, public services, budget and finance in these different types of performing arts collections. In addition, there is a helpful selected annotated bibliography on resources for the non-professional librarian as well as an extensive 31 page historical overview of the collections.

14. Stratman, Carl Joseph. *American Theatrical Periodicals: 1798-1967: a Bibliographical Guide*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ., 1970.

Call #: Z6935.S75

American Theatrical Periodicals: 1798-1967: a Bibliographical Guide contains 133 pages of bibliographic entries of over 685 theatrical periodicals (stage only) published in 122 cities across the U.S. The entries are arranged chronologically by year of first publication. Each citation is accompanied by a short descriptive annotation and in all but 85 of the periodicals, names of the holding libraries are included. There is an index of authors, editors, organizations, and publications and a helpful chart covering publication spans. The periodicals included range from large to small and from publications by organizations such as the American Society of Theater Research’s annual publication, *Theater Survey*, and regional theater publications such as Tufts College Theater’s *Prologue*.

15. Tumielewicz, P. J., and Peg Lyons. *The Directory of Theatre Training Programs: Profiles of College and Conservatory Programs throughout the United States (2007-2009)*. 11th ed. Dorset, VT: Theatre Directories, 2007.

Call #: PN2078.U6D56

The Directory of Theatre Training Programs is an excellent resource for theater archivists looking to plan workshops and curriculum for undergraduate and graduate theater programs in order to teach best practices for theater archiving. The resource is organized alphabetically by state and contains 290 pages of theater programs in the U.S., as well as four pages for Canada and U.K. There is also a 14-page alphabetical index of schools and the degrees granted. Entries that average half a page in length include contact information, degrees offered, admission and financial info, faculty and classes offered, facilities and production, and a general description of the program. Advertisements for programs are scattered throughout the resource.

16. Wellheiser, Johanna G., and Nancy E. Gwinn. *Preparing for the Worst, Planning for the Best: Protecting Our Cultural Heritage from Disaster: Proceedings of a Conference Sponsored by the IFLA Preservation and Conservation Section, the IFLA Core Activity for Preservation and Conservation, and the Council on Library and Information Resources, Inc., with the Akademie Der Wissenschaften and the Staatsbibliothek Zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany, July 30 - August 1, 2003*. München: K.G. Saur, 2005.

Call #: Z679.7 .P74 2005x

Preparing for the Worst, Planning for the Best: Protecting Our Cultural Heritage from Disaster contains 192 pages of conference papers from 12 different countries, including the U.S., Netherlands, Brazil, Turkey, Vietnam and the U.K. The papers are divided into the following chapters: National Policy Planning, Plenary Session, Institutional Planning, Disaster Plans in Action, Assessing the Risk, and Options for Collections Recovery. Papers that would be of specific interest to theater archivists include: "Writing a Disaster Plan: Identifying Risk" (p. 137-145), "Recovery of a Water-soaked Photograph Collection in the Netherlands" (p. 163-176), and "Audiovisual and Modern Information Media: Disaster Mitigation and Recovery" (p. 177-185). Each paper is followed by a reference list and information about the author and there are several photographs, charts, and images of such things as conservation processes and risk assessment. Appendix: speakers contact list (3p) and participating companies at the conference (2 p). International perspective.

17. Whalon, Marion K. *Performing Arts Research: a Guide to Information Sources*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1976.

Call #: Z6935 .W5

Performing Arts Research: a Guide to Information Sources is a 280-page bibliography of reference works including dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, bibliographies, directories, play indexes, finding lists, reviews sources, indexes and illustrated and audiovisual sources. Each citation includes a short, descriptive annotation. A combined index, where the user can find items by title, author, and subject and extensive cross-references make it easy to locate desired resources. Be

aware that this resource only includes information sources before 1974, so it is helpful for historical resources.

18. Wilmeth, Don B., and Tice L. Miller, eds. *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Call #: PN2221.C36 1996

The *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre* “has been designed to offer scholars, students, and general readers a comprehensive view of the history and present practice of the theatre of the United States” (vii). It is a 559-page alphabetical encyclopedic guide containing cross-references and 2,300 concise entries, ranging from a short paragraph to a page for such topical entries as performance art and musical theater. The topics covered include a wide range of theater arts including circus, magic, vaudeville and burlesque and stage actors, plays, theater movements, venues, and types of performance from theater’s early history to August 1995. In addition to topical entries, there are overviews of major cities, including Boston, Seattle, and Chicago and entries on specific plays containing brief stage histories, themes, and plot. Also included are marginalized groups such as gay and lesbian, African-American, Asian-American and Nuyorican theater. The entries written by over 80 contributors are signed, so it is possible to check the credentials of each contributor. There is also a helpful 22-page introduction on American theater history, a 12-page bibliography of American theater books, and a 32-page biographical index.

Journals and Newsletters:

1. *American Archivist*. Society of American Archivists. Web.

<http://archivists.metapress.com/home/main.mpx>

American Archivist is available in both print and online through the Society of American Archivists (SAA) website, beginning with its first publication in 1938, complete with searching capabilities. Published semi-annually, the journal presents peer-reviewed articles on the archives profession in the U.S. and abroad and touches on topics of digitization and digital preservation, selection and appraisal, photographs and visual arts, disaster planning, copyright, and authenticity. Archival books, websites, and products are also reviewed in the journal.

2. *Broadside*. TLA: *Broadside Online*. Theatre Library Association. Web.

<http://www.tla-online.org/publications/broadsideonline.html>

Broadside is the Newsletter of the Theatre Library Association (TLA) and contains organizational news, activities, policies, and procedures. Examples of articles include relevant book reviews, exhibits, conferences, member activities, and developments in performing arts librarianship, collections and scholarship. Edited by Angela Weaver of the University of Washington, *Broadside* is published three times annually. Publications began in 1940 and publications beginning in 1973 have been digitized and are available for free download on the Theatre Library Website. Scholarly articles are published in TLA’s other journal, *Performing Arts Resources*.