

BROADSIDE

a news digest of



THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Issue 4: July 11, 2015-December 15, 2015

December 15th, 2015 | [President's Blog](#)



Autumn, New York City, 2015. Photograph by Nancy Friedland.

TLA in 2015

Greetings TLA!

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

I am writing to provide a glimpse of the activities of this past year and to outline new initiatives for 2016.

I am delighted to report that Theatre Library Association has enjoyed another active and productive year. I thank our officers—Angela Weaver, Vice President, Colleen Reilly, Treasurer, and Laurie Murphy, Executive Secretary, the TLA Board, our committee members, and our general membership. Through their hard work and commitment to the mission of TLA, we continue to move forward with our publications, programs, and awards.

Welcome new board members Rosemary Davis and Claudia Chase! Welcome back Francesca Marini! A most welcome re-election to Diana Bertolini! Congratulations all!

Many thanks to Leahkim Gannett and Beth Kattelman for their service to the board.

Membership

It is that time of year to renew your TLA membership. If you are not currently a member, and you enjoy our news, publications, and events, please consider joining TLA. The TLA individual membership is \$50 for the year. Your membership dues provide the financial foundation for our

activities. We rely on your support in order to bring you *Performing Arts Resources*, the Freedley and Wall Book Awards, the Louis Rachow Distinguished Service Award, and the Brooks McNamara Librarian Scholarship Award. We share a passion for the performing arts and we are committed to its documentation and preservation through the various activities of the association. We support a robust network of professionals and are actively engaged with the archival, library, theatre, and academic communities. Through these awards and activities, we honor excellence in performing arts and film studies scholarship, we honor the best in our profession, and we promote and support future librarians and curators interested in performing arts collections. We enjoy a full circle.

I encourage you to Support TLA! Renew! Join!

Please consider renewing or joining at the \$75 rate in honor of our landmark 75 years or renew or join as a Sustaining Member at \$150—to help secure our next 75 years!

Annual Business Meeting

In line with our bylaws, we held our annual business meeting on October 16 following the board meeting. It was my privilege and duty as President of TLA to report on the activities of the association.

Book Awards

I am proud of the work of the Book Awards Committee. They continue to refine and perfect the process of working with publishers to identify and receive books for consideration. They coordinate shipping the books to all the jurors.

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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/broadsidenews/>

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Theatre Library Association

c/o The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

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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: \$50 personal, \$75 institutional; \$25 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

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The jurors then read, review, discuss, and decide on the finalists. In addition to managing this process, the committee members plan and arrange the Book Awards event. This year, we took a turn for a more relaxed and intimate get together to show our appreciation to our Freedley and Wall Award recipients and to honor our Distinguished Service Award recipient.

Congratulations to Arnold Aronson, our Freedley Award winner, for his outstanding work entitled *Ming Cho Lee: A Life in Design*. Our Wall Award winner, Mark Harris, was honored for his work *Five Came Back: A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War*. Scott Eyman was awarded the Wall Special Jury Prize for his work *John Wayne: The Life and Legend*. Warm congratulations to Karen Nickeson for her recognition as our Louis A. Rachow Distinguished Service Award.

The celebratory event was scheduled for the Café at the Library for the Performing Arts followed by a reception. We were honored to have all award recipients in attendance as well as our distinguished guest, Ming Cho Lee. There were many heartfelt notes of appreciation expressed by our award recipients—it was a lovely evening.

Many thanks to all of the jurors for honoring excellence! Many thanks to Grandaisy Bakery for their generous food donation. Thank you to Annemarie van Rousell and Evan Leslie of New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (LPA) for their wonderful effort to establish this year's ceremony under LPA's programs brand. Many thanks to Tiffany Nixon and Diana Bertolini, co-chairs, and committee members Linda Miles, Annemarie van Rousell, and Morgen Stevens-Garmon.

For full description of the Awards Event, please see the [full blog post](#) from Diana Bertolini.

Performing Arts Resources

Kenneth Schlesinger completed *The State of the*

Profession: Performing Arts Librarianship in the 21st Century. I think this is an essential text focusing on timely issues for the profession. Kenneth brought together excellent contributions. I hope you all have had a [chance to read this volume](#).

We have a number of exciting PAR volumes in queue. We continue to enjoy the memories of the SIBMAS TLA Conference. The proceedings are in process to be published by TLA as part of our *Performing Arts Resources* series. We are planning separate French and English text versions. SIBMAS is working diligently to translate for the French version. Tiffany Nixon has taken on the role of editor. We expect the volume to go to press in early 2016—and ready for mailing before the SIBMAS Conference in Copenhagen 2016. Marti LoMonaco has taken the lead on a PAR volume entitled *Theatres at an Exhibition—Developing Dynamic Performing Arts Exhibits*. The call for papers was recently distributed to the list. Marti is actively seeking contributors. We hope to engage many TLA folks in this project. I think this will be an important text serving as a primer with insight and best practices for staging exhibitions for the performing arts. We welcome you to share your knowledge and experience!

We also can look forward to PAR volumes on *Digital Humanities and the Performing Arts* with editors Doug Reside and Tanisha Jones. I will be working with John Calhoun on a future PAR on Theatre Architecture.

Publications Committee

Many thanks to Leahkim Gannett for her terrific work leading the Publications Committee. She will be stepping down as chair at the end of this year. I am delighted she will remain on the committee. Congratulations to Joseph Tally for taking over leadership responsibilities and actively engaging with all the activities of this essential committee. Last year, I charged an Ad Hoc Committee on PAR to evaluate new publishing and business models. Leahkim and Joseph have moved this discussion forward. The committee will continue to review the literature and studies on open access

models through 2016 before making recommendations to the board. I also plan to engage the board in an extended discussion on open access in preparation for the committee's report. For now, the board has endorsed the effort to provide open access to our early PAR volumes, 1-22. The digitization process, access, and platform are in discussion.



Gerding Theater, 2015. Photograph by Nancy Friedland.

ASTR Conference

We had a strong presence at the ASTR Conference in Portland with several TLA members in attendance. The plenary session was well attended—with engaging presentations on the *Samuel French Project* by Rosemary Davis, *Untitled Audio/Visual Oregon Shakespeare Project* by Debra Griffith and Gwyn Hervochon, and *The Wild Adventures of the William Archer Collection* by Thomas Postlewait. These presentations told wonderful stories of jubilation, frustration, and [discovery in working in archives](#). Angela Weaver arranged an exciting tour of the Gerding Theatre at the Armory. We had great attendance for [this event](#). We were fortunate to have an excellent guide —Creon Thorne. Many thanks to Noreen Barnes and Matt DiCintio for co-chairing the plenary and to Matt for moderating this exciting panel.

