

PERFORMANCE!

The Newsletter of the Society of American Archivists' Performing Arts Roundtable

Issue for Spring 2003

[The Performing Arts Roundtable: Encourages the exchange of information on historical and contemporary documentation of music, dance, theater, motion pictures, and other performance media. (from the SAA Web site)]

Roundtable Chair:

Bridget Carr
Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives
Symphony Hall
Boston, MA 02115
617/638-9434
bcarr@bso.org

Newsletter Co-Editors:

George Bain
Archives & Special Collections
Ohio University Libraries
740/593-2713
bain@ohio.edu

Ashley Yandle
Government Records Branch
NC Division of Historical Resources
919/733-3540
ashley.yandle@ncmail.net

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Message from the Roundtable Chair

By Bridget Carr

Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives

SAVE THE DATE!

The Performing Arts Roundtable annual meeting at SAA will be held on Friday, August 22, 2003 from 4:45 to 6:16.

I know it's a little early to be thinking about the annual SAA meeting, but I wanted to invite you to contact me with ideas for topics or issues relevant to performing arts collections that we might discuss at this year's meeting. In addition to our usual repository reports and session proposal brainstorming, I thought it would be fun for us to hear a 15- or 20-minute presentation on a performing arts related topic from one of our members or from an invited guest. I will be working on putting this together in the coming months. If you have ideas you'd like to share, please contact me. I welcome (and need!) your input. This is your roundtable and I'd like our meeting to address any special needs or concerns that you have!

Resources for Performing Arts archivists

One of the ways that the Performing Arts Roundtable can help its members and contribute to SAA is to put together a list of resources for archivists who deal either regularly or occasionally with performing arts collections. I'd like us to consider compiling a list of organizations, manuals, publications, websites, and vendors relevant to the needs of archivists dealing with different types of performing arts collections. This would include resources for dealing with different format issues, specialized subject matter, and the important issue of documentation of live performances. If you'd like to work on this or if you have favorite publications, articles, websites, or organizations you'd like to see included in such a list, please contact me at bcarr@bso.org. My aim would be to distribute a draft this summer and then perhaps to distribute it in a future issue of *Performance*.

News Items

IMLS Grants Support Two Projects at Cornell

The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded a grant for a major digital library project at Cornell University. The grant is for a three-year project to collaborate with five other libraries and museums to develop and test the Global Performing Arts Database. (From *College & Research Libraries News*, February 2003).

Philadelphia Dance Collection

The Temple University Libraries has received grants from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation and Dance Advance, a program funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, to

support the establishment and development of the Philadelphia Dance Collection. (From *College & Research Libraries News*, February 2003).

University of Maryland Has a Named Performing Arts Library

In ceremonies conducted in November 2002, the Performing Arts Library at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center was officially dedicated and named for Michelle Smith. She is the daughter of Robert H. and Clarice Smith, area philanthropists and generous supporters of the University of Maryland. The facility, formerly a music library, now serves music, theatre and dance. (From *Library Issues*, the University of Maryland Friends of the Libraries quarterly newsletter, Winter 2003).

Reports from the Field

Editor's Note: This section is intended to be an avenue for the exchange of information to members of the roundtable about collections or other topics of importance on the performing arts. For this issue we have solicited two articles. The first is by Kit Leary concerning copyright issues for photographic materials from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF). The second article was sent in by Debra Elfenbein of the American Dance Festival (ADF) and is an excerpt from the ADF publication *A Guide to Archival Collaboration*.

Rights, Rights and More Rights

By Kit Leary

I began my archival career working in the audiovisual department of the Archives-Library Division at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus, Ohio and later at the Southern Oregon Historical Society in Jacksonville, OR. In each job I handled photo orders and the occasional audio duplication request. As you would expect, these requests were pretty straightforward. We had the item requested, we had a set price to perform the duplication process, and we knew where we stood with respect to copyright. Either the donor had assigned all rights to the historical society, or they retained all or some rights to the item in question and the person wishing to duplicate for publication would need to

contact the donor for permission to publish.

