

BROADSIDE

NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Vol. 35, No. 2 TLA's 71th Anniversary Year Spring 2008

TLA TAKES THE SHOW ON THE ROAD



Board members pose in front of our VIP parking spaces at the Harry Ransom Center. **Left to right:** Beth Kerr, William Boatman, Tobin Nellhaus, Karen Nickeson, Kenneth Schlesinger, and David Nochimson.

In an historic first, the TLA Executive Board decided to hit the road and hold its February 2008 meeting in Austin, Texas. Although the Board has met outside of New York City in the past, it has always been in conjunction with a major conference, usually the annual ASTR-TLA event. Despite being one shy of a quorum—and only because several Board members who had hoped to come had to withdraw at the last minute—it was a fun and productive meeting. We got a lot done (the official voting on the business conducted will be handled by email and at the next meeting) and toured the spectacular Harry Ransom Center. Additionally, we co-hosted

a reception for Austin area theatre people in the evening that was well attended and provided an opportunity for non-members to become acquainted with who we are and what we do.

The Executive Board owes a deep debt of gratitude to our own Beth Kerr, who invited us to come to Austin and also coerced longtime TLA member, Helen Adair, Associate Curator of Performing Arts at the Harry Ransom Center, to join her in serving as our co-hostesses with the mostest! Both Beth and Helen assured that we were always comfortable, well fed, and dazzled and delighted by the holdings and facilities at both the Harry Ransom Center and the Fine Arts Library. They were wonderfully supported by Laura Schwartz, Head of the Fine Arts Library, where Beth serves as Theatre/Dance Librarian; Damon Jaggars, Associate Director of the University of Texas Libraries; and Thomas F. Staley, Director of the Harry Ransom Center, all of whom offered us space, food, libation, and a hearty

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TLA Takes the Show on the Road cont'

Texas welcome. Last but not least, TLA would like to thank Jill Dolan, the Zachary T. Scott Family Chair and Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Drama and Dance, for helping to underwrite the cost of the reception. Many thanks to everyone for ensuring the success of our meeting.

In addition to Board business as usual, the Austin adventure afforded two unique opportunities that proved to be welcome respites from our lengthy agenda. The first was a delightfully informative visit from Georgia Harper, TLA's new Legal Counsel. Georgia, who serves as the Scholarly Communications Advisor to the University of Texas Libraries, spent about an hour of her busy day advising us on copyright issues, Open Access publishing, the role of aggregators, and embargo agreements. There was plenty of time for Board members to ask questions and to have detailed discussions on many of the issues.

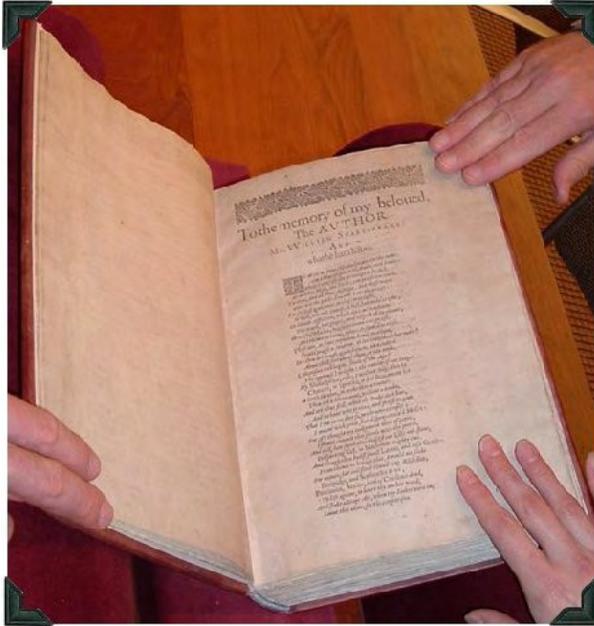


TLA Legal Counsel Georgia Harper



Tobin took this photo of the Board and HRC Curator Helen Adair at the start of the meeting. **Left to right seated:** David Nochimson, William Boatman, and Karen Nickeson; **standing:** Susan Brady, Kenneth Schlesinger, Helen Adair, Marti LoMonaco, and Beth Kerr

From the “Wonders of the HRC” Display



We all took turns touching the *Folio* simply because we could!