We now begin planning for ASTR 2016! Beth Kattleman and Matt DiCintio will be serving as co-

chairs for the next TLA Plenary at ASTR.

Website

The website is a beautiful work in progress. I hope you all are enjoying the interface, posts, and the responsive design on your mobile devices! Many thanks to Angela Weaver and Eric Colleary, co chairs of the Website Editorial Committee, and to all of the committee members for their excellent contributions including content development and working to develop best practices for communicating the activities of the association.

The last issue of BROADSIDE Digest was published July, 2015; and the next issue will be published this winter.

Emily Witkowski replaced Charlotte Cubbage as the Book Review Editor on the Website Editorial Committee. Welcome Emily! If you are interested in contributing to our Book Reviews, let us know!

Liaison—ATAP, ACRL-Arts, ATAP

We continue to support the innovative efforts of ATAP. ATAP is seeking nominations for candidates to join its Steering Committee in January 2016 for a three year appointment. Helice Koffler and Colleen Reilly will be rotating from the Steering Committee to the Advisory Board. Candidates should be able to commit to a monthly conference call and service to a sub-committee such as Funding or Training. ATAP conducted several activities at the ASTR-TLA conference including a Portland area archivist training session, the local plenary session, and the Portland Initiation Program grant. You can find news and updates on the activities of [ATAP in their monthly newsletter](#).

ACRL-Arts

Many thanks to Diana King for her excellent and persevering work with ACRL Arts Section. She has helped to move forward exciting conference programs for ALA Conferences—many in collaboration with other associations such as Music Library Association. Diana is also working

as co-chair on the Ad Hoc Committee on Libraries, a joint committee with ASTR members. The committee members met at the ASTR Conference in Portland to discuss next steps for the committee.

New Partnership

There is a potential new partnership with the association POBA. Kenneth Schlesinger currently serves on the board of POBA and will explore future joint activities for POBA and TLA.

Symposium Planning or Symp4

The Symposium 4 Committee is actively planning TLA's fourth symposium to be held in October 2016. The theme for the symposium will focus on *Documenting the Fringe*. Proposed panel discussions will cover several important aspects of fringe festivals including the history of festivals, program planning, and how the festivals contribute to the performing arts scenes in their communities. Other panel themes will include a scholarly investigation of fringe festivals and a panel with librarians and archivists to share strategies for documenting festivals. The call for papers was approved by the board and will be sent out in early spring 2016.

Social Media

Our Facebook activity is comprised of shared news articles with focus on all aspects of performing arts and TLA news. We want to grow our "Likes" and ask our membership to follow us on Facebook!

Treasurer's Report

Many thanks to Colleen Reilly for all of her work for TLA. She is committed to an additional year of service as treasurer to help refine our banking and accounting procedures as we work to centralize this activity to an account in New York City. She is on top of everything that comes her way. I appreciate all her work in keeping our books in order.

As of October 4, 2015, Colleen Reilly reported that the TLA Account Balance totaled \$93,481. Our expenses include publishing the PAR volume, and Book Awards mailing expenses and honorarium. PAR volumes 27, 29, and 30 continue modest sales. This balance also includes funding allocated for the SIBMAS TLA Conference Proceedings.

Secretary / Membership Committee Report

Many thanks to Laurie Murphy for all of her excellent work for TLA. She too is on top of everything that comes her way.



Lion Cubs, "Patience, Jr. and Fortitude, Jr." South Africa, 2015. Photograph by Nancy Friedland .

Laurie has spent many hours diligently updating and readying our membership directory for the website. This is terrific news and many thanks to Laurie for all this work. A thank you to Doug Reside for setting up the backend platform—we expect to have this important resource available very soon.

2015 Membership Statistics

Membership statistics are a concern. Laurie reported that as of October 8, 2015, we currently have 193 members representing a significant drop in membership. The steepest decline is with our personal members but we have seen institutional cuts as well.

As chair of the Membership Committee, Laurie will be heading an initiative to review our membership, solicit feedback from lapsed members, and will work with the Membership Committee on a membership drive for 2016!

Personal Note

I had an exciting year presenting at a number of library and academic conferences. I joined a panel at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference this past March. The focus of discussion was Research in Film Studies in the 21st Century. For an early morning session, our audience extended to standing room only. There was tremendous interest from attendees in libraries, digital access, and impact of digital technology on future scholarship. We had engaging questions and a lively discussion following the presentations. I also had an extraordinary opportunity to present at the IFLA Conference in August held in Cape Town, South Africa. My talk was focused on issues related to streaming video for educational support—a subject very much on my mind these days. We continue to meet new challenges in libraries and archives with innovative practices in our collecting, access, and teaching. Digital technology has helped to change our traditional methods and practices. It was once feared that Google would make libraries and librarians obsolete—I believe we are more vital than ever. I hold the passionate comments from our Book Awards recipients as testimony that our work is respected and appreciated.

Once known as Leo Astor and Leo Lenox, the iconic and beloved public sculptures of two male lions that sit in front of the New York Public Library were renamed in the 1930s by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. He called them Patience and Fortitude in order to remind and inspire New Yorkers of the qualities they would need to survive the hardship of the Great Depression. Today, they serve as mascots for NYPL and New Yorkers still lovingly refer to them as Patience and Fortitude. I hope you enjoy this picture from my trip to South Africa. I now lovingly refer to these lion cubs as Patience, Jr. and Fortitude, Jr.—reminding us all that these

continue to be important qualities particularly in today's world.

Nancy Friedland
President, Theatre Library Association

October 22nd, 2015 | [President's Blog, Elections](#)

TLA Election Results!

Congratulations to our new board members! Election results were shared at the annual business meeting held October 16, 2015.

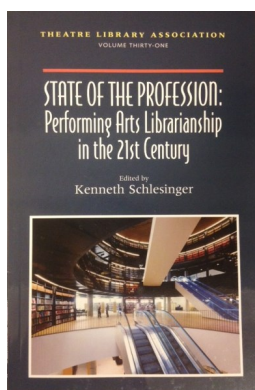
I am pleased to announce that Diana Bertolini has been re-elected for another term. Francesca Marini will be returning to the board in 2016.

Congratulations to Rosemary Davis and Claudia Case on your election to a first term on the TLA Board!

The three-year terms commence January 1, 2016. Thank you to the TLA membership for participating in this election process.

I look forward to working with you all.

Nancy



New PAR Volume Examines the State of the Profession

The latest volume of [Performing Arts Resources](#), *State of the Profession: Performing Arts Librarianship in the 21st Century*, was mailed to all Theatre Library Association members last month, and is now available for sale.

