

BROADSIDE

a news digest of



THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Issue 3: February 14, 2015-July 5, 2015

July 5th, 2015 | [President's Blog](#)



TLA Summer News

The TLA Board met in June at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts to discuss the ongoing business of the association. A note of thanks to the TLA Board for all of their good work.

Membership

Thank you to new and renewing members of TLA. We rely on your membership dues to keep our association moving forward.

If you are not a current member and read our discussions on the TLA List, enjoy our website, and respect our mission—I encourage you to join TLA.

TLA was founded in 1937 with a mission to support the training and development of librarians, curators, and archivists in best practices for collecting and preserving the documentation of performance. Today, preserving the arts involves working with a variety of formats, analog and digital, text, multi-dimensional items, ephemera, and more. These collections present new and unique challenges. TLA continues to be a leader in the discussion of best practices for the curation, preservation, and access of performing arts collections.

TLA has expanded its activities since 1937. We publish the monograph series, *Performing Arts Resources*. We continue the tradition of publishing *Broadside* – today in the online form of our newly launched website. We sponsor symposia, continue to strengthen liaison work with

a number of associations. We take pride in our Book Awards, the Freedley and Wall Awards, for excellence in publishing on topics related to the performing arts and recorded performance. We continue to honor our best in the profession with the Louis Rachow Distinguished Service Award and we encourage future librarians, curators, and archivists with the Brooks McNamara Performing Arts Librarian Scholarship Award.

By becoming a member of TLA, you endorse our mission and help us to continue all of our great work. [Join us today!](#)

Book Awards and Distinguished Service Award

The Book Awards will be held on October 16 at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The event will be hosted in the café for a more intimate and relaxed setting. Please hold the date and join us as we celebrate excellence in research and publishing.

In addition to the Book Awards, I am delighted to announce that Karen Nickeson will be honored with the Louis Rachow Distinguished Service Award. Karen recently retired from the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (LPA) “after a thirty-year career during which she distinguished herself as a curator, administrator, and strong and steady leader.”

Congratulations Karen!

TLA Book Club

The TLA Book Club is getting started this summer with its first selection—*Wonder of Wonders* by Alisa Solomon—recipient of the Freedley Award. The purpose of the club is to read and discuss works selected from past winners of the Freedley

BROADSIDE Editorial Information and Publication Guidelines

TLA WEBSITE PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

The Theatre Library Association (TLA) website is the principal medium through which the Theatre Library Association communicates news, activities, policies, and procedures. TLA has long published a newsletter, *BROADSIDE*, which served as the primary medium through which the activities of the TLA were documented. Effective September 2014, *BROADSIDE* will continue as a digest of postings from the TLA website. TLA will continue to provide historical information about the organization and the profession of performing arts librarianship through its website and now the *BROADSIDE Digest*.

The website has no ambition to serve as scholarly publications. Scholarly and other articles or monographs may be considered for TLA's other principal publication, *Performing Arts Resources*.

The TLA website will serve as a means for the exchange among members of information that advances the mission of the organization. Examples of this include short news items about recent activities of both individual and institutional members; short reviews of relevant books and other resources; news of relevant exhibits, conferences, and other developments in performing arts librarianship, collections, and scholarship.

In keeping with the aims of documenting the record of activities of the TLA, the Website Editorial Committee supports the guidelines established by the Publications Committee and has added guidelines to support publishing to the website.

Revised Guidelines

President's Blog provides the President with a platform to discuss the activities of the Theatre Library Association and issues and trends related to performing arts librarianship.

Committee chairs will be responsible for reporting to the website on the activities of their respective committees.

Priority in the publication of articles will be given to the Association's officers, members of the Board, and chairs of committees. These articles provide the most important means by which the leadership of the Association communicates recent Board decisions, upcoming TLA- sponsored events, appeals for member involvement, etc.

TLA members in good standing are encouraged to submit news items that are in keeping with the statement above. All submissions are subject to editing for length, clarity, and factual confirmation.

Ideas for articles—other than brief news items, book reviews, or submissions from officers and committee chairs—should be submitted to the Website Editorial Committee in advance in order to allow sufficient time to plan layout, provide constructive suggestions, and occasionally seek guidance

from the Publications Committee. Articles should relate to performing arts libraries, library resources, or related topics in performing arts scholarship, rather than to general performing arts topics.

Reviews of books or other resources are an excellent way for members to contribute to TLA and the profession. Reviews should include a concise summary of the resource, a comparison of it to similar resources, and a brief evaluation. Suggestions and unsolicited reviews should be sent to the Book Review Editor.

The copyright of all articles published to the TLA website will be owned by TLA. Permission to republish an article may be requested from the Editor.

BROADSIDE (ISSN: 0068-2748)

BROADSIDE will be published at least three times a year but is no longer limited to three times a year publishing cycle. *BROADSIDE* (archive) and *BROADSIDE Digest* are open access—no login required—and available via *BROADSIDE* online at <http://www.tla-online.org/news/broadsideneews/>

Contents ©Theatre Library Association

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Editor's Note

BROADSIDE has transitioned from a newsletter to a digest of TLA's online content. Current issues of the digested version will serve as an archive of both the website and TLA activities since the previously published issue.

About TLA

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TLA website: <http://www.tla-online.org/>

TLA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/theatrelibraryassociation>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/theatrelibassn>

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1937, the Theatre Library Association supports librarians and archivists affiliated with theatre, dance, performance studies, popular entertainment, motion picture and broadcasting collections. TLA promotes professional best practices in acquisition, organization, access and preservation of performing arts resources in libraries, archives, museums, private collections, and the digital environment. By producing publications, conferences, panels, and public events, TLA fosters creative and ethical use of performing arts materials to enhance research, live performance, and scholarly communication.



JOIN US!