Copyright and intellectual property rights become a little murkier in a theater setting, not only with photographers but also with the other artists found within.

I first came to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) in Ashland, Oregon in January 1986 as the first professionally trained archivist the theater ever had. At that time the photographer employed to photograph our productions had been with us since the 1973 season. He also photographed the "head shots" for the biographies in our playbill and souvenir program and other assignments such as

behind the scenes work in our costume or scene shops. He retained the negatives of the black and white images in his house—also his studio—and we held the color. He provided us with contact sheets from which to order prints and he printed from his negatives. He retained copyright to these images and when someone requested the use of an image for a commercial publication they would contact him and he alone would determine the printing and publication fees. This didn't pose a big problem unless a scholar, trying to publish a photo to accompany an article in a scholarly journal, could not afford the publication fee. In many cases the journal had no budget to assist the scholars and if the scholar had few funds they might choose not to use our image, or obtain one from another theater that produced the same play. Thus, we would lose the publicity of having our production depicted in the journal. This seemed to me counterproductive since we as a theater had no advertising budget and relied on the press and word of mouth to get our information to potential audience members.

Further complicating the issue was the fact that there was no set procedure whereby we might take custody of our photographs once a particular photographer left our employ, retired or died. We did have in the archives the work from earlier photographers, but the collections came to us in several ways. One of them retired and transferred not only the photography collection of prints and matching negatives, but also some equipment with which we could make additional prints ourselves. Another died and her sons worked out a deal through her estate. Other collections were less clear. To this day, I am not sure whether

we purchased these collections, or they were donated for a tax deduction.

As an archivist, I wasn't in a position to make decisions or negotiate contracts with the photographer(s), but only to influence the choices made. I pointed out that essentially these photographers were working for us and without our granting them access they wouldn't have the means to shoot these images in the first place. Eventually wording was added in the contract with the photographers that OSF owns joint copyright with the photographer, that negatives will be transferred to us in an orderly fashion, that prints will be made and publication fees charged at different rates, or waived, depending on the request. Company members, for example, attempting to document their work in sewing a costume or building a chair, are able to obtain a print at a reduced rate if ordered within the current season or soon after. Scholars are still at the mercy of the photographers, but the circulation and prominence of the image placement are certainly considered, and whether the images will be found in a journal or a commercial textbook. Prices still vary between photographers (currently at least four are employed every season), but at least we have the copyright question put to rest.

Added to the mix of what may be published, however, is the Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. When a request is received from a commercial publisher, the union requires us to contact the actors depicted and request their permission to use the images in that particular instance. Sometimes actors do not grant permission. I should mention

that the union does allow us as an organization to provide images to the media, both print and electronic, to publicize our plays in non-commercial publications. In every case we require proper credit for the actors and the photographer and that it is an OSF production. We also attempt to ensure that credits are found on the same page as the photograph.

Not only do we have the Actors union; we as an organization deal with directors, designers (scenic, costume, lighting and sound) composers and choreographers as well. Their concerns have to do with artistic creation, or intellectual property rights, and whether what we send out reflects their work in its final form. In other words, when photographs are taken during dress rehearsal, a costume may not be completed yet, a hat may change, a prop may not work as planned, etc. There are also surprise moments in the production that the director does not wish to give away. Therefore, we do not provide images of these moments until the play completes the run.

Another area of concern is the understudy videotape. Since this is a professional regional theater that

employs both union and non-union actors working in a true repertory situation (shows running at the same time and often opposite each other), AEA allows us to make full production videotapes (single camera, not balanced for color). Most of our understudies also act in two or three other shows and are able to see the blocking and hear the cues for their understudy assignments via these videotapes. Some years ago AEA directed us to erase these tapes at the end of the season, but in recent years we have been allowed to keep them and store them in the Archives. They are available for limited purposes, mostly in-house use and rarely for scholarly use, without the written permission of AEA.