Performing Arts Resources 31, *State of the Profession: Performing Arts Librarianship in the 21st Century*, considers the current status of performing arts librarians and archivists—as well as performing arts libraries in general. It reflects on issues of professional preparation and training, sustainability of the profession, consolidation of performing arts libraries nationwide, challenges of digitization and technological transformation, and service to our unique communities of users. In particular, it focuses on the following three framing questions:

- Is the performing arts librarian a vanishing species?
- Will the convergence of libraries, archives, and museums – not to mention digitization – advance or inhibit our profession?
- Do these new models offer dynamic synergies for collections – or is our unique identity being lost?

While in some respects threatening, the current landscape offers opportunities for unexpected collaborations, innovation of traditional professional practices, and possibly new paradigms for promoting our collections and mission to the public. In this reconfigured constellation, do we despair, cling to our eternal verities, or proactively embrace these new challenges to create historically-rich and technological interventions for a truly 21st century crucible of performing arts documentation?

Kenneth Schlesinger
Lehman College, City University of New York

CALL FOR PAPERS

Theatres at an Exhibition—The Art of Performance in Two Dimensions

This PAR will be devoted to the art of theatre exhibitions. The volume will be an inspirational “how to” for librarians, archivists, and theatre historians planning their own exhibitions by showcasing outstanding examples from the past and getting advice from the experts on how to design, create, fund, and promote these to the public.

We will address the critical questions of how to make theatre performative in two dimensions; how to appeal to a range of audience(s) from practitioners to the general public; how to create a great exhibition with limited funds and no special training. Barbara Cohen-Stratynier, Director of Exhibitions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, will write the lead article on her pioneering work in New York but we need many more essays to round out the volume. We invite contributors on these and other topics of your choice:

- Determining your exhibition theme or topic and telling a dynamic story
- Selecting and interpreting exhibition materials
- Display, conservation and preservation of physical elements—costumes, props, print, three-dimensional stage designs, audio and visual materials
- Clearing rights and permissions for displays
- Education by design—creating interactive displays, teaching tools, and other hands-on learning for all ages
- The hybrid environment—incorporating online components or organizing a virtual display
- Funding the project—sponsoring organizations, grants, partnerships
- Publicity, marketing, and public programming
- Exhibition publications
- Case studies of notable exhibitions, which might include notes and advice on best practices

Please send a 500-word proposal as an e-doc attachment by November 30, 2015, to Dr. Marti LoMonaco, Editor, at mlomonaco@fairfield.edu. You may also attach photos to supplement your written proposal. I welcome e-mail queries in advance of your formal proposal.

Marti LoMonaco
Fairfield University

July 11th, 2015 | [Media](#)

Never Miss a Post with TLA's RSS Feed

Inundated with blogs you'd like to follow but don't have the time to visit them all? Most blogs and news sites – including TLA's – offer Really Simple Syndication (RSS) to help you out. RSS simplifies the information from your favorite sites and delivers all of it to one location.

To get started, all you need is a feed reader. When a blog or news site you subscribe to adds a new post, it'll automatically be sent to your reader. No more guess work. No more visiting dozens of blogs to see if they've been updated recently.

One of the most popular feed readers is [Feedly](#), which can be installed as an app for iOS and Android, and can also be used on the web. Registration is simple, free, and easy-to-use. Looking for other options? Lifehacker has [a great post comparing different feed readers](#).

Each reader has its own different set-up instructions, but generally all you need is a link to each site's RSS feed that you want to follow. The subscription link for TLA's RSS feed can be found at the bottom of every page: <http://www.tla-online.org/feed/>

Eric Colleary
University of Texas at Austin

TLA Announces 2014 Book Award Winners!

The Theatre Library Association is proud to announce the TLA Book Award winners for English language works of scholarship on theatre, film, and broadcasting, published in 2014.

The 2014 George Freedley Memorial Award for an exemplary work in the field of live theatre or performance will be awarded to **Arnold Aronson** for *Ming Cho Lee: A Life in Design*, published by Theatre Communications Group.

The following works were 2014 finalists for the Freedley Award:

- **Rick DesRochers**, *New Humor in the Progressive Era: Americanization and the Vaudeville Comedian*, Palgrave Macmillan
- **Jenna M. Gibbs**, *Performing the Temple of Liberty: Slavery, Theater, and Popular Culture in London and Philadelphia, 1760-1850*, Johns Hopkins University Press
- **Stephen H. Grant**, *Collecting Shakespeare: The Story of Henry and Emily Folger*, Johns Hopkins University Press
- **John Lahr**, *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh*, Norton
- **Paige McGinley**, *Staging the Blues: From Tent Shows to Tourism*, Duke University Press

The 2014 Richard Wall Memorial Award for an exemplary work in the field of recorded performance will be awarded to **Mark Harris** for *Five Came Back: A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War*, published by Penguin. A Special Jury Prize will be awarded to **Scott Eyman** for *John Wayne: The Life and Legend*, published by Simon and Schuster. The following works were 2014 finalists for the Wall Award:

- **Cecilia DeMille Presley and Mark A. Viera**, *Cecil B. DeMille: The Art of the Hollywood Epic*, Running Press

- **J. E. Smyth**, *Fred Zinnemann and the Cinema of Resistance*, University Press of Mississippi
- **Eric Hoyt**, *Hollywood Vault: Film Libraries Before Home Video*, University of California Press
- **Federico Pacchioni**, *Inspiring Fellini: Literary Collaborations Behind the Scenes*, University of Toronto Press

The 2014 TLA Book Awards will be presented to the winners at a gala celebration in the Café of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in New York City, at 6:30 PM on **October 16, 2015**. Additional event and registration information to follow.

October 1st, 2015 | [Events](#), [Awards](#), [Louis Rachow Distinguished Service Award](#), [Members](#)

Distinguished Service Award 2015 – Karen Nickeson

The Theatre Library Association Professional Awards Committee is thrilled to announce that Karen Nickeson is the recipient of the 2015 [Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award](#). Karen's exemplar career at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts embodies the essence of distinguished service and we are proud to celebrate Karen's accomplishments at the October 16th ceremony.

Karen Nickeson received her Master's training in Library and Information Science from UNC Chapel Hill, where she also performed and taught dance locally. After a brief period in The New York Public Library branches, she was recruited as a cataloger for the Jerome Robins Dance Division. Later, as archival specialist, she worked along with the Dance Heritage Coalition to pioneer the use of standardized electronic finding aids at NYPL. When asked why she chose to join the Billy Rose Theatre Division as Assistant Curator in 2000, she answered, "Because I love the words." She retired as Curator in 2014 and is so proud to have shared her professional life with the brilliant staff of the Library for the Performing Arts.