Membership

(Annual dues: \$30 personal, \$40 institutional; \$20 student/non-salaried members. In order to defray the rising costs of international postage, members with non-U.S. mailing addresses are now required to pay a \$10 surcharge.) Includes *Performing Arts Resources*, published occasionally. Dues can now be paid online using PayPal.

For availability and prices of past issues of *PAR* and *BROADSIDE*, contact

TheatreLibraryAssociation@gmail.com

TLA listserv: To Subscribe:

1) Send email (nothing in the subject) to:

LISTSERV@listserv.illinois.edu

2) in the body of the email message type the following line:

SUBSCRIBE TLA-L your name

July 5th, 2015 | [President's Blog](#)

or Wall Award or titles selected from the TLA Book Reviews. If you are a TLA member, it is not too late to join. Send email to nef4@columbia.edu.

ASTR TLA Conference

We are looking forward to a dynamic presence at the ASTR TLA Conference. The plenary session, chaired by Matt DiCintio, will include papers discussing the Samuel French Collection, William Archer Collection, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Project. The conference will be held in Portland in November.

Symposium Planning

Our next symposium is in planning for 2016. The theme of this event will focus on fringe festivals. Leahkim Gannett and Morgen Stevens-Garmon are serving as co-chairs of the planning committee. Many thanks to the other committee members: Matt DiCintio, Laurie Murphy, and Rachel Smiley.

Performing Arts Resources (PAR)

We have a dynamic roster of PAR volumes in planning. Kenneth Schlesinger is editing the next volume entitled *State of the Profession: Performing Arts Librarianship in the 21st Century*. We look forward to this volume in 2015. Future volumes include *Creating Digital Projects for the Performing Arts* (co-editors, Doug Reside and Tanisha Jones), *Theatre Architecture* (co-editors, John Calhoun and Nancy Friedland), *Theatres at an Exhibition – the Art of Performance in Two Dimensions* (editor, Marti LoMonaco), and a volume to include proceedings of the SIBMAS TLA Conference held in 2014.

Liaison Activities

Many thanks to Diana King, John Calhoun, and Joseph Talley for their assistance in arranging for tours of the American Conservatory Theatre and the Museum of Performance and Design during the ALA Conference in San Francisco.

Colleen Reilly is doing terrific work as co-chair of

ATAP. Doug Reside and Eric Colleary have joined the ATAP Steering Committee—congratulations to both Doug and Eric! ATAP is planning a number of activities for ASTR—TLA 2015 in Portland. There will be a Portland Initiation Grant and Training Session which will include outreach to local organizations, the ATAP training session, and a Local Plenary Session, chaired by Eric Colleary.

We look forward to another dynamic year—and hope to see you in October at the Book Awards. Enjoy a wonderful summer!

Nancy Friedland

President's Report for Spring 2015

May 13th, 2015 | [President's Blog](#)

The TLA Board met in New York City on February 20, 2015. We had a productive meeting and successfully connected with our members on the west coast using good old fashioned technology – the telephone. It was my pleasure to welcome our new members Tanisha Jones and Joseph Talley and to welcome back Diana King and Doug Reside.

The action never stops with TLA!

New Appointments

I am delighted that Eric Colleary has taken on the role of webmaster and co-chair of the Website and Editorial Committee. Charlotte Cabbage has decided to step down from her work as Book Review Editor. Many thanks to Charlotte for her wonderful work and we look forward to the new round of reviews for this summer. I have appointed Emily Witkowski to this post. There will be separate post for Emily's introduction. Joseph Talley has agreed to serve as chair-elect of the Publications Committee. He is working closely with Leahkim Gannett who will be stepping down at the end of this year. Many thanks to Leahkim for her terrific work with this committee. I am

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delighted to announce that Laurie Murphy will take over the leadership of our Membership Committee. Many thanks to Beth Kattelman for her wonderful work.

ASTR TLA Conference – Portland

Matt Dicintio and Noreen Barnes received great response to their call for papers and are now in the process of finalizing the panel for the TLA Plenary. Matt is also serving on the conference planning committee and will be investigating other possible activities for TLA and ATAP. Angela Weaver is looking into a tour of the Portland Center Stage. The TLA hosted tours of historic theatres have been successful at ASTR—we had great response in Baltimore and we hope for the same in Portland.

Book Awards

Diana Bertolini and Tiffany Nixon are leading the work of this committee. For the full update, please see the [posting](#).

October Awards Event

Mark your calendars for October 16. Following our Annual Business Meeting, we will host our Awards Event. The event will be held at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. More information on the event to follow. And, there will be a PAR Giveaway!

Symposium Planning

Leahkim Gannett and Morgen Stevens-Garmon are co-chairing the planning committee. This promises to be a wonderful event – the focus is on fringe festivals. We have an excellent planning committee in place. The event will likely be scheduled for October 2016 in New York City.

Publications

We have a number of PAR volumes in process and under review. Kenneth Schlesinger is editing a timely volume entitled *State of the Profession: Performing Arts Librarianship in the 21st Century*.

Future volumes under review with the Publications Committee include a revised proposal for theatre architecture. We are also planning a volume on exhibition planning for performing arts collections. The volume on Digital Humanities is under review and we are in discussion to publish the proceedings of the SIBMAS TLA Conference.

Website and Editorial Committee

New members to the committee include Rachel Smiley and Selena Chau. The committee is working through best practices for publishing and news coverage. We hope you are enjoying the new website.

Ad Hoc Committee on PAR

I have charged this committee to review various publishing models for PAR. There has been ongoing discussion by the Board to launch PAR as an open access publication. The Board will take up the matter at the June meeting.

Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

TLA helped to host a Wikipedia Edit-a-thon in February at the invitation of Rachel Mattson, Manager of Special Projects in the archives at LaMaMA. The event was held at Columbia University (many thanks to the library)—we had a good turnout including several experienced contributors to Wikipedia. The focus—entries related to the performing arts. I hope to host more of these!