The second was a specially prepared “wonders of the HRC” display, courtesy of Helen Adair, for our delectation. We all eagerly pawed a beautifully restored *First Folio*, which is in such pristine condition that we could turn the pages without benefit of white gloves; Helen explained that this is one of three in the collection (the other two were safely out of our reach). We moved rapidly from the wonders of Shakespeare to those of Scarlett O’Hara as we beheld the actual velvet green drapery dress worn by Vivien Leigh in the film version of *Gone With The Wind*. Although the HRC had an exact replica of the dress made to assuage the crowds who regularly come to view it, Helen provided us with *the real thing*, for which we thank her heartily. She also regaled us with the original promptbook for the George Aiken stage adaptation of Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*; the early working drafts of a Tennessee Williams’ script known as *The Poker Game* which evolved into *A Streetcar Named Desire*; the censor’s report with

mandated line changes for the London premiere of *Streetcar*; the original screenplay for *All The President’s Men* displayed alongside Bob Woodward’s handwritten notes from his meetings with Deep Throat; and a fine array of Norman Bel Geddes’s designs, including those for the Max Reinhardt production of *The Miracle* in 1924.

Marti LoMonaco
Fairfield University



Helen Adair gently lifts Scarlett O’Hara’s legendary green drapery dress for all to admire. It is obvious that Vivien Leigh was well cast as Scarlett since by the size of the bodice, Leigh also had a “seventeen inch waist, the smallest in three counties.”

President's Report

HRC Director Thomas Staley graciously opened our meeting by welcoming us to the Center and briefly describing its holdings and collecting policies. He invited TLA members to take advantage of the numerous research fellowship opportunities available; go to their website at www.hrc.utexas.edu for further information.

I was pleased to welcome three of our four newly elected Board members to the meeting: William Boatman, Susan Brady, and Karen Nickeson. The fourth new member, Susan Mosakowski, was not able to join us in Austin, since she was busy with rehearsals for her new play, *Man-Made*, which will open in March at the Ohio Theatre in New York City.

Future Board Meetings

We will continue with our policy of holding Board meetings on the Friday of three-day holiday weekends—Memorial Day, Columbus Day, and President's Day—in the hopes that more members may be able to attend. Hence, the remaining 2008 meetings will be held Friday, May 23rd, and Friday, October 10th while the Winter 2009 meeting is slated for Friday, February 20, 2009. The May 23rd meeting will be hosted by Vice President Kenneth Schlesinger at Lehman College/CUNY, where he serves as Chief Librarian. The campus is in the lovely section of the Bronx near the famous Arthur Avenue Italian eateries, where we plan to take the Board for dinner following the meeting. The October 10th Meeting will precede the Annual Business Meeting and Book Awards, which will begin at 5:30 PM that afternoon at the Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Remember that everyone is welcome to attend all Board Meetings so do plan on joining us if you can.

Book Awards 2008 and Beyond

This is a reminder that the Book Awards will be held October 10, 2008, in the Bruno Walter Auditorium at Lincoln Center in New York. TLA is deeply grateful to Steve Vallillo for agreeing to serve as Interim Chair of the Awards and also to Ken Rosenberg, Dick Wall's longtime assistant at Queens College/CUNY, who will be working with Steve. We also want to thank the six jurors, two of whom, Jim Fisher and Steve Higgins, graciously have agreed to stay on during this transitional year. The other jurors, and their term endings, are Jason Rubin (2008) and Susan Peters (2010) for the Freedley Award and for the TLA Award, Madeline Matz (2008) and Cathy Ritchie (2010). Please note that for the 2009 Awards, we will be seeking four new jurors and a new Book Awards Chairperson. If you are interested in serving in any capacity, please contact me well in advance of the May 23rd Board Meeting, so that I might bring your name to the Board for consideration.

Secretary's Report

David Nochimson announced that TLA's 2007 membership included 158 personal members, 30 student/non-salaried members, and 141 institutional members, for a grand total of 329 members, making for a slight increase in the overall total for the second year in a row. He also noted that we have received a number of thank you notes from Institutional Members for the free Mint publications sent to them this past Fall. Remember that all members are entitled to this handsome three-volume set of "lost plays." If you haven't yet renewed your membership, please do so now and ask for copies of the plays to be sent to you as a bonus! We again thank the Mint Theater and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation for their generosity in providing this lovely gift.

Performing Arts Resources Backlog

David has conducted an inventory of our backlog of old issues of *PAR*. There are copies of *PAR* volumes 2 through 25 as well as *American Popular Entertainment: Papers and Proceedings of the Conference on the History of American Popular Entertainment*, edited by Myron Matlaw (1979) and *Preserving America's Performing Arts, Papers from the Conference on Preservation Management for Performing Arts Collections*, co-edited by Barbara Cohen-Stratyner and Brigitte Kueppers (1982) available. All of these can be purchased via our website, which contains a full contents listing of each volume: <http://tla.library.unt.edu/backissues.htm>. Since sales of these books are minimal and they are taking up valuable shelf space at NYPL and the Shubert Archive, David is recommending that we discuss our options. Although we definitely will retain at least six copies of each volume, the Board is considering halting web sales and giving away and/or discarding the rest. However, we do not want to pay for postage nor do we want David to be saddled with what could be a time-consuming distribution task. We need to find out what members might be interested in one or more copies of these back issues. Please let David know of your interest as soon as possible: dnochimson100@qc.cuny.edu. The Board will determine a new policy at the May meeting and how we might handle the pick-up/distribution.