TLA Awards

September 30th, 2015 | [Events](#), [Book Awards](#)

November 2nd, 2015 | [Events](#), [Awards](#), [Book Awards](#), [Louis Rachow Distinguished Service Award](#)

TLA Book Awards Ceremony

Hello TLA members and fans! Our book awards jurors have finished reading this year's nominees and they've chosen some wonderful books to recognize this year at a ceremony in New York. TLA is thrilled to invite you to the annual presentation of the [Theatre Library Association's Book Awards](#), honoring English language works of scholarship on theatre, film, and broadcasting, published in 2014. The 2014 George Freedley Memorial Award for an exemplary work in the field of live theatre or performance will be awarded to **Arnold Aronson** for *Ming Cho Lee: A Life in Design*, published by Theatre Communications Group. The 2014 Richard Wall Memorial Award for an exemplary work in the field of recorded performance will be awarded to **Mark Harris** for *Five Came Back: A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War*, published by Penguin. A Special Jury Prize will be awarded to **Scott Eyman** for *John Wayne: The Life and Legend*, published by Simon and Schuster.

The TLA Book Awards Ceremony will include remarks from this year's winners and a display of materials from the holdings of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, with a brief reception to follow.

- Where: Café of New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
- When: 6:30 PM on Friday October 16, 2015. (Doors open at 6:15.)
- Reserve your seat [online today](#). (For assistance with online reservations, please visit the welcome desk at the Library for the Performing Arts' Lincoln Center Plaza entrance, where volunteers will make a reservation for you, even if you do not use email.)

This event takes place in the Library for the Performing Arts' Café, on the first floor, Lincoln Center Plaza level. Enter via the Café entrance by ascending the stairs at the corner of Amsterdam Ave. and West 65th St. Mobility impaired people may enter via 111 Amsterdam Ave.

We hope to see you in October!

Diana Bertolini
Book Awards Committee Co-Chair

2015 TLA Book Awards at the Library for the Performing Arts



New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Café, 2015; photograph by Evan Leslie.

Hello TLA Members and Friends!

We're delighted to report that our annual event, which was held on Friday October 16th at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (LPA) was a triumphant success! For the first time, this year's Book Awards ceremony was produced as part of LPA's Public Programs Series. The event began with opening remarks from Evan Leslie, Artistic Producer for The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Evan welcomed us warmly to the Café of the Library for the Performing Arts, speaking about the long history of interconnections between the Library and TLA, and the natural fit of the TLA Book Awards with the Library, which plays host to so many scholars conducting research on the Performing Arts.

Then former TLA President Kevin Winkler took the stage to present the Louis Rachow Distinguished Service in Performing Arts Librarianship Award to Karen Nickeson. Kevin has known Karen throughout her NYPL career, starting as a cataloger for the Jerome Robins Dance Division, and later working as both Assistant Curator and Curator of the Billy Rose Theatre Division. He spoke of her consistently excellent work and discussed her pioneering the use of standardized electronic finding aids at NYPL. In Karen's acceptance speech she said that in a long and

TLA Awards

interesting career, what has meant the most to her has been having the opportunity to work with so many wonderful people.



Karen Nickeson, 2015; photograph by Evan Leslie.

Nancy Friedland, TLA's current president was on hand to present the 2014 George Freedley Memorial Award for an exemplary work in the field of live theatre or performance to Arnold Aronson for *Ming Cho Lee: A Life in Design*. Nancy was delighted to present this award to Aronson, who is a longtime colleague of hers at



Arnold Aronson, 2015; photograph by Evan Leslie.

Columbia University. She spoke about the high esteem he's been held in by many years of Columbia Students. In his acceptance speech,

Aronson paid homage to Ming Cho Lee, who was in the audience with his wife Betsey. He expressed his gratitude to Lee for the lifetime of great designs that inspired the book, and for the generous way Lee invited him into his home and gave him 150 hours of interviews.



Ming Cho Lee and Betsey Lee, 2015; photograph by Evan Leslie.

Next up was TLA Board Member and Wall Award juror John Calhoun, to present the 2014 Richard Wall Special Jury Prize for an exemplary work in the field of recorded performance to Scott Eyman for John Wayne: The Life and Legend. While introducing Eyman—who had previously won the Wall Award for *Empire of Dreams: The Epic Life of Cecil B. DeMille* (2010)—John commended his



Scott Eyman, 2015; photograph by Evan Leslie.

TLA Awards

book for its exemplary level of research, as well as for its genuine insight, and the heightened understanding it provides of Wayne's life and work. I think everyone from TLA was deeply touched by Eyman's kind words about how much it means to him to be honored by librarians, because the librarians who help him in his research have such a great impact on him. He also tantalized the audience by telling us about his next project, a book about the decades-long friendship between Henry Fonda and James Stewart.

Then John Calhoun came back to present the 2014 Richard Wall Memorial Award for an exemplary work in the field of recorded performance to Mark Harris for *Five Came Back: A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War*. John praised Harris's book, for its comprehensive research, engaging writing, and its emotional power in describing scenes like George Stevens' filming the liberation of Dachau. When Harris got to the podium he noted that he had announced that this would be his next book while accepting the Wall Award for his previous book, *Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood* (2008) and shared a wonderful story about his research process, when a librarian drew his attention to an unprocessed box of letters George Stevens had written to his family while stationed abroad making propaganda films during World War II. He said these letters provided him with the breakthrough he needed to understand Stevens' enigmatic personality. He also mentioned how helpful George Stevens Jr. had been to him while working on the book, and he dedicated his award to the Stevens family.

After the Ceremony, many of our guests joined us for a reception, with delicious snacks generously donated by Grandaisy Bakery. Through the generosity of the Billy Rose Theatre Division, we were able to have original archival materials relating to the winning books on display: two stunning Ming Cho Lee set models, a souvenir program from the John Wayne vehicle *The Alamo*, and a scrapbook from the collection of *The Best Years of Our Lives* art director George Jenkins.

Congratulations again to all of this year's winners, and thanks to everyone who helped make this memorable evening possible!

Diana Bertolini
Co-Chair, Theatre Library Association Book Awards Committee



Mark Harris, 2015; photograph by Evan Leslie.

ASTR-TLA Conference

November 20th, 2015 | [Events](#), [Conferences](#), [ASTR](#)



Rosemary K. J. Davis, Debra Griffith, Gwyn Hervochon, and Thomas Postlewait, 2015; photograph by Matt DiCintio.

