

ABTT Seminar: Caring for your Theatre and Live Art Records

14:31:18 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Hello everyone! Hope you are all well! We will be using the chat function in this webinar. Please select "all panelists and attendees" before sending your message so we can all see it :) Please do let us know where you are all joining us from!

14:32:04 From Adam Harrison to Everyone:

Afternoon from Adam in Richmond.

14:32:29 From Emma T to Everyone:

Hi. I'm Emma from a tiny village in mid-Wales. I'm doing a part time PhD in films archiving

14:34:27 From Alan Butland Tyne Theatre and Opera House to Everyone:

Hello, Delighted to join you today. I am member of the ABTT HRC and also APAC

14:34:32 From Barbara Day to Everyone:

Hello, Barbara in Prague

14:34:48 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Great to have you with us Barbara and Alan! Hi Emma, amazing to have you with us and hear about your PhD in films archiving!

If you want to interact via the chat box today please make sure you select "all panelists and attendees" in the drop down before sending your message. Please do let us know us know where you are joining us from! Always great to know where you are all from and what your roles are!

Today we are joined by the ABTT's volunteer Archivist Paul Roberts who will be hosting today's session and members of the University of Bristol Theatre Archive in talking about how to care for your Theatre and Live Art records.

As with our other webinars, please change your view to gallery view so that you can see all panelists on the same screen, this button can be found in the top right corner of your screen. The seminar will be followed by a Q&A session so we can help address any questions you may have.

If you have any questions during the session, please do pop these into the Q&A section for our panelists. This is usually found at the bottom of your screen labeled "Q&A" with two speech bubbles above it.

For people just joining us, we will be using this chat function today to discuss between ourselves and it is great to hear from you all!

14:34:04 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Our host for the session today is Paul Roberts. Paul Roberts is a part-time PhD candidate at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. His doctoral research examines the professionalisation of technical practice in post-war Britain, particularly during the rise of civic and subsidized theatre building, as an emerging standardization of specialist labour incorporated new and influential representative bodies.

Today our session will be discussing how to look after your records, the best ways to preserve your paper-based and audiovisual documentation along with understanding records and archives. We will be looking in greater detail at some of the Theatre Collection's archival collections and also conversing about the Records at Risk project.

To help us with discussing these interesting topics we are joined by Lucy Powell who is the Keeper of Theatre Archives (job-share) at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. After studying English Literature and Archive Administration at university, Lucy has worked as an archivist in local record offices and higher education for over 25 years, surveying, cataloguing and caring for archives as well as making them accessible through research rooms and through engagement projects.

14:38:18 From Alistair Livingstone:

Hi Paul - nice to meet you online - Delighted to join you - looking to archive my own design work and I'm a member of the Stephen Joseph Committee of ABTT. Glad take part/

14:40:20 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Hi Alistair, great to have you with us! If you have any questions about archiving your own work during our seminar today please do put these in to the Q&A tab

14:41:27 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

The University of Bristol Theatre Collection is one of the world's largest archives of British theatre history and Live Art. The Theatre Collection was founded in 1951 to support the establishment of Drama as an academic discipline in the UK, and has grown to become one of the world's leading collections relating to the history of British theatre and live art.

The Theatre Collection comprises over 140 named collections and archives, including actors and collectors Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson. It also holds artworks, audio visual material, costumes, designs, set models, playbills and programmes of this most ephemeral of art forms. The collections are particularly strong from the late 18th century onwards and document life both onstage and offstage, providing a unique insight into theatre and live art, their creative processes and broader cultural contexts.

The Theatre Collection's holistic approach to collecting across archives and objects, and the interconnectedness between the collections, make it an outstanding research resource.

The collections are organised by being split into three main sections:

-Theatre

-Live Art

-Library

If you would like to find out more about the University of Bristol Theatre Collection and it's collections you can do so here: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/>

You can find out about upcoming events, exhibitions and more here: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/events--exhibitions/>

14:44:44 From Sally Lewis to Everyone:

Hi Sally Lewis- freelance curator & APAC member- will this file be shared after please?

14:46:07 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Hi Sally, this session is being recorded and the video and the chat from todays session will be made available by the end of the week.

14:46:28 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

You will be able to find this here: https://www.abtt.org.uk/events-and-courses/abtt_seminars/2021-2/caring-for-your-theatre-and-live-art-records/

14:46:46 From Sally Lewis to Everyone:

Great, thank you

14:47:06 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

The Theatre Collection has achieved both Accredited Museum and Accredited Archive Service status, and its collections have been Designated Outstanding by the Arts Council, England.