Treasurer's Report

Angela Weaver, who is serving as Interim Treasurer through the end of 2008 (we will elect a new Treasurer later this year), reported that TLA has \$33,418.13 in the bank as of February 8, 2008. The Board heartily thanks Angela for taking over this critically important task at the same time that she is beginning her tenure as *Broadside* editor. Angela, we salute you!

ASTR/TLA Annual Conferences

The 2007 Conference in Phoenix, Arizona was a great success featuring three TLA events. The wonderful plenary session, "Exploding the Borders: Diversifying Performing Arts Research, Writing, and Collection Development in the 21st Century," chaired by none other than Angela Weaver (who is a very busy lady, as you can tell), is described in a separate article by Colleen Reilly. We had an equally wonderful tour of the Child Drama Collection at Arizona State University conducted by its Curator and longtime TLA member, Kathy Krzys. This one-of-a-kind archive contains materials that document the international history of professional theatre for young audiences, youth theatre, and theatre education from the 17th century through the present day. Kathy prepared a dazzling presentation of collection highlights including beautifully archived costumes and masks (the masks, many with wigs, are housed in specially designed preservation boxes that promote easy access for researchers), renderings, promptbooks, photographs, manuscripts, and personal papers of such notables as Irene Corey, the Everyman Players, Jonathan Levy, Lowell and Nancy Swortzell, and Rita Criste. At least 30 conference attendees climbed into mini-buses, arranged by Kathy, to whisk us from the conference site in downtown Phoenix to ASU and back. We are deeply grateful to Kathy for all her efforts in providing TLA with this very special visit. The final TLA event was our annual Hospitality Suite but held this year with a twist. Member Claudia Wilsch Case arranged for us to convene poolside at her in-laws' condominium a short ten-minute stroll

Editor's Note:

Submission deadline for the Summer 2008 *BROADSIDE* is June 13, 2008

Angela Weaver

aw6@u.washington.edu

President's Report of Board Meeting Highlights cont'



Kenneth Schlesinger and Judy Markowitz are deep in conversation while Bill Green, Marti LoMonaco, and Tobin Nellhaus pose for the camera at the Poolside Hospitality Suite.

from the conference hotel. Although no one went for a dip, we all enjoyed the balmy evening and the opportunity to socialize out-of-doors, which is a rather unique occurrence for TLA. We heartily thank Claudia, her husband Andrew (who also drove us to the store to purchase libations and munchies), and their parents, Claude and Susan Case, for their gracious hospitality.

This year's ASTR-TLA conference will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, November 5-9, 2008. TLA will host a plenary (see information elsewhere in this issue), a brown bag session especially designed for helping graduate students with their research needs, and a trip to the Harvard Theatre Collection.

TLA at ALA

Due to popular demand, TLA will give an encore performance of its excellent presentation on *Federated Searching in*

Theatre and Film Databases (first offered at the ASTR-TLA 2006 Conference in Chicago) for the American Library Association in June. Chaired by Nancy Friedland from Columbia University with presentations by Judy Markowitz, University of Maryland, and Kevin Winkler, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the session will focus on federated searching across a wide variety of electronic resources that provide surprisingly interesting content on theatre and film studies. The session will conclude with a discussion of what federated search tools are currently available, as well as the future of federated searching. If you missed this informative session in Chicago, be sure to catch it at ALA on Saturday, June 28, 2008, 10:30 AM to 12:00 noon, in a room TBA at the Anaheim Convention Center.

Symposium III

Kenneth Schlesinger presented a new Mission Statement and described the

proposed structure for the next TLA Symposium, "Detonating the Classics? Radical Adaptations and Textual Reinterpretation," to be held Friday, May 22, 2009 in the Bruno Walter Auditorium at Lincoln Center (see article). The Board voted to approve the proposal and have the Planning Committee move forward.

Publications

Publications Committee Chairman Rob Melton provided a full report of current activities and recent changes including the announcement of our new *Broadside* editor, Angela Weaver. We want to take this opportunity to thank former editor, Ellen Truax, for her many years at the helm of *Broadside*, which she brought so ably into the age of electronic publishing. Congratulations and huzzahs for a job well done also go out to Susan Brady and Nena Couch, co-editors of *PAR 25, Documenting: Lighting Design*, which was sent to members at the end of 2007. Susan announced that several authors will be on hand at the upcoming USITT Conference in Houston for book signings and, we hope, lots of sales. *PAR 26, Symposium II Proceedings*, edited by Kenneth Schlesinger, should be out by Fall 2008. Nancy Friedland is editing *PAR 27, Documenting: Costume Design*, with publication slated for Summer 2009.