Get Involved

If you would like to be more involved with TLA, please do not hesitate to contact me. TLA offers wonderful opportunities for professional development.

Nancy Friedland

March 13th, 2015 | [Job Postings](#), [Members](#), [President's Blog](#)



Meet Our New Webmaster — Welcome Eric Colleary!

I am delighted to introduce Eric Colleary as TLA's new webmaster. Eric has extensive experience working with WordPress and social

media. In addition, he has been appointed Co-Chair of the Website Editorial Committee and will work with Angela Weaver to further the activities related to the website and *Broadside Digest*. His interests include archives, performing arts collections, LGBT Studies, and food history!

Eric is a Visiting Professor in Theatre History and Performance Studies at Macalester College in Saint Paul. He recently received his PhD in Theatre Historiography from the University of Minnesota, where he was an Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellow conducting research on LGBT archives, identity and performance. He serves as co-leader of the Twin Cities chapter of the American Theatre Archives Project(ATAP) and has worked closely over the past six years with the Tretter Collection in LGBT Studies at the University of Minnesota as an archivist, exhibit curator, advisory board chair, and performing arts specialist. During graduate school, he began exploring his side interest in food history and currently edits ***The American Table, a public history blog documenting American foodways*** (www.americantable.org). As a result of this project, he was recently named a 2015 Legacy Research Fellow by the Minnesota Historical Society and is currently developing a social history cookbook focusing on the servants of the historic James J. Hill House in Saint Paul, MN.

Nancy Friedland

May 22nd, 2015 | [Book/Media Reviews](#), [President's Blog](#)



Meet our New Book Review Editor — Welcome Emily Witkowski!

I am pleased to introduce Emily Witkowski as the new TLA Book Review Editor.

Many thanks to Charlotte Cabbage for her fine work as editor. Charlotte will help with the transition which should be completed by early summer. The Book Review Editor works with the review writers to produce approximately 4 -6 reviews which will be published to the website and then included in each issue of *Broadside Digest*.

Emily currently works as a Children's Librarian in Maplewood, NJ. Her involvement with TLA began as she was completing her Masters in Library and Information Science at Rutgers University, when she volunteered for the joint conference between TLA and SIBMAS. With a B.A. in English and Interactive Multimedia, she expressed interest in interdisciplinary studies early on, and used that interest to begin working with makerspaces in libraries. After working as the Makercoach at the Piscataway Public Library's Summer of Make program, and interning with the Science and Engineering Library of Columbia University, she is now looking for ways to further develop makerspace programming, particularly for early youth.

Welcome Emily!

Nancy Friedland

May 22nd, 2015 | [Book/Media Reviews](#), [President's Blog](#)

New: TLA Book Club

I am interested in starting a TLA Book Club focusing on titles from our Freedley and Wall Award winners and our current book reviews. The list of past Freedley and Wall winners is an outstanding catalog of works all worth revisiting or discovering fresh. Our TLA Book Reviews provide the current must-have titles on the performing arts.

Discussions would be virtual—the platform to be determined. We could also try to form regional meetups.

If you are a current member of TLA and have interest in joining a TLA Book Club—please write to me directly at nef4@columbia.edu.

If there is enough interest—we could get started just in time for summer!

Nancy

Distinguished Service Award—Call for Nominations

April 27th, 2015 | [Awards](#), [Louis Rachow Distinguished Service Award](#)

Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award Call for Nominations

A CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

The Theatre Library Association wants to celebrate the excellence of our profession by selecting an individual who embodies its best qualities. Please take a moment from your busy schedule to identify that person.

Your Distinguished Service nominee should be a performing arts librarian, archivist, curator, or scholar— a dedicated professional who has made significant contributions to our field, and whose energy and creative intelligence have made a difference in the vision of our profession.

Preferably, the nominee should be a TLA member. You need to be a TLA member in good standing in order to nominate.

For a list of past winners, please see:

<http://www.tla-online.org/awards/distinguishedservice/winners.html>

As part of your nomination, please submit:

- Your name and affiliation
- Nominee's name
- Justification statement for nomination (400 words maximum)
- Short biography of Nominee, plus a CV or link to professional webpage

Please submit nominations electronically to Dr. Francesca Marini.

Email: fmarini@library.tamu.edu by **May 15, 2015**.

The Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award will be presented at the Theatre Library Association's Annual Business Meeting and Book Awards in October 2015.

By nominating an outstanding individual, you help celebrate and enhance esteem for all performing arts professionals.

Dr. Francesca Marini, Chair, TLA Professional Awards Committee

Member Spotlight: Mint Theater

June 15th, 2015 | [Members](#)

The Mint Theater is a repertory company located in New York City. Originally founded in 1992 as an actor training company, the Mint shifted its focus three years later to staging historical dramas when Jonathan Bank became its executive director. Over the past twenty years, the Mint Theater has presented forty-four so-called “neglected” plays. It excavates buried theatrical treasures, reclaiming them for our time through research, dramaturgy, production, publication, and a variety of enrichment programs.¹ With this mission, the value of research for performance becomes more apparent.



Robert Boardman, Kraig Swartz, Christa Scott-Reed, Jack Koenig, Arleigh Richards, Lisa Bostnar and Sally Kemp in *The Voyage Inheritance* by Harley Granville-Barker; Michael Gottlieb, photographer.

Theater directors and dramaturgs often research within library and archival resources. The Mint Theater’s approach is to never rewrite the plays, but to consider cuts to dialogue that have no connection to contemporary audiences.² Making these types of decisions takes careful consideration of historical context and variations of a play’s scenes. This topic was explored in past collaboration with Theatre Library Association (TLA) activities. In 2007, they were a partner in TLA’s second Symposium on *Performance Reclamation: Research, Discovery, and Interpretation*.³

The Mint Theater is a TLA institutional member that invites individuals to interact with theater

history through scholarship, programs, and performance reclamation: mounting lost or forgotten theater works. Speaking of the Mint Theater’s productions, Bank has said that “history is the lifeblood of everything. In our plays, we constantly tell people the story of history.”⁴ Mint Theater staff members continue to participate in the American Theater Archive Project (ATAP)⁵, present educational programs on theater with The New York Public Library (NYPL)⁶, as well as provide their own archival records for study. Their aim is to use the engaging power of the theater to excite, provoke, influence, and inspire audiences and artists alike.⁷



Gareth Saxe and Angela Reed in *The Daughter-in-Law* by D.H. Lawrence; Richard Termine, photographer.