The development of the collections has been dependent on the generosity of others, with a large proportion of the holdings coming from donations and bequests from enthusiasts and professionals who share the desire to preserve a record of theatre and live art in Britain.

For those who are hoping to find out more about caring for your own records or finding a home for your records you can find more information here: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/caring-for-your-theatre--live-art-records/>

As Lucy has mentioned, the Theatre Collection has launched the Theatre and live art records at risk due to COVID-19.

They are currently running a project to identify and rescue significant theatre and live art records at risk due to the impact of the pandemic.

They are looking to help individuals and organisations that have been affected by the pandemic and need help with caring for their archives, both digital and analogue.

If you are looking for help with caring for your records or know of someone who may need our help, please contact Sian Williams, Project Archivist for the Theatre and Live Art Records at Risk project: sian.a.williams@bristol.ac.uk

14:51:17 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

We are now joined by Sian Williams, Project Archivist for the Theatre and Live Art Records at Risk project. Sian has been a Project Archivist at the Theatre Collection since 2018, cataloguing the personal archives of the visual artist, Franko B and the performer and artistic director, Ian Smith. Before training to be an archivist, Sian completed a PhD in social and cultural history at the University of Southampton.

Please do remember if anyone has any questions they would like to put forward to our panellists, please do pop it in the Q&A tab which can be found at the bottom of your screen.

14:54:20 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

At the Theatre Collection they collect, preserve and make available a world class collection of theatre and live art material and welcome offers of new material. They can also provide advice on caring for your collection and on finding an alternative repository if the Theatre Collection would not provide the most suitable home for it.

You can find more details on the Theatre Collections Donations Development Policy here:

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/caring-for-your-theatre--live-art-records/finding-a-home-for-your-records/>

Whilst your records are in current use it is worth considering how to care for them, as later you may want to select some of them for preservation as part of an archival collection. Records can take various forms including paper based, photographic, audiovisual and digital material.

For information on managing, caring for and storing your own records, please take a look at the following link: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/caring-for-your-theatre--live-art-records/caring-for-your-own-records/>

14:56:40 From Alistair Livingstone :

My personal archive of work is not nearly as well ordered as Julia's ! I did once copy her copyright stamp.

15:00:19 From Elysia Moore:

The National Archives - Archive Principles and Practice: an introduction to archives for non-archivists might be a link to review when thinking about managing, caring for and storing your own records: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-principles-and-practice-an-introduction-to-archives-for-non-archivists.pdf>

Heritage Hub produced by Gloucestershire Archives is a web resource for community and family archivists covering a range of topics to help you preserve a personal, organisational, local or subject-related collection: <https://www.heritagehub.org.uk/heritage-hub-online-training/introduction-to-heritage-hub-online-training-for-community-and-family-archivists/>

Gateway to Your Archive: A guide on how to identify, use and manage your community archive produced by Explore York Libraries and Archives also offers valuable advice on storing your collection:

<https://www.exploreYork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CommunityArchivesGuidanceBooklet.pdf>

The Institute of Conservation offers a range of help advice on the care and conservation of objects: <https://www.icon.org.uk/resources/caring-for-your-collection/caring-for-your-treasures.html>

And of course the Association for Performing Arts Collections (APAC) Resources page also holds some fantastic resources: <https://performingartscollections.org.uk/resources>

15:02:02 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Some great questions coming in, if you have any questions please do pop them in the Q&A tab!

For performance and theatre companies looking to maintain their archives:

The American Theatre Archive Project, an initiative of the American Society for Theatre Research has produced comprehensive guidance, "Preserving Theatrical Legacy: An Archiving Manual for Theatre Companies" (though please be aware the ATAP Initiation Program [Appendix A] is intended for American theatre companies): <https://www.americantheatrearchiveproject.org/resources/preserving-theatrical-legacy-an-archiving-manual-for-theatre-companies/>

If you are thinking about preserving your personal digital files:

The Digital Preservation Coalition has produced Personal Digital Archiving advice and a comprehensive report which might be of use: <https://www.dpconline.org/docs/knowledge-base/1867-dp-note-6-personal-digital-archiving/file>

For advice on preserving your digital memories, such as digital photographs, audio and video have a look at "The Library of Congress personal archiving pages" here: <https://www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving/>

For additional resources and information about caring for your own records: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/caring-for-your-theatre-live-art-records/caring-for-your-own-records/>

For advice about finding a home for your records: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/caring-for-your-theatre-live-art-records/finding-a-home-for-your-records/>

Please do remember If anyone has any questions they would like to put forward to our panelists, please do pop it in the Q&A tab which can be found at the bottom of your screen.