We do receive requests from other theatres or libraries that may require permission and each of those are dealt with appropriately. One such example was a theater wanting to use a particular song specified in the script. The theater wishing to produce the play was willing to pay royalties to ASCAP, but ASCAP did not have a copy of the sheet music or audio of the named artist singing. We had a tape of the song that we duplicated for them. They paid the royalties to ASCAP.

Kit Leary is the Archivist at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in Ashland. Her e-mail address is <kitl@osfashland.org>.

A Guide to Archival Collaboration

The Partnership Between the American Dance Festival and Duke University Libraries

This excerpt describes the collaboration between the ADF Archives and Duke University Libraries. It is intended to spur non-archival organizations to initiate similarly beneficial relationships with a university library, historical society, state archive, or other repository. The publication describes the leap, albeit midair, that a dance organization can make from holding institutional records and old videos to managing a multiformat historical program through intellectual and physical controls.

ADF ARCHIVES IN CONTEXT

The ADF Archives/Duke Libraries partnership has substantial precedent in the history of ADF. From the start, ADF has been allied and identified with great educational institutions, in part because of the historical support within higher education for modern dance. Beginning in 1934, the Festival has been contractually affiliated with Bennington, then Mills (1939 season) and Connecticut colleges, until moving to Duke University in 1977. Festival performances, programs, and the school have operated on campuses outfitted with theaters, dance studios, lecture halls, and dormitories. Season after season, the institutional missions of ADF and these colleges have dovetailed, to their mutual benefit.

PARTNERSHIP OF RESOURCES

In the relationships with Bennington and Connecticut colleges, and now in its collaboration with Duke, ADF has supported and expanded the host institutions' programs; at Duke, ADF furthers the University libraries' collection development, curricular support, and outreach. ADF gives the local community—as well as the larger academic world—opportunities to access a seminal modern dance collection.

An immediate benefit involves the experience of seeing dance performances by world-class companies. Such exposure develops a knowledgeable audience for dance and a supportive environment for all the arts.

Communities—state, local, and academic—thrive on cultural expression

and the critical thinking demanded by it. As Duke President Nannerl O. Keohane said at the 2002 anniversary gala of ADF's twenty-five years in North Carolina, "The American Dance Festival is the extraordinary jewel in the crown of this city, of this region, of our country, and the world."

The ADF Archives is supported by Duke yet hasn't donated its holdings or ownership of physical and artistic copyrights to Duke. By exercising this option, ADF's collection focus, subject expertise, and relationship with its peers autonomously flourish in the context of Duke's mentorship. Mentorship by Duke Libraries enables the ongoing improvement of standards of ADF's archival services and increased access to ADF holdings.

Because of its expertise in managing sizable and valuable special collections, Duke Libraries' evolution to collaborating in protecting ADF's historical documents has been a relatively short and graceful one, however ongoing. The Duke Libraries offers assistance in a variety of areas, including the invaluable expertise of its staff, storage, and reference. While ADF is responsible for all archival administration, ADF Archives has an invaluable resource in the expertise of Duke librarians, in particular, Steven L. Hensen, a national leader in the field of archival administration and 2001-2002 president of the Society of American Archivists.

ADF ARCHIVES COMES ALIVE

ADF's archival program has been involved with the Duke University

Libraries system since its inauguration in 1993. Starting in fall 1977, when ADF moved to Duke, ADF's old records, photographs, films, and videos were stored in a Durham warehouse without climate control or stability, shelving, or organization. This was not unusual at that time; the importance of a stable storage environment for archives wasn't common knowledge—especially for organizations where archives weren't the primary focus. For that matter, ADF offices weren't always housed in stable environments. From 1989 to 1998 ADF staff worked in three mobile homes except during Festival seasons. At one time an opossum died between the walls of a trailer; it took a month to figure out what was causing the smell and remove it.