Mark Bedard, John Tufts, Annie Purcell, Joe Delafield, Maren Searle, and Jeremy Lawrence in *Fashions for Men* by Ferenc Molnár; Richard Termine, photographer.

Member Spotlight: Mint Theater



Elise Kibler and Stephen Plunkett in *LONDON WALL* by John Van Druten; Richard Termine, photographer.

Their plays bring history forward and have received accolades such as an Obie Grant (2001), a special Drama Desk Award (2002), and the Theater History Museum's Theatre Preservation Award (2010).⁸ Their presentation of John Van Druten's 1931 play *London Wall* was the first Off-Broadway play to be broadcast in the WNET series, *Theater Close-Up*.⁹ In 2003, it presented the rarely staged *The Daughter-in-Law*, by D.H. Lawrence. It was named one of the best ten plays of the year by *The New York Times*.¹⁰

To learn more, view the Mint Theater's production photos and videos on [their website](#), watch productions live or at NYPL's [Theatre on Film and Tape Archive](#), read their 2002 book [Worthy But Neglected: Plays of the Mint Theater Company](#), or [peruse their ephemera](#) in the NYPL performance archive.

Selena Chau, MLIS

¹ "About: Mission & History," [minttheater.org](http://minttheater.org/about.php?tab=tab-1), retrieved June 14 2015,

² Bruce Chadwick. "What Could Be a Better Place to Store History Plays than a Mint (Theater)?," George Mason University History News Network, retrieved June 14 2015, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/136780#sthash.7OKRT7WX.dpuf>

³ "Theatre Library Association, Symposium II," [tla-online.org](http://www.tla-online.org/Symposia/symposiumtwo/), retrieved June 14 2015,

⁴ Bruce Chadwick. "What Could Be a Better Place to Store History Plays than a Mint (Theater)?," George Mason University History News Network, retrieved June 14 2015, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/136780#sthash.7OKRT7WX.dpuf>

⁵ "ATAP Participants," American Theatre Archive Project, retrieved June 14 2015, <http://americantheatrearchiveproject.org/participants>

⁶ "Meeting Molnár: The Mint Theater Company Explores the Archives of Ferenc Molnár," NYPL.org, retrieved June 14 2015, <http://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2015/03/23/meeting-moln%C3%A1r-mint-theatre-company-explores-archives-ferenc-moln%C3%A1r>

⁷ "About Mint Theater Company," facebook.com, retrieved June 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mint-Theater-Company/73840567057?sk=info&tab=page_info

⁸ "About: Mission & History," [minttheater.org](http://minttheater.org/about.php?tab=tab-1), retrieved June 14 2015,

⁹ Jonathan Mandell. "TV vs Theater: Off Broadway's Mint Theater on WNET's Theater Close-Up," [newyorktheater.me](http://newyorktheater.me/2014/10/03/tv-vs-theater-mint-theaters-london-wall-on-wnets-theater-close-up/), retrieved June 14 2015,

¹⁰ Bruce Weber. "THEATER: THE HIGHS; The Plays And Players Of the Year," [nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/28/arts/theater-the-highs-the-plays-and-players-of-the-year.html), retrieved June 14 2015,

Member Profile: Don Wilmeth

June 15th, 2015 | [Members](#)



Don Wilmeth: TLA Member for Over 50 Years

*Your authorship
and editor history
make you a*

leading figure in the theatre research field. When reviewing current research, what do you look for in new publications or new authors? Are there writing styles or particular topics that have become more popular in recent years?

I have tried as a theatre academic to stay abreast of publications in our field as much as possible, and have facilitated this effort in several ways. Since the 1960s I've been a frequent reviewer for *Choice* – to date I've reviewed over 300 titles for them. In addition I have been a juror for the TLA and Freedley committees for something like three decades. I have no idea how many books I've read for the Freedley, but the number is in the hundreds. These two activities have served me well in my effort to stay up to date with current scholarship (and more popular studies in the field). I've also done dozens of reviews in professional journals and regularly read book reviews in all our major academic journals. I've tried not to limit my activity to theatre journals but have accepted review assignments in non-theatre journals (e.g., American History journals).

I don't think I read new works (publications or authors) with any objective in mind (i.e., looking for something specific). I am a theatre historian so a historical component is important to me and I still prefer fairly traditional historical studies over hybrid approaches or studies that are dependent on some theoretical foundation (I'm not opposed to theory in general but am not too fond of new works that are primarily theoretical). I would say, then, that some academic or scholarly tomes today fail to communicate to some of us and some of these efforts get bogged down in academic jargon. The best of our efforts, in my opinion, tend to eschew most jargon and try to communicate using elegant, sophisticated, but accessible

language. I hope this never changes. Trends are hard to nail down, so I do not consciously try to do this. I think I've read so much over the past 50 years that I consider myself fairly capable at recognizing good, well researched, and effectively argued writing.

As a long-time member and contributor to TLA, ASTR, and other professional organizations, what advice or guidance would you give to someone thinking about joining the performing arts library community?