Distinguished Achievement Award

Committee Chair Phyllis Dircks reported that the deadline for nominations has been extended. The Committee will make its recommendations to the Board prior to the May meeting so winners may be feted at the Annual Business Meeting and Book Awards on October 10th. Please send your nominations to Phyllis at dircks@liu.edu.

Membership

Beth Kerr graciously accepted the Board's invitation to succeed Angela Weaver as

Chair of this Committee. If you are interested in working with Beth, please get in touch with her at: beth@austin.utexas.edu.

Affiliated Organizations

The Board approved Susan Brady as liaison to the Society of American Archivists. I also asked Helen Adair, who not only attended our entire meeting but made many helpful suggestions throughout, to take over as liaison to SIBMAS since she presently serves on the SIBMAS Executive Council. She graciously agreed. This would facilitate planning for the SIBMAS/TLA Joint Conference in 2012, currently scheduled to be held in San Francisco at the proposed Museum of Performance and Design.

Thanks and Praise

The Board officially recognized the heroic efforts of our new Executive Secretary, David Nochimson, for his many strong contributions to making TLA a better organized and run association in such a short time. We also thanked our newest Board member, William Boatman, for taking the minutes at his very first Board meeting.

Marti LoMonaco, President
E-mail: martilomonaco@optonline.net

Exploding the Borders: Diversifying Performing Arts Research, Writing, and Collection Development in the 21st Century

The Theatre Library Association and the American Society for Theatre Research held their joint conference, "Intervening 'America'" in November at the Hyatt Regency in Phoenix, Arizona. The conference mapped traditional assumptions about the term "America" against current developments in theatre history and performance studies while navigating the complex cultural territory of "America" as site, symbol, and signifier. Following this theme, TLA invited

panelists from the Cuban/Latino Theater Archive at the University of Miami and the Yolanda Broyles Gonzalez and Francisco Gonzalez Archives at Texas A&M to address the issues arising from collections inhabiting the shifting sands of the geopolitical "American" space.

Lillian Manzor launched the plenary session with a spirited presentation of the diverse aspects of the emerging Cuban/Latino

Cuban/Latino Theater Archive

Writers Directors Actors/Roles Written Texts Theatrical Productions Theaters

Playwright Information

Caridad Svich

1963 -

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Awards 2000-07, New Dramatists elected member, Ni
2002-03, TCG/PEW National Theatre Artist Re
2002-03, Bunting Fellowship
Harvard University/Radcliffe Institute f
2002-2003, Scholar-in-Residence, Perishable

LA CASA DE BERNARDA ALBA
de Federico Garcia Lorca
teatro estudio

Cuban/Latino Theater Archive homepage; playwright's page for Caridad Svich; program cover from a Grupo Teatro Estudio production of *The House of Bernarda Alba* in Havana, Cuba.

Theater Archive at the University of Miami. She aptly depicted this endeavor as a “monument of theater history” documenting 400 playwrights, 1500 plays, and 800 productions with a count to date of over 1 million visitors to the website:

<http://scholar.library.miami.edu/archivoteatral/>.

In her presentation, “Cuban/Latino Theater Archive: A Digital Preservation Archive for Theater History”, co-authored by Lyn MacCorkle, she discussed the complex strata of the digital theatre archive landscape: the network of institutional, technological, and creative expertise required to mobilize a digitization project, the particular features of a digital archive for the ephemeral practice of theatre, and the cultural and political implications of an archive for the Cuban/Latino theatre practices.

The digital archive documents Cuban/Latino writers, directors, actors, texts, theatrical productions and theaters through multimedia, digital images, and manuscript and directory databases. Manzor eloquently outlined the theoretical foundation of the project, describing the importance of documenting work of artistic consequence relating to the “margins” of American experience. She emphasized the collaborative nature of the theatrical event and argued for the need to find a shared language between artists, researchers, librarians, archivists, technologists, and institutions to deepen the collaboration between the theatre and the archive. Manzor also proposed database, communication, and hypertext paradigms for future digital projects which emphasized this cross-communication.

Miguel Juárez followed Manzor’s presentation with a passionate argument for broadening the scope of individual and institutional collection policies to include

performance practices reflecting cultural and ethnic diversity. His presentation, co-authored by Rebecca L. Hankins, “Making the Case for Collecting Ethnic Studies Collections at Predominantly White Institutions: The Yolanda Broyles Gonzalez and Francisco Gonzalez Archives at Texas A&M” outlined the successful acquisition of this unique collection containing records of Borderlands Mexican-American and Chicano musical and theatrical performance. The records reflect the efforts of El Teatro Campesino and contain actos (scenarios), manuscripts (musical and theatrical), and recordings of Borderlands music. The archives contain recordings of Tejano performers, including the Lydia Mendoza Collection of correspondence, rare footage, and two of her elaborate costumes.