In fall 1993 heavy rains flooded the Durham warehouse. The ADF directors and staff of arts administrators had no librarians or archivists in their immediate circle, but they recognized the tragedy of losing these materials and, with them, ADF's history. ADF sought and received immediate help from Duke Libraries and the North Carolina Office of Archives and History (also known as the State Archives). Duke staff within the recently formed RBMSCL, especially Steven L. Hensen, worked for more than two weeks with ADF staff in the labor of archival triage for the documents, separating damaged from the merely neglected, and beginning an initial survey of materials. The State Archives temporarily stored and dried more than 300 record cartons of waterlogged materials. ADF has continued to receive support from the local archival community since its storage disaster; the State Archives stores master copies of its films and the

North Carolina Museum of Art stores the signed art poster collection.

The process of problem solving that follows salvage-and-rescue culminated in 1994 with a unique agreement between Duke Libraries and ADF, fashioning a partnership that was built for continued evolution and expansion.

During the 1993 crisis, conservation for the holdings—including rehabilitative care and preventive efforts to avoid future damage—was initiated. Duke arranged for some waterlogged papers to go to the state's largest freezer, in the North Carolina Office of Archives and History. One effort to prevent other crises was to apply for a grant to hire the first archivist, who began an inventory of all aspects of ADF holdings. Another eventual action was to transfer the bulk of the ADF materials to the Duke Offsite Storage (DOSS). To ADF it was a haven, but it had problems of its own: DOSS was not completely under the aegis of Duke Libraries and Duke Libraries' materials outgrew it. In fall 1999 ADF materials were moved into the DOSS Annex, an off-campus facility also known as the Old Paint Shop, in order for ADF to have readier access to its records and to clear out space in DOSS for RBMSCL materials. Although a modicum of climate controls was provided, it was very small.

In summer 2001 Duke's new offsite facility, the Library Service Center (LSC), opened. LSC contains ADF's master videos, films, processed and unprocessed papers from 1930s to the present, as well as films, videos, photographs, and papers from additional collections. LSC is a state-of-the-art facility, with temperature and humidity

controls, shelving built in modules with room to expand as needed.

MENTORSHIP: A PARADIGM FOR SUCCESS

The ADF Archives/Duke Libraries model collaboration meets the challenge of limited resources, which a small organization faces in establishing and maintaining an archive. The ADF Archives autonomously administers its program of records management, preservation, access, and outreach while being supported by an expert host institution. Sophisticated information

delivery is evolving within the context of affiliation rather than absorption.

For the ADF Archives, and other similar organizations, collaborating with a host institution offers resources, even privileges, that build thriving dance archives. In-kind collaboration can involve unique training, services, and generosity; in-kind support when it is committed and consistent may be as valuable as funding. Collaboration between dance creators and diverse caretakers can preserve dance artifacts, enable community access, and extend understanding of the crucial significance that dance has to our culture.

From [A Guide to Archival Collaboration](#) © 2003 American Dance Festival, Inc. Reprinted by permission. The complete publication can be downloaded from the ADF website at <http://www.americandancefestival.org/>. Debra Elfenbein is the Director of Archives at the American Dance Festival in Durham, NC. Her email address is <debraelf@duke.edu>.

Editor's Corner

Do you have an opinion about something that you read in this issue of *Performance*? We encourage feedback and opinions from our readers and, as always, we appreciate your ideas for timely topics, items for the **News Notes** section, and suggested writers. For those of you attending the annual SAA meeting, is there any interest in a group dinner after the roundtable meeting? If you are interested, please contact Bridget Carr at bcarr@bso.org.

The Next Issue

The expectation for the issuance of the next issue of the newsletter is July 2003. We already have a commitment from Bridget Carr for an article on the Boston Symphony Orchestra archives, but we would welcome other articles as well. Remember, this is **your** newsletter, let your voice be heard!

Newsletter Distribution

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