TLA Plenary “Adventures in the Archives”—ASTR 2015

The TLA Plenary at the American Society for Theatre Research conference in November was a terrific success. In collaboration with the conference themes of advocacy and urgency, we opened our call for proposals by recalling the TNT series “The Librarians,” in which a group of scholars and historians become action heroes as they safeguard some of humanity’s greatest treasures against supernatural terrorist threats. We invited speakers to consider activism and urgency as part of the task of theatre librarian and historians and to reflect on the inability of remaining indifferent. We can all agree that funding will always be insufficient and physical space may always be inadequate; we might also agree that undergraduate and graduate students should receive more education in using the resources we shepherd. What else can we agitate for? How can we become action heroes? With plenary co-chair and TLA board member Noreen C. Barnes, we invited panelists to consider the following topics in reflecting upon their own advocacy:

- Activist Curatorial Agendas and Practices
- Forgotten Causes and Hidden Boxes
- Collections Management
- Personnel and Training/Loss of institutional memory/knowledge

- Preservation challenges: integrity of collections; issues particular to manuscripts, film/video, designs, costumes and props
- Ethics in acquisition policies
- Constructing diverse archives

The panelists described their experiences in maintaining and using collections that risk misuse at best and disappearance at worst, and with their work came both triumph and frustration.

Rosemary K. J. Davis, the Samuel French Collection Processing Archivist at Amherst College, described her work in the French collection, which has been funded by a “Hidden Collections” grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources. An appropriate location for the work of an action hero, a former nuclear fallout shelter houses the collection. In her bunker, Davis catalogues more than 60,000 unique items that date as early as 1794. These include the thousands upon thousands of playscripts published by French’s various concerns during his own career between the 1830s and 1890s and their subsequent incarnations. The collection also includes musical scores, programs, business records, broadsides, scrapbooks, and correspondence, including a request from Margaret Murray Washington (wife of Booker T.), who in 1917 requested ten copies of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Tuskegee Institute. Davis invited researchers to use the collection to explore the development of international copyright and

performance rights laws, the spread of amateur theatricals, and the proliferation of publishing businesses in the nineteenth century. She also invoked the work of the American Theatre Archive Project as a means of guarding against future “hidden” collections.

Debra Griffith, the Records and Reference Archivist for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Gwyn Hervochon, who also was an archivist at OSF and is now with Boise State, described the herculean project of digitizing the Festival’s audiovisual records that date to the 1930s. Griffith and Hervochon counted more than 4,100 pieces of obsolete media, some of which, including the 1955 score to a production of *Timon of Athens*, had been considered “total losses.” More than 1,600 reel-to-reel audio recordings, 700 audio cassettes, and 550 VHS tapes were rescued by contracted digitizing and cataloguing firms. Even holdings on more modern digital formats, such as minidisks from the 1990s, risked falling into oblivion. Griffith and Hervochon stressed the importance having support from the entire OSF organization; many of the rescued recordings now appear on the company’s YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/orshakes). The archivists praised Carl Ritchie, a longtime OSF company member who for a half-century worked to preserve and index the collection.

The theatre historian Thomas Postlewait, an emeritus professor from Ohio State and faculty member at the University of Washington, posed provocative questions about historians’ response to adversity in, “Shit Happens: The Fate of a Theatre Archive in the United Kingdom.” Postlewait detailed his decades-long struggle to access the archives of early twentieth-century playwright and translator William Archer. For reasons that are still not readily apparent, government and institution officials relocated the archive more than a half-dozen times since it was originally donated to the British Drama League in 1924. Along the way, Archer’s manuscripts (including the first translations of Ibsen into English) and his correspondence with Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, and J. M. Barrie, among

others, suffered from poor storage, inconsistent cataloguing, and leaky ceilings. Postlewait received applause from the audience when he described spreading out damp pages to dry. In recalling his frustration with the archive’s access and condition, Postlewait admitted that he has been tempted to shrug his shoulders in resignation (“shit happens”). Still, he challenged the audience to find more productive attitudes and courses of action than anger and cynicism. The four panelists offered enlightening perspectives on the often hidden but often valiant efforts of the men and women who toil in bunkers and beneath leaky ceilings. Following the presentations, audience members swarmed around the panelists, action heroes home from battle.

Matt DiCintio
Tufts University

ASTR-TLA Conference

November 25th, 2015 | [Events](#), [Conferences](#), [ASTR](#)

Westward Ho! Tour of Portland Center Stage at the ASTR-TLA Annual Conference, November 6, 2015



Gerding Theater, 2015; photograph by Nancy Friedland.

We couldn't have asked for a better day to get out and about in Portland. For once, the weather in the Pacific Northwest cooperated, giving us a mild fall day devoid of rain. Some of us walked from the Marriott, others took the street car or light rail, but a group of about twenty conference participants gathered at 11th Avenue in The Armory to tour the Gerding Theater, home of Portland Center Stage, in the Pearl District. Creon Thorne, the General Manager, met us in the lobby and guided us on a lively and informative tour of the company's home.

He began by recounting the history of The Armory and the role it played in late 19th century Portland as a military installation and gathering place for local residents. Because the building used a truss system to support the roof, the space was devoid of columns and could accommodate a large

number of people for cultural and sporting events, from concerts to boxing matches. Creon pointed out that the current roof still employed the original trusses made of old growth Douglas fir. In the late 60s, the Blitz-Weinhard Brewing Company

purchased the Armory and transformed it into a warehouse and bottling plant; it remained so until 1999 when the Armory was purchased by the Gerding/Edlen Development Company as part of the Brewery Blocks redevelopment package. Gerding Theater, which opened in 2006, was named for Bob Gerding, who initially suggested The Armory as a permanent home for Portland Center Stage.

The Gerding Theater became the first building on the National Register of Historic Places—and the first theater—to achieve a Platinum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating from the US Green Building Council. Creon explained that the designation came about due to a mixture of green/sustainable design and mechanical features as well as construction methods.

Leaving the lobby, we entered the Main Stage Theater which was dressed with the revolving set for an expanded cast version of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Inside the theater, Creon pointed out such environmentally friendly features as the seats which were upholstered with recycled fabric and constructed with recycled wood.

Beneath the Main Stage was the black box Studio Theater where the off-Broadway hit *Sex with Strangers* was being staged. Before going inside the black box theater, Creon explained that because the ground floor was below the level of the river, the walls had to be reinforced, leading some of the engineers to joke that there were

ASTR-TLA Conference



Trusses in the Gerding Theater, 2015; photograph by Angela Weaver.

bridges that weren't as well-built. Creon said that if the Big One (earthquake) were ever to hit the Pacific Northwest, this was the place you'd want to be.