It was a natural thing to do when I was a young academic—i.e., join all the appropriate professional organizations, attend the meetings, participate when feasible, etc. I ran for various offices early on. For example, I was VP of TLA but chose not to run for President. I was on the executive committees of both ASTR and TLA for many years (too many probably). In addition to serving as President of ASTR, I was its secretary for a decade. All of these involvements served me well and brought me in contact with all the “right” people in these organizations. I might add that one of my interests has always been libraries—I was the volunteer curator of a Magic Collection at Brown for some years, and have been on the board of the Friends of the Brown Univ. Library for something like 20 years. I am currently completing my tenth year on the board of the Friends of the Keene Public Library and will soon become a Trustee. In Providence, I was a member of the Corporation of the Providence Public Library. I've almost always had one foot in that door, and I think this kind of participation is very important.

I was very interested to read about your long teaching career and how you have bridged your professional research into performance fields such as acting or directing. How does live performance complement or augment your theatre research?

I always thought of myself as part theatre artist. I directed as part of my academic job every year of my employment, and when possible I've been an amateur actor. My research has gone in many directions as well. I've always sought challenges that led me in new directions: I've co-edited

Member Profile: Don Wilmeth

nineteenth-century plays, researched and wrote the life of a late eighteenth-century actor (using many traditional archives in numerous countries and in some of the best library/collections available to scholars), and compiled and edited numerous reference works (both full-length and specific contributions) such as the *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre* and (as co-editor) the three-volume *Cambridge History of American Theatre*. I've contributed to reference works, including *World Book Encyclopedia*—a unique challenge since this is mostly designed for teen readers.

I actually don't find theatre research of a more traditional kind much different from the research I've done as a director. When it was within my control, I've requested assignments unlike any I've done previously, thus leading me to unique and applicable research to the directorial project at hand. I do believe that I was a better director than I might have been because of my work as a director and as an actor! I've always been interested in the actor as a phenomenon and for many years taught a course on the historian and theory of acting. My time on stage or as a director of actors I believe made me a more credible teacher of that course and led to a number of relevant publications, including several published bibliographies on actors and acting.

In addition to your current editing work for Macmillan's Studies in Theatre and Performance History, are there upcoming projects you would like to tell us about?

The Palgrave Macmillan series is my second book series, the first with Cambridge University Press. That series published around 30 titles on some aspect of American theatre/drama. The first title was published in 2005 and since then we've published some 50 monographs. Unlike the CUP series, this one includes a broad range of theatre studies (both geographically wide-ranging and broad in topics and approaches). My goal when accepting the editorship of this series was to encourage work both by young scholars (often with their first book) and more senior,

experienced scholars. As time has passed, I notice that we've had a better balance of these two.

This is a long-winded way to say that I have little time left over for my own projects. I did take on a challenge in 2011 with my colleague Milly Barranger to co-edit the manuscript by Helen Krich Chinoy on *The Group Theatre*. She had worked on this project for at least three decades and left, after her death, an unfinished manuscript that required two very full years of editing—much rewriting, confirming as many sources as we could, getting permissions for photos, etc. The book is also in the Palgrave series and has done fairly well.

Since I retired in 2003, I've also spent a good deal of my time wearing another hat—that of collector of theatrical materials (including ephemera, memorabilia, etc.). I've especially sought prints (engravings, etching, posters, etc.) by theatre caricaturists, e.g., Thomas Rowlandson, the Cruikshanks, James Gilray, and others of their ilk. I've also mounted four library exhibits: one on actors with ties to New England at the Cheshire County Historical Society, and two at Brown – one on popular amusements and one, currently being planned, on Theatrical Satiric Caricatures, which will be at Brown next Spring and will also feature a special lecture by Prof. Joseph Roach from Yale (this will be the annual Wilmeth Lecture for 2015-16).

Don B. Wilmeth, Emeritus Professor (retired in 2003) at Brown University, is the author, editor, coeditor, or series editor of over six dozen books, including the award-winning three-volume *Cambridge History of American Theatre* and a new edition of the *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre*, a standard in the field. Don is a former president of the American Society for Theatre Research and dean emeritus of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre. He has lifetime achievement awards from a half dozen professional organizations. In 2008, Brown bestowed upon him the William Williams Award, the most prestigious honor given by the Brown University Library, and in 2012 The (NY) Theatre

May 20th, 2015 | [Collections](#)

Museum presented him its Theatre History Preservation Award. In 2015 the University of Illinois (Ph.D., 1964) awarded him its Alumni Achievement Award. He is currently editor of Palgrave Macmillan's *Studies in Theatre and Performance History*.

Interview conducted and edited by Rachel Smiley, Events and Member Profile Editor for TLA Website Editorial Committee



Harry Ransom Center Announces New Curator of Theater and Performing Arts

April 20th, 2015 | [Staff Transitions](#)

TLA's very own Eric Colleary (Webmaster and Co-Chair of the Website Editorial Committee) has

been appointed [Cline Curator of Theater and Performing Arts](#) at the Harry Ransom Center, a humanities research library and museum at The University of Texas at Austin.

Colleary will oversee access and interpretation of the Ransom Center's theater and [performing arts collections](#), including extensive holdings of major American and British dramatists such as Samuel Beckett, David Hare, Lillian Hellman, David Mamet, Arthur Miller, George Bernard Shaw, Tom Stoppard, and Tennessee Williams.

Congratulations, Eric!

Angela Weaver

The Samuel French Archive Takes Center Stage

Theatres are curious places, magician's trick-boxes where the golden memories of dramatic triumphs linger like nostalgic ghosts, and where the unexplainable, the fantastic, the tragic, the comic and the absurd are routine occurrences on and off the stage.—E.A. Bucchianeri, *Brushstrokes of a Gadfly*



Script of "Our Best Society", a play written by Irving Brown and published by Samuel French, Ltd. (ca. 1876)

Like any good theatrical production, the [Samuel French Company Theater Collection at Amherst College](#) is complicated, rich with nuance, and intricately detailed. The collection also boasts an elaborately complex combination of plotlines and a cast of thousands. Since materials started to accrue in the mid-1960's, the archive expanded beyond a straightforward (though glorious and expansive) collection of plays and publications to

include documentation of French's business dealings, author correspondence, and scrapbooks that capture a particularly fertile time in the world of amateur theatrical performance. And there's more. Blueprints for set design. Sets of orchestra parts for musicals. Bound volumes of plays taken from the libraries of drama societies in the early 20th century. Programs from productions all over the world. I could go on and on.