Juárez noted that even though the collection was accessioned in 2005 various events prevented it from being transferred to the University until 2006; however, exhibition requests were made to the archives while it still remained in transit. Juárez argued that this was not anecdotal to the archives’ journey to the institution, but reflective of the potential demand for these cultural collections in libraries, museums, and archives that have long overlooked their importance to public, academic, and scholarly research. He insisted upon the necessity for change in collecting practices to broaden the scope of communities represented in predominantly white archives and special collections to reflect America’s population shift to a “Minority Majority State”.

Under TLA Board Member Angela Weaver’s expert moderation, the presentations were followed by an enlivened discussion, addressing issues such as the importance of “diversifying diversity” to reflect complex political, racial, and ethnic dynamics (as in the case of Afro-Latina Cubano Studies). Early encounters with the collections for emerging scholars and performers were promoted to ensure meaningful and lasting

Exploding the Borders cont'

use of the primary sources. Both presenters urged the involvement of graduate students with the collections in their processing and research development. As a panel attended by the performers, scholars, archivists, and librarians who continuously seek to engage their responsibilities in shaping the landscape of theatre and performance studies, the "American" space defined throughout was one in which all participants had a personal stake in collecting, describing (through archival paradigms and scholarly research), and advocating for diversity across collection practices.



Colleen Reilly
Yale University

Lydia Mendoza materials



Zoot → Miguel in all of them *those are notes from my conversation of Miguel Delgado who played Rafael in Zoot + script didn't change so much. In N.Y. it got overproduced. Everything got bigger. Paduicos shadows got bigger (in set)*

Gordon Davidson. *Everybody got into the act.*

"American Patrol"
Only one dance sequence added in N.Y.

Showcasing the Gringitos + Blacks.

Picture from *Zoot Suit* and notes written by Luis Valdez (El Teatro Campesino)

American Society for Theatre Research
November 5-9, 2008 - Boston, Massachusetts
Unsettling Theatre: migration, map, memory

Theatre Library Association Plenary

MAPPING THE BODY: METHODOLOGIES FOR RECONSTRUCTING LOST AND DISAPPEARING DANCE

America, founder of modern dance, is beginning to lose its senior generation of choreographers and practitioners. While a number of leading companies have built impressive archives and now videotape performances in order to preserve them, dances are still passed along as they have been for thousands of years: generation to generation, body to body, mouth to mouth.

Labanotation was developed as a standardized system to "map" physical movements and the path of the body in space. Videotape, a vulnerable format, has successfully captured dance performances for over three decades - in a two-dimensional medium. Print documents are still critical: reviews, photographs, choreographer's notes or oral histories. Others insist that the most effective way is to have the original choreographer - or a trusted company member - set the dance on a new company.

Clearly, a successful reconstruction must be a composite of all these necessary elements. Has the development of sophisticated digital technologies provided new procedures - and perhaps pitfalls - for the documentation of live motion? How do research libraries and archives support this process - and how might they frustrate it? We're interested in a fresh assessment of contemporary best practices and challenges facing this tenuous field of dance reconstruction.

Further, we welcome testimony of international efforts to document and preserve the movement heritage of vulnerable and vanishing cultures: First Peoples, Cambodian traditional dance decimated by the Khmer Rouge, societies threatened by genocide or ethnic cleansing.

Susan Brady, Chair
TLA Plenary Committee
Yale University

Jill Lane, Chair
ASTR Program Committee

Dance Heritage Coalition Sponsors Focus Group on Fair Use

In early January 2008, I was invited to participate in Dance Heritage Coalition's first Focus Group to discuss Fair Use and related access issues to dance libraries and archives. Held at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the panel featured major movers and shakers in the dance production, scholarly and preservation communities in the New York metropolitan area. We had a fascinating discussion, moderated by attorney Peter Jaszi, which we wish could have gone on longer. In an intensive three hours, we covered some of the following topics: access to unlicensed footage for which the collection doesn't own rights; the complexity of incorporating moving image into exhibitions; use of copyrighted performance materials in educational presentations; dealing with the intricacies of various unions and clearance procedures; honoring longstanding relationships with artists; and relations with the special counsel's office. What became immediately apparent was the range of ostensible best practices, dependent on institutional culture and past tradition.

I asked Libby Smigel to draft the informational piece below in order to educate TLA members about this important initiative. As she mentions, a number of TLA members participated in various cities on the circuit. In the future, I will approach TLA's Executive Board to request its endorsement of the Statement of Best Practices of "Fair Use" for Dance Archives and Libraries. We will keep you posted of future developments in BROADSIDE.