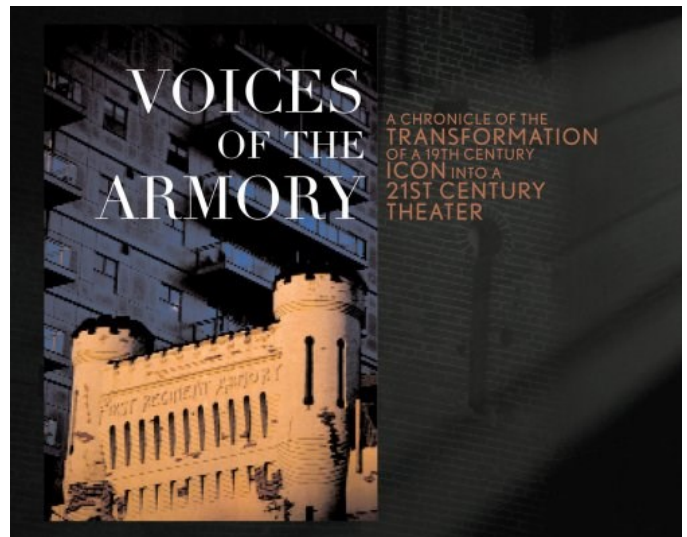
Inside the theater, a vigorous discussion ensued around Portland Center Stage's efforts to build audiences among the coveted 25-40 demographic as part of a Building Audiences for Sustainability grant from the Wallace Foundation. PCS hopes by incorporating a number of different social and social media activities around its productions, it can cultivate a subscription base among this age group, which traditionally has not been a strong theatre-going demographic.



Creon Thorne, General Manager, and tour attendees, 2015; photograph by Nancy Friedland.

The last stop on the tour was the administrative level where we viewed a rehearsal room as well as administrative offices and the company kitchen. Creon explained that the company wanted to have the rehearsal room in the midst of the administrative level in order to foster a sense of community among the actors and staff—although he admitted that sometimes the sound of actors practicing their lines or songs in the open kitchen could be distracting.

At the end of the tour we were gifted with copies of the book, *Voices of the Armory: A Chronicle of the Transformation of a 19th Century Icon into a*



21st Century Theater, which tells the story of the Armory project in way more detail than a mere tour report could ever do. A number of tour attendees took advantage of the generous discount Portland Center Stage offered ASTR-TLA conference participants to purchase tickets for the two productions currently running. A most enjoyable time was had by all thanks to the great staff at Portland Center Stage.

Angela E. Weaver
University of Washington

ALA Annual Conference

September 23rd, 2015 | [Conferences](#), [Exhibitions](#)



Kirsten Tanaka shows off some of Museum of Performance + Design's treasures, 2015; photograph by John Calhoun.

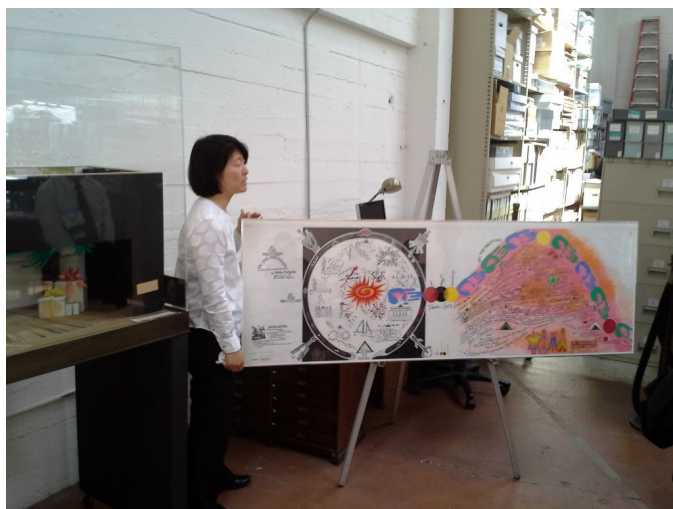
Inside the Museum of Performance + Design

Before the ribbon was cut at the American Library Association's 2015 conference on June 26, several Theatre Library Association members took the time to enjoy a tour of San Francisco's Museum of Performance + Design (MP+D). Founded in 1947 by Russell Hartley, a San Francisco Ballet dancer and designer, this institution has evolved considerably since its beginnings, expanding its mission to document Bay Area performance from the mid-19th century Gold Rush days to the present. Leading the tour at MP+D's current Folsom Street headquarters in the South of Market district was head librarian/archivist Kirsten Tanaka, who showed off some of the museum's treasures and described its activities.

The museum houses about 3.5 million items in its 5,000 sq. ft. building and offsite facility. These holdings range from books, playbills, photographs, posters, broadsides, scrapbooks, biographical files, sheet music and three-dimensional items like costumes and stage models. The archives of San Francisco Ballet and San Francisco Opera are represented as well as the personal papers of opera star Gladys Swarthout, dancer/

choreographer Anna Halprin, and playwright Paul Gerard Smith, among many others. There are archival records documenting the city's major theatre companies and buildings; a theatre film archive of about 500 productions (open on a restricted basis to Actors' Equity members and other qualified theatre professionals), plus a number of other performance videos; local radio archives; and an oral history project for San Francisco performing artists.

On the tour, Tanaka presented artifacts documenting San Francisco performance history: a model of the War Memorial Opera House stage; a sculpted cherub from the Fox Theatre movie palace (designed by Thomas W. Lamb and demolished in 1963); a color panel dance score for Anna Halprin's [In the Mountain On the](#)



Kirsten Tanaka shows an Anna Halprin dance score for "In the Mountain On the Mountain," 2015; photograph by John Calhoun.

[Mountain](#); several animal skin Chinese shadow puppets; and two Anna Pavlova self-portraits. Only four life masks of the prima ballerina are known, and tour guests got a chance to see one in the MP+D holdings. It was a colorful array that gave just a taste of the museum's unique collections.

MP+D has faced its share of challenges over its 68-year history. Founded by Hartley as the San

ALA Annual Conference



Chinese shadow puppet at the Museum of Performance + Design, 2015; photograph by John Calhoun.

Francisco Dance Archives (later the Archives for the Performing Arts), the collection for a time was part of San Francisco Public Library system. After a period of expansion and a couple of relocations, the organization became formally known as the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum in 1989. Another move in 1999 gave the museum, renamed MP+D in 2007, an expansive space in the Veterans Building at the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. But the Veterans Building closed for seismic upgrade and renovation in 2013, and the grant- and donation-dependent MP+D was compelled to move into its present location with a smaller staff, including executive director Muriel Maffre and dedicated San Francisco Ballet archivist Supriya Wronkiewicz in addition to Tanaka.