The very nature and strength of many archives is exactly this kind of diversity: a spectrum of items in a plethora of formats, collections comprised of

Collections

personal narratives interwoven with records that chart a flash of history. The French archive is particularly exceptional because of its comprehensiveness and depth—not only does it reveal a rich chronology of theatrical publishing output spanning the years from 1794-2012, but it also helps chart the evolution of performance rights and copyright laws. Letters and clippings shed light on the spread of independent theatrical performances (beyond Broadway, beyond Covent Garden) as the 19th century ended. And the unique experience of being able to analyze French’s business structures alongside evidence of blossoming theater cultures gives a richer context to all these specific histories.

Processing for the French archive is almost at the halfway point, with a scheduled completion date in late summer 2016. While scholars can (and do) make use of the collection already, this next year’s work will produce item-level inventories and descriptions that will enable intellectual and physical access to the materials in a greatly enhanced way. Taking on this job in July 2014 presented me with an enormous feeling of stage fright, which thankfully subsided quickly into pure excitement and brainstorming.



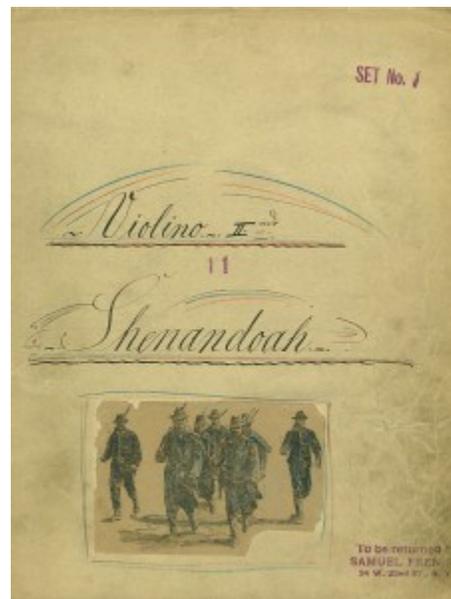
Promotional photograph for Benn W. Levy’s “Springtime for Henry”, performed at the Bijou Theatre. (1932)

Every box opened reveals new historical threads connected to countless other timelines. And though the job of unraveling these threads is not

always easy, it is certainly rewarding to know that when the curtain closes on this project, the French Archive will be imminently more accessible to researchers interested in enriching scholarship about publishing, law, and performance. And so, my focus remains on revealing “the unexplainable, the fantastic, the tragic, the comic and the absurd” intricacies of this archive in every way I can.

Rosemary K.J. Davis

Rosemary K. J. Davis is Samuel French Collection Processing Archivist with the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. In addition to an MSLIS degree from Pratt Institute, she holds a BA in Visual Studies and Fiction from the New School. Prior to her work at Amherst College, Rosemary processed Riot Grrrl collections at the Fales Library at NYU, exhibition records at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jazz Loft oral histories at Duke’s Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and the papers of Christian J. Lambertsen at the Duke University Medical Center Archives.



1st Violin musical part for *Shenandoah*, a musical by James Lee Barrett, Gary Geld, Phillip Rose, and Peter Udell. (date unknown)

Photos: The Samuel French Company Theater Collection, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.

Exhibitions

June 2nd, 2015 | [Collections](#), [Exhibitions](#)

All the Rage in Paris: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, 1909-1929

Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas
February 18 – June 21, 2015



All the Rage in Paris focuses on Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, the company that brought theatre—and theatre design—to the center of artistic life in Europe from 1909 to 1929. Conceived as a showcase for Russian art and artists, the Paris-based company embraced the latest trends in literature, music, dance, and visual art, revolutionizing dance and captivating audiences in London, New York, and beyond.



Thanks to Robert L. B. Tobin, the McNay's collection features artists at the heart of Diaghilev's company: Alexandre Benois, Léon

Bakst, Natalia Gontcharova, and Mikhail Larionov. Their designs reveal the shifting tastes and artistic talents that defined the Ballets Russes, from the oriental exoticism of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhéhrazade*, to the Russian folklore of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, and the courtly spectacle of Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Princess*.

Actual costumes, from the McNay's Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts and the Museum of Performance and Design in San Francisco, bring these artists' scene and costume drawings to life. Along with photographs of ballets in performance, the costumes suggest the explosion of color and movement that dazzled theatre-goers and influenced design well beyond the stage.



Pochoir, a hand-stenciling technique that produces vibrant colors and bold patterns, flourished in the period of the Ballets Russes. As rare volumes and portfolios from the Tobin Collection reveal, pochoir became the printmaking medium of choice for publishing Diaghilev's ballets, disseminating his artists' designs, and advertising the fashions they inspired.

Bakst's harem pants and turbans for *Schéhéhrazade*, for example, made their way from the stage to the salon of Paris couturier Paul Poiret. Evening wraps and cloche hats from San Antonio's Witte Museum show that Diaghilev's Ballets Russes influenced how stylish women dressed as far away as Texas. Exquisite opera coats and fanciful cloche hats from San Antonio's Witte Museum show the far-reaching impact of the Ballets Russes on fashion as well as on dance.

Exhibitions

All the Rage in Paris is the second of two exhibitions celebrating the McNay's 60th anniversary. Last fall, the museum organized *Artists Take the Stage: Theatre Design from Picasso to Nevelson*. The scene and costume designs in these anniversary exhibitions represent only a small part of the Tobin Collection, which includes over 12,000 objects and continues to grow 15 years after its founder's death.

