



How to make a Digital Poster Collection 101

[Newfoundland & Labrador Performing Arts Posters Online](#)

Context

Newfoundland & Labrador is:

- Most easterly point of North America in its own time zone
- Last province to join Canada (1949 vote of 51%/49%); formerly the Dominion of Newfoundland
- Comprised of both an island and a part of the North American mainland covering a total area of 405,212 square kilometres (156,453 square miles)
- Populated with 510,000 residents with just over one-third, or 181,000, living in and around the capital city of St. John's
- Advocate of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage; active provincial ICH office.
- UNESCO has identified just over 800 places in the world that are of outstanding natural and cultural significance. Three of those are in Newfoundland and Labrador: Gros Morne National Park, L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site and Red Bay.

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador:

- The province's only University, and largest in Atlantic Canada, MUN has several campuses in St. John's, Corner Brook, Norris Point, Labrador City, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River as well as in Harlow, England and St. Pierre and Miquelon, France.
- Founded in 1925 as Memorial University College; granted university status in 1949
- Student population: almost 18,000 students engaged in full and part-time studies at undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Employs 950 full-time faculty (and 850 sessional instructors), 2,300 administrative and support staff, and 2,000 students in part-time jobs.

The Performing Arts Collection (PAC)

- Established in 1982 as a collaborative project between Memorial's Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS) and Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA) in response to the call for help from local members of our provincial theatre community. Community artists were concerned that evidence of the province's 1970s¹ theatrical and cultural renaissance would be lost without a cultural institution actively collecting and archiving performing arts material.
- Consists of more than 80 collections including: an oral history project called *STAGE* (1993-2003, 2010-present) in which approximately 300 individuals have been interviewed; *composite collections* (script bank of 400+ published/staged and unpublished scripts; 3000+ programs and handbills; 3000+ posters) and *fonds and collections* relating to established companies, actors and playwrights.

¹ Prior to the 1970s there had been a clear divide between highbrow (British theatre canon) and low brow (community theatre, sketch comedy/variety shows, etc.). During the 1970s groups such as CODCO, Newfoundland Travelling Theatre Company, Mumpers' Troupe, and Rising Tide emerged, creating their own original scripts that dealt with political, religious and social issues using satire and biting humour. From this era, individual talents and groups including poets, writers, actors, comedians, visual artists, and musicians often collaborated on theatrical and musical creations. (e.g. *Makin' Time with the Yanks*) and many of whom have achieved local, regional (Atlantic provinces), and national acclaim and notoriety.

Digitizing the Poster Collection

Poster Statistics:

In July 2010 the poster collection (Coll-143) totaled **2153** posters. The current tally is **3240** posters, all of which have been:

- Processed physically (in custom mylar enclosures)
- Described, RAD compliant, in an excel database, transferred to tab delimited files in order to be uploaded as metadata within our CONTENTdm system
- Scanned at 600 dpi on ColorTrac SmartIf Gx+T56 1500 scanner at specified light settings
- Each poster has a light "Copyright" watermark at the centre of the image
- Uploaded to our Digital Archive Initiative (DAI), a site covered by the Creative Commons License
- OCR program Abby FineReader provided by CONTENTdm Project Client services.

Student Hours:

The bulk of the processing, description and scanning was conducted by undergraduate students via the University's work exposure program. Over the past 3 years, students have contributed approximately **325 hours** towards this project.

Copyright issues

This is the largest online performing arts poster collection in Canada. In 2010 there were no Canadian examples of similar online projects. As there were no 'best practices' to model upon, consulting the Canadian Copyright Act became the starting point. Posters are not referenced in the act; upon consulting with a variety of Canadian copyright experts there was no consensus as to the nature of posters. Are they works of art or public memorandums? Who holds the copyright: the poster designer or the commissioner? As a means of addressing copyright, early contact with the performing arts community *aka* project stakeholders (performers and poster designers/artists) was made.

Community Outreach

Who is the stakeholder community for this project; the poster creators and commissioners? As the metadata was being inputted a spreadsheet was being created that listed each performing artists/group as well as the number of posters relating to their events in the collection. In 2010 there were 565 unique performers; any performer with more than 10 posters was considered a stakeholder (represented 25% of the total) and was contacted via email (see sample emails). Of the 55 individualized emails, 45 responses were received and all were supportive of the project. Once the project was launched another series of emails were tailored to each stakeholder.