15:09:16 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

We are now joined by Nigel Bryant, Audiovisual Digitisation Officer from the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

Nigel started his career in video in the 1990s at the largest European archive of TV and press commercials, went on to become a video archivist and filmmaker for various charities and joined the University of Bristol Theatre Collection in 2019.

If you are looking at preserving your works please do see some links below about how you can transfer onto more reliable formats.

You can use 'DVD decrypter' to make image (ISO) files from DVDs here:

<http://www.dvddecrypter.org.uk/>

You can also use 'Make MKV' which rip films from DVDs: <https://www.makemkv.com/>

If you need to rip audio files from CDs you can use dBpoweramp here: <https://www.dbpoweramp.com/>

This costs around £40

If you require video editing software following ripping your VHS you can also use Lightworks -

<https://lwks.com/>

You can hire somebody to digitise VHS tapes or you can do this yourself with a domestic VHS player which have both video and audio outputs

15:20:15 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

The records you have created and accumulated in the course of your theatre or live art related activities may have significant research value. If preserved these records could be a valuable source of information and could contribute to the history of theatre and live art.

Some great questions coming in. Do you have a questions about how to care for your records? Or want to know more about how to store specific items, or where to house an archive - please pop your questions in the Q&A tab at the bottom of your screen.

15:27:11 From Hannah Jones to Everyone:

The National Archives published some guidance in 2019 that might be useful here. It was designed for charity archives, but can be adapted for other organisations. Example retention schedules are included: <https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/management-framework-for-retention-and-transfer.pdf>

15:27:32 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Thank you Hannah, what a great resource, appreciate you sharing this!

15:31:09 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Question 1: Who should make the decision about what to preserve and what not?

Question 2: Stephen Joseph Committee of the ABTT are discussing how best to preserve material relating to Stephen Joseph.

There is work at the John Rylands, Keele, SJT and Terry Lane's archive is at the V&A. We would appreciate advice on how we should go about archiving further information including archiving SJ Association and Committee material.

We are considering a directory pointing to where material can be accessed and how to fund this

15:33:58 From Sally Lewis to Everyone:

Apologies if this is obvious but to what extent is there a standard for documenting performance (especially small pieces/community pieces which might not be filmed but whose evaluation would be useful to others) ?

15:34:07 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Archives Hub: Home: <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk>

Discovery | The National Archives: <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

15:37:58 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Question 3:Apologies if this is obvious but to what extent is there a standard for documenting performance (especially small pieces/community pieces which might not be filmed but whose evaluation would be useful to others) ?

15:42:07 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

The question we are currently discussing is: What legal documents should an Organisation like a theatre company keep?

15:42:51 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

We are now answering: Are medium like Dropbox and iCloud any good for long term or is this to be avoided? Is there a reliable on-line system for long term storage?

15:44:22 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Robert you may find that this link may be helpful in regards to documents from a legal standing: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/legislation/archives-data-protection-law-uk/overview/>

We are now answering: If a collection consists of printed and written material as well as relevant and related artefacts, what is the best approach for finding a long term repository for the whole thing?

15:50:29 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Current question is: how receptive are institutions to accepting private archives and how do you put forward work to get on to these catalogues?

<https://www.abtt.org.uk/people/association-of-performing-arts-collections-apac/>

15:51:12 From Hannah Jones to Hosts and panelists:

Elysia, I'd be happy to provide some additional advice on adding content to Discovery. Would it be useful to have a chat about this later and I can provide some links!

15:52:24 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Hannah that would be amazing thank you! We would love to speak with you in more detail

The ABTT is a member of APAC, as such, anyone who is a member for ABTT can also participate in APAC activities, exhibitions, and seminars.

What is APAC?

The Association of Performing Arts Collections (APAC) is the membership organisation for professionals, specialists, and other individuals working with or interested in performing arts heritage in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

15:55:03 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

Question: How best can I secure access for myself and for others to a personal collection if I make an arrangement to give it into the care of an academic or institutional archive? I have heard tales of collections being 'sealed' preventing donors or others from using any of the material until the risk of content referring to any living person has expired.

15:57:26 From Elysia Moore to Everyone:

We would just like to thank everyone for joining us today for this seminar and a huge thank you to our speakers today!

As always, this session has been recorded and will be made available on the ABTT Website ASAP. You will be able to find this here shortly: https://www.abtt.org.uk/events-and-courses/abtt_seminars/2021-2/caring-for-your-theatre-and-live-art-records/

15:58:18 From Alan Butland Tyne Theatre and Opera House to Everyone:

Thank you to everyone for your presentations and answers to a wide range of questions.