However, like *Artists Take the Stage*, *All the Rage in Paris* exemplifies the McNay's emphasis on theatre design as an integral part of the visual arts.



Jody Blake, PhD

Jody Blake, Curator of the Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts at the McNay Art Museum, earned a PhD from the University of Delaware and earned an MA and a BA from

Tulane University where she helped develop the Tulane/Newcomb Summer Abroad in Paris program. Prior to her work at the McNay, Jody was Associate Professor of Art History at Bucknell University and published *Le Tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz Age Paris, 1900-1930*.

Photos: Views of *All the Rage in Paris: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, 1909-1929*, and *Design, Fashion, Theatre: The Art of Pochoir in France, 1910-1930*, McNay Art Museum, 2015. These exhibitions are organized by the McNay Art Museum and are programs of the Tobin Theatre Arts Fund.

Events

May 1st, 2015 | [Events](#)

2015 TDF/Irene Sharaff Awards



Racks of costumes at TDF's Costume Collection

The TDF/Irene Sharaff Awards will be presented tonight, May 1, 6:30pm at the Hudson Theatre in New York City.

Congratulations to Jess Goldstein, Douglas W. Schmidt, Brian Hemesath, and Gino Bifulco – T.O. Dey Shoes. There will be a Memorial Tribute to Raoul Pène Du Bois.

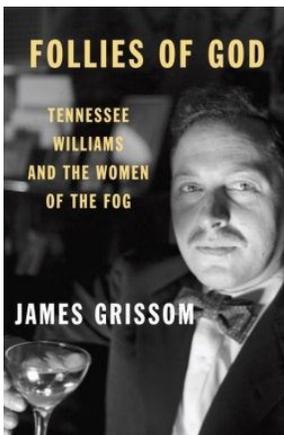
Additional information can be [found here](#).

David LeShay

Source: www.tdf.org

Book/Media Reviews

June 18th, 2015 | [Book/Media Reviews](#)



*Follies of God:
Tennessee Williams and
the Women of the Fog*
James Grissom
New York: Knopf, 2015
ISBN: 9780307265692
404 pp.

There is no question that Tennessee Williams is having a banner year. Productions of his plays continue to find appreciative audiences, John Lahr's recently published biography of Williams masterfully reconstructs the playwright's chaotic life, and now comes James Grissom's *Follies of God*. Grissom's extraordinary exploration of the last months of Williams's life emphasizes the playwright's deep desire to believe he mattered. Williams reflects on his muses—his mother, sister, and several noted actresses—all of whom provided inspiration for or the realization of his indelible characters. Revisiting his time with Williams, Grissom manages the remarkable feat of unlocking the creative process of America's foremost dramatist, as well as of a number of actresses, at least one director, Elia Kazan, and one actor, Marlon Brando. Williams explained to Grissom that rather than critical responses to his work and late life honors, he thought "instead on those women—and a few men—who have been a constant source of inspiration and illumination; examples and extremes" (p. 17). As such, the book's spotlight swings wildly from Williams's waning days to his encounters with collaborators and their memories of him.

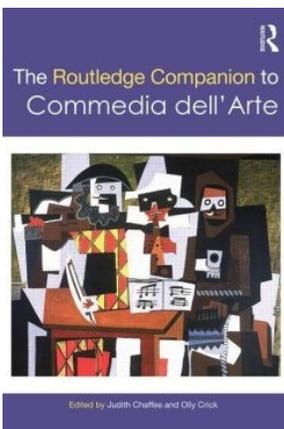
To cut to the chase, *Follies of God* is an absolute "must read" for those who admire Williams and his plays, love American theatre, and wish to take a highly idiosyncratic journey into the nature of creativity, the personas of its creators, and their drive to create. In the best sense this book is like no other this reader has encountered. Despite numerous prior studies of Williams' work, Grissom's approach provides fresh insights. The often despairing, drug-infused Williams, believing himself creatively played out in his last year, hopes—in fact, prays—to continue creating. Grissom's encounters with Williams's "women of the fog," as he calls them, is accomplished through a rough chronological journey from *Battle of Angels* (1940) to *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). The actresses, consistently providing penetrating analysis of the plays and their characters, particularly those which each was associated with, comment on the work and their relationships with Williams, often with bracing honesty. Maureen Stapleton, Jessica Tandy, Kim Stanley, Julie Harris, Barbara Baxley, Katharine Hepburn, Kim Hunter, Geraldine Page, and two who did not appear in Williams's work, but whom he found inspiring, Lillian Gish and Mildred Natwick, all provide fascinating commentary. There are tales of the conflicts in acting styles represented by those trained by Lee Strasberg or Stella Adler versus those from an older, highly theatrical approach, here represented by Katharine Cornell, Miriam Hopkins and Tallulah Bankhead; as well as reflections on changing politics and morality, including McCarthy-era blacklisting, stories of rampant homophobia, and aspects of the evolving American stage.

Book/Media Reviews

The book's riches touch on art and creativity, family dysfunction, sexuality and gender, spirituality, friendship, and the ways in which the gifted struggle—some with success and some not—to harness the demons within and the brutalities of life's experience. This handsomely bound book includes a smattering of illustrations, but the words of Williams and his muses provide insight and inspiration to those creatively inclined.

James Fisher

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro



The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'arte
Judith Chaffee and Olly Crick, editors
London and NY:
Routledge, 2014
ISBN: 9780415745062
540 pp.

Commedia dell'arte was born in Italy almost certainly as a result of influences from the ancient Roman comic theatre, borrowing archetypal characters from its traditions while emphasizing improvisation as its style. *Commedia* actors and their characters are now the stuff of theatrical legend as a result of their mastery of improv and the fundamental human situations and interactions their improvised plays depicted. Alas, we cannot see them perform, though for centuries artists have provided iconic images, capturing the seemingly

unattainable idea of the actor as artist improvising plays to create an indelible comic form. *Commedia's* historical influence is incalculable, but is seen most vividly in the scripted plays of Shakespeare, Molière, Lope de Vega, Carlo Goldoni, and Carlo Gozzi; and also appears in Punch and Judy, pantomimes, harlequinades, and in many operas and ballets. *Commedia* also influenced the works of diverse twentieth century artists: Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jacques Copeau, Max Reinhardt, Luigi Pirandello, Dario Fo, and the Theatre of the Absurd playwrights, among a multitude of others.