Features of the online collection

The collection can now be searched by keyword or by a performer drop down menu.

Celebrate

January-June 2013 the 130-square foot art gallery space at the Queen Elizabeth II hosted an exhibition featuring the poster collection. CBC (Canada's public broadcaster) radio program, *Weekend Arts Magazine*, popular with the arts community, featured a fifteen-minute story on the high caliber and fascinating content of the exhibit. Posters about this project have been featured at the 2013 conferences of ACA (Winnipeg, Canada) and SAA (New Orleans, USA).

Colleen Quigley

Archives and Special Collections, (Performing Arts Collection)
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Sample emails

My name is Colleen Quigley and I am thrilled to be taking on the responsibilities for the Performing Arts Collection within Archives and Special Collections at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II Library. Since 1982 Archives and Special Collections, due to the commitment of Gail Weir, Bert Riggs and the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), has been dedicated to the collection and preservation of the province's performing arts culture (a mandate which includes theatre, music and dance). As the newly appointed Manuscripts Librarian in this position I look forward to reconnecting with you as we (Archives and Special Collections) continue to collect the material (such as programs, posters, photographs, scripts etc.) showcasing the talents of our local and visiting performers. As a performing artist myself (dancer and actor), I am especially interested in the preservation of our province's rich theatrical and intangible culture.

I am writing to you because of an exciting project I am currently working on intended to highlight the holdings of the Performing Arts Collection. This project relates to the 2100+ posters within our holdings related to performances by local performing artists and groups, including the Wonderful Grand Band, that we would like to digitize for several purposes:

- Preservation of ephemera is often overlooked or neglected
- Post on our Library website, specifically on Digital Archives Initiative (DAI) in order to make them accessible to researchers on campus and throughout the world
<http://collections.mun.ca/> *
- Promote the legacy of the province's performing arts, including the role the Wonderful Grand Band has played in this history.

*DAI is also the portal to Memorial's archival holdings as well as being the repository of the province's ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) initiative and many of Memorial's invaluable library resources.

We will be incorporating watermarks and posting the scans in low resolution. Would you like us to include a link to the Wonderful Grand Band website (www.wonderfulgrandband.com) to accompany the information related to each poster? Would the members of the Wonderful Grand Band have any objections to the inclusion of these posters on the DAI?

Looking forward to hearing from you regarding this exciting digitization project.

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From:**Sent:** February 1, 2012 3:28 PM**To:** Quigley, Colleen [<mailto:csquigley@mun.ca>]**Subject:** RCA posters online (MUN's DAI)

Hi Colleen,

This is fantastic. What a wonderful job! This will be so helpful to have. I have forwarded this to all the RCA staff so we can all take time to browse the project.

Thanks for all your hard work and congratulations!

Peter

RCA

From: Quigley, Colleen [<mailto:csquigley@mun.ca>]**Sent:** February 1, 2012 3:28 PM**To:****Subject:** RCA posters online (MUN's DAI)

Dear Peter,

I am pleased to announce the launch of the Archives and Special Collections poster digitization project. You can now browse and search our collection of nearly 3000 posters featuring local performing artists and groups.

You can now:

- Browse the entire collection from Memorial's Digital Archive Initiative* (DAI)
<http://collections.mun.ca/cdm4/description.php?phpReturn=typeListing.php&id=157>
- Check out which of the RCA related posters are part of our collection (sample search results): [here](#)

You can also search by keywords (ex. LSPU, RCA theatre, etc)

Each poster has been scanned to allow for keyword searching, a watermark has been affixed to each, and a link to the RCA website has been included. We are thrilled with the results, however, there may be errors in the automated text recognition program. Please bear with us as we work towards improving your DAI experience. We anticipate exciting upgrades to the DAI in the not-so-distant future, including a different display for the descriptions and an option that allows users to comment on collections, items, and/or photographs!

I look forward to receiving any feedback you may have. Please help spread the word and feel free to link to this project from your website.

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