Kenneth Schlesinger
TLA Vice President



To help libraries and archives with dance-related holdings meet their mandates of ensuring access to materials documenting dance legacy, the Dance Heritage Coalition (DHC) has launched a national project to define a balanced application of the "fair use" doctrine of the Copyright Law.

The "Fair Use" doctrine (Section 107) is an intentionally flexible and powerful tool that addresses circumstances where significant cultural, educational, or public missions conflict with property rights. The DHC "fair use" project is modeled on the successful project completed by the field of documentary filmmakers, under the guidance of intellectual property rights attorney Peter Jaszi. The resulting Documentary Filmmakers' Statement of Best Practices for Fair Use has earned endorsements of organizations of filmmakers, and has now been accepted as a legal standard of fair use for the documentary field by errors and omissions insurers as well as public television stations.

See: http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/fair_use/

The process of arriving at a statement of best practices of “fair use” for dance libraries and archives involves multiple steps. Last summer, for Stage 1, DHC Board members identified cases and contexts where copyrights interfered with archival programs or user access. This survey found three contexts where a consensus on “fair use” would advance the missions of dance collections: 1) digital media and delivery; 2) exhibitions (and their ancillary products); and 3) uses that take materials outside library walls. Stage 2 involves a set of nationwide focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews. Participants consider scenarios under one or more of the three outlined contexts as a way of discussing what the scope of “fair use” might be.

To date, Washington, New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago have hosted focus groups; four more cities will be visited. Each focus group builds on the information-gathering and consensus-building of the previous meeting. Participants are invited with the intention of broad representation: public and private, small and large, generalist and specialist. One or two scholar-educators contribute the perspectives of the library-user. Three TLA members have participated in these early focus groups, as well as members of SAA, ALA Dance Librarians Discussion Group, and Society of Dance History Scholars, among others.

Once the consensus on “fair use” has been identified, Peter Jaszi together with DHC staff will craft a draft Statement of Best Practices of “Fair Use” for Dance Archives and Libraries. At Stage 3, the DHC will seek endorsements from the governing boards and members of library and archival organizations as well as scholarly dance associations. Widespread adoption of the Statement of Best Practices signals that the principles are reasonable applications of the

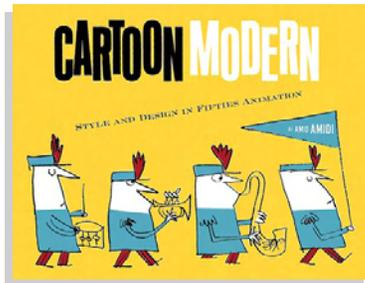
“fair use” doctrine in light of the needs of the dance collections to serve its public. Although the statement will be advanced as the consensus of *dance* archives and libraries, many of the issues are common to collections in all disciplines.

Interviews and focus groups will be convened in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Tallahassee (April) and Denver (May). Please contact DHC Project Director Libby Smigel (LSmigel@danceheritage.org, 202-223-8392) to offer input or volunteer to participate.

Libby Smigel
Project Director
Dance Heritage Coalition

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TLA NEEDS YOU TO CHAIR OUR ANNUAL BOOK AWARDS



We are seeking either a new Chair or possibly Co-Chairs to take over for Dick Wall as head of the Book Awards selection process. This entails corresponding with publishers and eligible authors, coordinating the juries and their deliberations, writing press releases, and contacting the winning authors. There is a lot of detailed clerical work involved in this task, which is why we suggest that the Chair(s) be affiliated with an institution where there is staff assistance as well as support for equipment (computer, fax, phone, copy machines), mailings (postage), and the like. The institution (or the Chair her/himself), however, gets all those free books which, in this age of escalating prices and rapidly decreasing book budgets, is a mighty fine incentive. The TLA Executive Board also will be setting a term limit for the Book Awards Chair so, if you choose to apply for this position, we promise it will not be a lifetime appointment.

Please let me know of your interest and qualifications prior to our May 23rd Board Meeting. You can send e-mail to martilomonaco@optonline.net or send snail mail to Professor Martha LoMonaco, CNS 205, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT 06824-5195.

**Cartoon Modern: Style and Design in Fifties Animation* by Amid Amidi, 2006 winner of the Theatre Library Association Award

DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

TLA seeks to honor outstanding members of our profession through the **Distinguished Achievement Award**, to be presented at the Annual Meeting in New York in October 2008. We would like to identify persons whose vision, energy, and knowledge have extended the boundaries of librarianship and performance-related scholarship; they may be performing arts librarians, curators, archivists, scholars or others in related professions. Please take a moment from your busy schedule to nominate those individuals whose contributions have made a difference to all of us. We ask that you send us their names, with a short bio and appropriate documentation, so that their achievements may be duly celebrated. Nominations may be sent to: dircks@liu.edu.