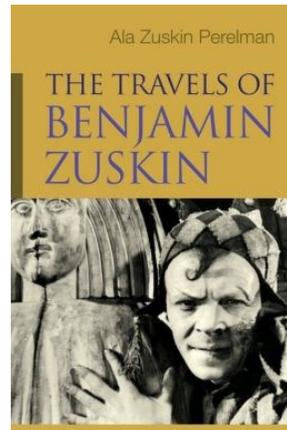
In our time, the phrase *commedia dell'arte* is applied with impunity to any performer or performance making use of improv, stock characters, masks, and/or anarchic farce. As such, the phrase sometimes appears almost meaningless in contemporary theatre. However, *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'arte* brings together diverse contributions (many quite short) of variant quality from over fifty scholars, translators, mask makers, actors, and other practitioners, proving that this inspiring form continues to permeate contemporary theatre culture. In three sections and a thorough bibliography the contributors to this collection explore: the singular performance aspects of pure *commedia* in "The Defining Features: Actors Scenarios, Troops, Stock Characters, Masks, Language and Lazzi;" the rich cultural history of the form in "Historical Context," and the present-day manifestations of *commedia's* inspiration in "Alive and Well and Living In...." Fully-packed with rich factual information from the featured scholars and idiosyncratic viewpoints from the practitioners, the

volume provides a rich, if incomplete compendium.

The editors have made a valiant effort to provide a comprehensive accounting of *commedia* then and now, but with a subject that reigned in its purest form for more than three-hundred years, with wildly diverse tentacles of influence in multiple cultures, this admirable attempt is ultimately futile. Inevitably, significant figures, plays, and influences are overlooked or under-reported. Despite this, the book has enormous value as a resource and guide, providing much well-researched historical material and commentary of practitioners who find *commedia* a fertile stimulus. At this point a more complete portrait of *commedia* through the ages would be difficult to find.

The hefty publisher's price (\$205.00, mirroring the book's literal heftiness) may prevent individuals from adding this useful, well-illustrated book to their private collections (unless it finds its way into paperback), so it is likely that only libraries with strong performing arts collections will acquire it. This volume serves as a worthy addition to the vast scholarship on a most unique theatrical form, and is likely to remain a potent inspiration to performing artists and scholars alike.

James Fisher
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro



The Travels of Benjamin Zuskin

Ala Zuskin Perelman
Syracuse,
NY: Syracuse
University Press, 2015
ISBN: 9780815610502
320 pp.

The Travels of Benjamin Zuskin, part of the series Judaic Traditions in Literature, Music and Art, is an account of the artistic and personal life of one of the stars of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre. Benjamin Zuskin acted, directed, and eventually became artistic director of the theatre, which existed between 1919 and 1949. Born in 1899, Zuskin was executed in 1952 as a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. His story is told by his daughter, Ala Zuskin Perelman, born out of his second marriage, to actress Eda Berkovskaya. Originally written in Russian (published in 2002), and re-written in Hebrew (published in 2006), Sharon Blass translated the book into English in 2015.

The book is structured as a play: prologue, five acts with interludes, and epilogue. The author narrates her father's story in her own words, but she also lets the primary sources speak for themselves. The book reproduces letters, excerpts from the court records, an account of Zuskin's career in the form of a narrative curriculum vitae, and forty photographs. The index makes it easy to retrieve information in the text.

Book/Media Reviews

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Zuskin's story is also the story of Jewish theatre in Russia and of one of its most prominent institutions. The Jewish School of Acting, established in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) in 1918, started to offer public performances in 1919 and moved to Moscow in 1920, where it became the State Jewish Chamber Theatre, GOSEKT (Gosudarstvenny Yevreyski Kamerny Teatr). GOSEKT was the first Jewish theatre in history to be subsidized by the state. In 1925, the word "chamber" was dropped, and GOSEKT changed its name to State Jewish Theatre, GOSET (Gosudarstvenny Yevreyski Teatr). Zuskin auditioned for the acting school in late 1920 and joined the theatre in March 1921. His audition piece later on developed into *The Old Tailor*, one of Zuskin's signature performances. Zuskin's debut took place on September 24, 1921 in the short play *It's a Lie!*, part of *An Evening of Sholem Aleichem*, directed by Alexei Granovsky and designed by Marc Chagall. The following year the already famous Zuskin played the lead role in *The Sorceress*. Throughout his career, Zuskin worked very closely with actor and director Solomon Mikhoels, who became artistic director of the Theatre in 1929. Zuskin eventually took over the artistic direction of GOSET after Mikhoels was murdered in early 1948; but this role did not last for very long, as Zuskin was arrested at the end of 1948. The artistic and personal relationship between Zuskin and Mikhoels is central to Zuskin's career and to the book.

The Travels of Benjamin Zuskin gives readers a full account of the life and career of an artist who was instrumental in advancing Jewish theatre and culture, but whose name may be less known to the general public. The author conveys facts in a

very engaging manner; readers feel like first-person witnesses to the events described in the book. The book is an excellent source for anyone interested in theatre, Jewish theatre and culture, Russian history, and life in general.

Francesca Marini
Texas A&M University

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Friday, October 16, 2015

Fall Board Meeting

[The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts](#)
111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, New York

More information to come shortly.

Thursday, November 5-Sunday, November 8,
2015

[ASTR-TLA Annual Conference](#)

Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront
1401 SW Naito Pkwy.
Portland, OR 97201