Nonetheless, the museum continues to maintain a robust exhibition and programming profile. At the time of the tour the exhibit *Latifa Medjoub: Sublimated Masks*, showcasing costumes and fiber sculptures created for the Collected Works production of Genet's *The Balcony*, had just closed. A performance salon featuring dancer Alessio Silvestrin was held the evening after the tour. The museum has partnered on an ongoing [online exhibit](#) of Russian choreographer Leonid Yakobson's photographs and films. And an offsite exhibit of San Francisco Ballet and San

Francisco Opera ballet posters is on display through 2016 at the War Memorial Opera House.

Now in its third year of a five-year lease on Folsom Street, MP+D may be faced with another relocation in 2018, skyrocketing San Francisco real estate prices being what they are. But Tanaka says that its mission to "keep the unfolding history of the performing arts in the San Francisco Bay Area alive" and to "collect, preserve and interpret materials on performance and theater design to support learning, appreciation and creativity within a world-wide community of artists, researchers and the general public" will remain alive.

For more information about the Museum of Performance + Design's collections, exhibitions, and research hours, visit their website at <http://www.mpdsf.org/>.



Two Anna Pavlova self-portraits and a life mask at the Museum of Performance + Design, 2015; photograph by John Calhoun.

John Calhoun
Billy Rose Theatre Division
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Events

October 30th, 2015 | [Events](#), [Related Organizations](#)

From the La MaMa Archives: Preserving the Videotaped Record of 1970s-Era Experimental Theatre



We had a packed house on October 19 for “Preserving the Videotaped Record of 1970s-era Experimental Theatre: A Screening and Panel Discussion.” More than fifty people gathered in La MaMa’s newest venue, [The Downstairs](#), to screen newly digitized clips

documenting La MaMa’s 1972 and 1973 seasons—and to discuss the challenge of preserving this kind of legacy video material.

The event had its origins in a collaboration in which La MaMa Archives was fortunate enough to participate last year. In late 2014, faculty from NYU’s Moving Image Archiving and Preservation program ([MIAP](#)) asked us to serve as a host site for a spring 2015 student project designed to introduce new archivists to the challenges of planning and overseeing a video digitization project. After inspecting a subset of our obsolete video collection (5-15 objects), students would be required to draft an RFP for the digitization of these materials, select a vendor, and then ensure the successful completion of a preservation-level digital migration of these materials. NYU would cover the cost of the transfers, and at the conclusion of the project we would receive a) a set of preservation-level digital copies of our materials and b) recommendations that might inform future migration projects. Meanwhile, participating students would learn how to apply their knowledge of archival best practices in the context of an actual collection.

We jumped at the opportunity.

The invitation to participate in this project came at an auspicious moment in the life of the La MaMa Archives. In 2014, we received a [Hidden Collections Cataloging Grant](#) from the Council on Library and Information Resources to support the creation of a digital catalog describing materials from our earliest collections (1961-1985). That grant enabled La MaMa to hire one additional full-time and two part-time Archives staff (I’m the full-timer). A year and a half later, we’ve cataloged roughly three-quarters of all the material in this earliest collection.

Among the most important results of this cataloging project is that we can now very clearly see which elements of our collection are most in need of conservation and migration. At the top of this list is a cache of rare video, shot between 1972 and 1980 on a [Portapak](#) camera, documenting 170 early Off-Off Broadway productions. These videos represent what is likely the most extensive video documentation of the theatrical experiments of the early [Off-Off Broadway](#) theatre movement in existence. But video shot on Portapak cameras—a format known as half inch open reel video—is obsolete and at-risk, in large part because the equipment required to play these materials back is scarce. The last machine of this kind was manufactured in the 1970s, parts are difficult to replace, and only a handful of living technicians know how to repair them.

So when MIAP asked us to collaborate on this project, we were extremely receptive. We had already begun developing a strategy for migrating these videos to digital. But we were not yet ready—logistically or financially—to undertake a wholesale project. Partnering with MIAP presented a low-risk opportunity for us to gather information that will enable us (we hope!) to mount a large-scale half inch open reel video migration project in the near future.

The official collaboration concluded successfully in May 2015 when students returned to us our original reels along with a hard drive containing a

set of digital files. But we didn't want to let the collaboration end there. So last Monday (October 19, 2015) we revved up our video projector, opened up our doors, and invited all comers to a post-game roundup. The discussion featured comments from Peter Oleksik (Assistant Media Conservator at MoMA and professor of MIAP's Video Preservation II course); Genevieve Havemeyer-King, Ethan Gates, and Michael Grant (students who worked on this project); Rachel Mattson, Suzanne Lipkin, and Ozzie Rodriguez (members of the La MaMa Archives team); and Bill Seery (Director of Preservation Services at [The Standby Program](#), who performed the transfers of our video). How, we asked, can small organizations meet the challenge of preserving historic, live performance captured on video formats that are now obsolete? What specific preservation concerns do half inch open reel videos present? And how are we educating a new generation of archivists to handle these challenges?

And then we screened excerpts from the videos—material that had not been publically viewed in over 40 years. These clips showcased four productions: “Short Bullins”—an evening of non-naturalistic one acts written by [Ed Bullins](#) (an important figure in the Black Arts movement); [Tisa Chang](#)'s Peking Opera adaptation *Return of the Phoenix*; [Paul Foster](#)'s *Silver Queen*; and [Tom Eyen](#)'s *Three Drag Queens from Daytona* (a queer satire based on Samuel Beckett's [Endgame](#)). The response from the audience was extremely positive—so much so that we're thinking of organizing an upcoming series featuring screenings of the full-length videos.

From La Mama's perspective, this collaboration was important for a few key reasons. On one hand, it offered us a low-risk opportunity to consider and experiment with and what we wanted from a vendor. We chose, for instance, not to ask for mezzanine-level digital files. We requested only 10-bit uncompressed preservation-level files and Mp4 access copies. But as I prepared video clips for the big screen, I regretted that decision because mezzanine-level files would

have made my editing process easier. This collaboration also offered us the opportunity to teach new archivists something about what it looks like to work with a small, community-based archive. Valuable, at-risk video is as commonly found in small arts and community-based organizations as in large university or government repositories. But the needs of small repositories are distinct from the needs of larger institutions. We're going to need a new generation of archivists who understand these distinctions, and who believe in the importance of small organizations' collections.

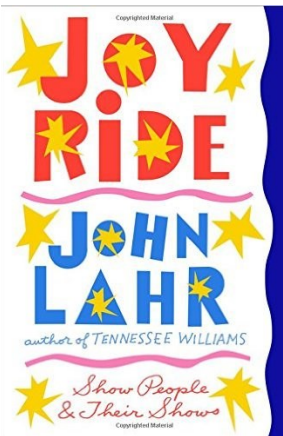
Finally, this collaboration made it possible for us to begin to share these videos with researchers and members of our communities for the first time in 4 decades—and to plan for future migration projects. We still have approximately 245 half inch open reel videos that haven't been digitized at the preservation level. So our work in this area is far from over.