Deadline for Nominations: April 30, 2008

You will find below a list of distinguished awardees of previous years, cited alphabetically for each year:

2006: Maryann Chach, Mary C. Jensen, Madeline Fitzgerald Matz
2004: Annette Fern, Don Wilmeth
2002: Betty L. Corwin, Richard M. Buck
2000: Rod Bladell, Don Fowle, Maryann Jensen, Louis Rachow
1996: Dorothy Swerdlove
1994: Paul Myers.

Awards Committee: Phyllis Dircks, Chair; Maryann Chach; Don Wilmeth

TLA Announces Upcoming Symposium on Performance Deconstruction

Theatre Library Association is pleased to announce its upcoming Symposium on performance deconstruction, specifically related to issues of reinterpreting the classical repertory. Titled *Detonating the Classics?: Radical Adaptations and Textual Reinterpretation*, it will be held at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts' Bruno Walter Auditorium on **Friday, May 22, 2009**.

This Symposium is third in a trilogy related to performance documentation. The first, held in 2003, dealt with documenting performing arts in an online environment. Last year's explored reconstruction challenges with lost or rediscovered texts, dance works and musical theatre. Now we're interested in having a dialogue between librarians, archivists, and artists who *explode* classical texts in search for new meanings and resonances.

The Symposium III Planning Committee has developed the following Mission Statement:

Experimental directors, innovative designers, and translators/adapters have approached the classical repertory as fertile ground for reinvention. Do performing artists have an ethical responsibility to respect the integrity of original texts? Are these texts sacred – or do they function as minefields for subsequent generations, waiting to be excavated to reveal new meanings and fresh interpretations?

How have performing arts libraries and archives supported contemporary deconstructions of the classics – and how might they continue in the future? Do these collections actually serve as keepers of the flame or as co-conspirators? Is the ultimate result detonation or de-notation?

Following a Keynote address from a prominent theatre director or practitioner, the Symposium will be organized into three thematic panels:

Directing and Design – investigating interpretation, staging and visual reconceptions of classical works

Text and Translation – issues of faithfulness, integrity and cultural expression

Performance – the dynamic between classical and contemporary performance styles

We're in the process of recruiting panelists, which should represent the diversity of the Downtown performance scene. As with Symposium II, we would like to incorporate live performance to enhance and enrich this discussion.

Please continue to monitor *BROADSIDE* and TLA Promptbooks for upcoming announcements confirming participants and program content. If you would like additional information, please contact either Susan Mosakowski, smosakowski@nypl.org, or Kenneth Schlesinger, Kenneth.Schlesinger@lehman.cuny.edu.

Proposals Sought for PAR

The TLA Publications Committee invites proposals for a future volume of Performing Arts Resources (tentatively volume 28, to appear in 2010). PAR is designed to gather and disseminate scholarly information dealing with 1) the location of resource materials related to theater, film, television, radio, and popular entertainments; 2) descriptions, listings or evaluations of such collections, whether public or private; 3) issues relating to the profession of performing arts librarianship and archival management; 4) an edition of previously unpublished primary material; or 5) other similar information. For the titles of previous volumes of PAR, see the TLA website (<http://tla.library.unt.edu/publications.htm>).

Proposals should consist of: Proposed subject, with tentative title; proposed editor(s) of a collection or author(s) of a monograph; the major sub-topics that would be covered by individual chapters or essays; a reasonable estimate of the length of the entire volume; a reasonable estimate of the extent of photographs or other illustrative material that would be included; a tentative publication timetable for the project; and a statement of why the proposed topic is timely and who the target audience for the publication is. For more information, or to submit a proposal, contact Rob Melton, Chair of the Publications Committee, at rmelton@ucsd.edu or 619-534-7573. The deadline for submitting proposals is August 31, 2008.

Please note these additional points: Editors, authors, and contributors to volumes of PAR cannot be remunerated financially by TLA for any expenses occurred in researching, writing, or editing. Decisions regarding printing, binding, and distributing volumes of PAR, along with price, are made by TLA's Board of Directors. Although individual contributors may retain copyright in their articles, TLA will own the copyright to the collection as a whole and will retain the right to sell or transfer future print or digital re-publication rights to third parties.

Rob Melton
University of California, San Diego

THE BROADSIDE NEWS NETWORK

Please send your brief news item to one of the following Broadside News Network stringers: Stephen Kuehler (Northeast, skuehler@comcast.net), Phyllis Dircks (Mid-Atlantic, dircks@liu.edu), Catherine Ritchie (South & Southwest, catherine.ritchie@dallaslibrary.org), Sarah Welshman (Midwest & Plains, welshman@chipublib.org), or Rob Melton (West Coast & Rockies, rmelton@ucsd.edu).