To learn more about the work of the La MaMa Archives, check out our blog: <http://pushcartcatalog.wordpress.com/>. We hope to make video of the October 19 event available soon, so keep your ears peeled for details.

Rachel Mattson
Manager of Special Projects, La MaMa Archives

Book/Media Reviews

November 11th, 2015 | [Book/Media Reviews](#)



Joy Ride: show People and Their Shows

John Lahr

New York, NY: W. W.

Norton & Co., 2015

ISBN 9780393246407

592 pp.

This engaging collection of profiles and reviews written by John Lahr for *The New Yorker* during

the past twenty years will indeed be a joy ride for those interested in theatre and, to a lesser extent, film. Lahr, fresh from the publication of his long-awaited biography of Tennessee Williams, released earlier this year, offers here a different reading experience. Highly readable, revelatory, and entertaining, the twelve dramatists and four directors profiled are an eclectic group featuring such relative newbies as Sarah Ruhl and stretching back across the centuries to William Shakespeare. The more than one dozen reviews are similarly eclectic and selected to connect to the accomplishments of one or more of the profile subjects, nicely enhancing appreciation of both.

For a longtime fan of Lahr's *New Yorker* profiles, and his excellent, well-researched biographies of Williams, Joe Orton, and his own father, Bert Lahr, this latest collection does not disappoint. His profiles, which are extended encounters with individual artists that are part interview, part Lahr's own informed reflections on the life and work of the subject, feature his obvious passion for theatre in all iterations. From the vaudeville and musical stage of his father's era to the classics and the most challenging contemporary dramatists, the book is unsurprisingly a love letter to English-speaking theatre. What is surprising is the book's celebration of the art of writing, as exemplified both in the varied accomplishments of the playwrights featured and in Lahr's own vivid style and craft, revealing his long immersion in theatre as critic, profiler, and practitioner (he won accolades for scripting Elaine Stritch's acclaimed one-woman show).

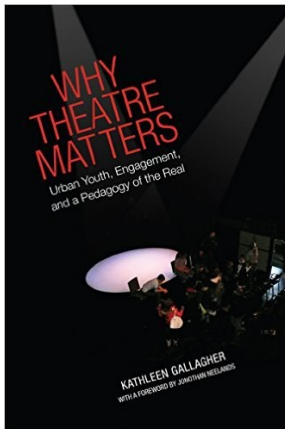
Though some of the profile subjects are now deceased (Harold Pinter, August Wilson, Arthur Miller, Clifford Odets, Mike Nichols, and Ingmar Bergman), these artists remain very much alive in frequent productions of their works and in Lahr's mostly appreciative profiles. As far as living talents are concerned, including Ruhl, Tony Kushner, Susan Stroman, and more, the reader is provided a front row seat to observe major working artists in the midst of balancing the demands of their art, personal lives, and, in some cases, the burdens of fame. The profiles also add other dramatis personae to the book as, for example, in Stroman's profile, in which a talented madman, Mel Brooks, interrupts her deep mourning for her husband, the late director Mike Okrent, bursting into her apartment singing "That Face," a song he had just completed for his musical based on his 1968 film, *The Producers* (2001). Sliding down Stroman's long hallway and leaping on to her couch for a big finish, Brooks reignited her desire to work, resulting in the phenomenally successful musical. Lahr's text is rife with similarly hilarious and deeply touching anecdotes, and the reader – at least this reader – will not be able to get enough.

Despite its length, the reading of *Joy Ride* flies by, providing readers with a rich, rewarding, and, in a time of supposed decline for live theatre, an encouraging and unforgettable ride.

James Fisher
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Book/Media Reviews

November 11th, 2015 | [Book/Media Reviews](#)



Why Theatre Matters: Urban Youth, Engagement, and a Pedagogy of the Real
Kathleen Gallagher
Toronto, Canada:
University of Toronto
Press, 2014
ISBN 9781442626942
320 pp.

The mere title of Kathleen Gallagher's new book, *Why Theatre Matters*, impelled me to read it immediately. Gallagher, who is not a theatre practitioner herself, but a pedagogic and ethnographic researcher, makes a compelling case for how drama classes make a difference in urban schools throughout the world. She substantiates her claims by drawing upon an impressive array of materials, anchored in her own quantitative and qualitative analyses of classroom engagements in Toronto, Boston, Lucknow, and Taipei, which she compares and contrasts with hundreds of similar studies and books devoted to theatre and urban pedagogy. This book is a must for every institution with a School of Education and especially Theatre Education programs; it would be difficult to find another volume that builds such a comprehensive and persuasive argument for the primacy of theatre in urban education as this one.

Gallagher's subtitle—*Urban Youth, Engagement, and a Pedagogy of the Real*—rather than theatre, is the actual subject of the book, which explores how drama classrooms become the site for open and frank discussions of class, privilege, and empowerment and a means for students to grapple with the social, political, and economic realities of their lives. The secondary school teachers profiled here work in poor neighborhoods without a lot of resources or support for their creative pedagogies. Their students are complicated people who come from fraught home environments where they are often responsible for earning a living and caring for others. Simply

getting to class is a challenge; one girl describes the lack of bus fare to get to school while others spend so many hours working in paying jobs that they don't have time to do homework and often are too tired to go to school. It is difficult for teachers to sustain a planned curriculum, since they can't count on students being able to build knowledge and skills over time. Hence, when successful outcomes occur—and Gallagher gives many examples of these—it's a cause for cautious optimism, at best. A great strength of the book is its focus on student perspectives; pages are devoted to verbatim transcriptions of student-teacher-researcher focus group sessions where the complexities of people's lives and their interrelationships, in and outside the classroom, are fully exposed.

One of the most profound lessons I took away from this book is to beware feel-good narratives that celebrate the transformative power of art. Although some of these success stories are real, they are always far more complicated than the tales Hollywood would tell. In them, the urban teacher—usually white—is the “noble savior” of the underprivileged—usually black—students. Gallagher cautions that we don't fall prey to our liberal humanist imaginings and neglect to see how much Whiteness, privilege, and unequal power underlie these heroic tales. As an assiduous chronicler of the urban youth she is dedicated to understanding, she always gives students the last word, which, more often than not, tells it like it is.

Marti LoMonaco
Fairfield University

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 5, 2016

Winter Board Meeting

[The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts](#)

111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, New York

More information to come shortly.

May 13, 2016

Spring Board Meeting

[The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts](#)

111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, New York

More information to come shortly.