California

The **Museum of Performance & Design**—formerly known as the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum—reopened to the public on March 18, 2008 after extensive renovations. Its opening exhibit, on view through August 30th, is entitled “Art & Artifice: 75 Years of Design at San Francisco Ballet.” The exhibit examines the role of design in SFB’s continual imaginative reinventions of itself since its founding in 1933 by former Ballets Russes dancer/choreographer Adolph Bohm and surveys the early influences from the Ballets Russes, Russian artist Leon Bakst, modern American artist Paul Cadmus, stage/film designer Irene Sharaff, European artist/designer Nicholas Georgiadis, and many more. The Museum is located on the fourth floor of the Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue.

Love Library at **San Diego State University** was the site of a lecture on March 15th entitled “Can We Talk About Victorian Children’s Theater?” by Professor Marah Gubar of the University of Pittsburgh. SDSU has the largest academic program in children’s literature in North America.

Illinois

David Mamet: A Life in the Theater

(Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) was published in February. Author Ira Nadel used extensively the **Chicago Theater Collection**, located in the Special Collections and Preservation Division of the **Chicago Public Library**, to complete his research for the book. The Chicago Theater Collection includes the archive of the St. Nicholas Theatre Company, founded by David Mamet and friends, as well as the Goodman Theatre Archive, where Mamet served as playwright in residence during the 1980s.

Missouri

The University of Missouri-Kansas City’s (**UMKC**) Miller Nichols Library has received a \$502,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for maintaining and sharing the library’s Marr Sound Archives of historic radio and music recordings. The grant will largely be used towards cataloging the Archives’ J. David Goldin Collection of 10,000 16-inch acetate disc and pressed recordings dating from 1933 to 1950, each 30 minutes long and produced for broadcast. The cataloguing project will make the contents of these rare recordings available for the first time to academicians through online catalog access. The project began January 1, 2008 and is expected to continue through December 31, 2010.

Texas

The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the **University of Texas at Austin** has introduced a new website at www.hrc.utexas.edu. New features include an online edition of a “Guide to the Collections,” links to multimedia such as slideshows, video clips, and audio podcasts, along with “Writers Reflect,” offering commentary from authors who have donated archival material to the Center.

Virginia

The personal collection of Robert Prosky,

veteran actor, has been acquired by **George Mason University Libraries** Special Collections and Archives. The Robert Prosky Collection consists of documents spanning Prosky's prolific career in theatre, film, and television that began more than 50 years ago. Materials include playbills, photos, scripts, articles, reviews, fan letters, personal correspondence, opening night gifts, media, and a scrapbook. The University Libraries hosted "An Evening with Robert Prosky," where Prosky shared his experiences in appearing in more than 200 plays nationally and internationally and his 38 film and television roles, including "Mrs. Doubtfire," "The Natural," "Rudy," and "Dead Man Walking."

Washington

Angela Weaver, Head of the Drama Library, recently oversaw minor renovations to the University of Washington's Drama Library. Located on the ground floor of Hutchinson Hall, home to the School of Drama, the library began life as a locker room and changing area for the pool next door and was a dark and cramped facility. As part of the University Libraries Vision 2010 strategic plan to enhance physical library spaces, the Drama Library was allocated approximately \$50,000 out of endowment money for a light refurbishment. The change has been "dramatic" and remarked upon by patrons and library staff alike.



In Memoriam

Suki Sommer at home, early February 2008; Photograph by Maureen Buja

Many may remember Susan ("Suki") Sommer from her long association with The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. She was the former Chief of the Music Division (1997- until her retirement in 2001), Head of the Circulating Collections (1987-1997), and also served as Acting Director (1999-2000). Suki passed away March 4, 2008 at her Manhattan apartment after a long illness.

Suki joined NYPL in 1961, and in 1969 became head of the Rare Books and Manuscripts section and curator of the Toscanini Memorial Archives in the Music Division. She served a term as president of the Music Library Association and excelled as editor-in-chief of its journal, *Notes*, from 1982 to 1987, after years of writing and editing book and music reviews. She was

awarded an honorary membership in the Association in 1994. She was also active in the International Association of Music Libraries and edited that organization's journal as well, from 1992 to 2000.

From 1970 to 1992, Suki taught both music and performing arts reference and bibliography classes at Columbia University's School of Library Service, and many TLA members first encountered her through one or both of these classes. (She was one tough grader!)

Suki was a sometimes member of TLA and led the Executive Board in a memorable strategic planning meeting in 1999. She will certainly be missed. A memorial service is planned for April 16th at 4:15 P.M. in the Bruno Walter Auditorium of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Kevin Winkler
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

BROADSIDE PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

BROADSIDE is the principal medium through which the Theatre Library Association communicates news, activities, policies, and procedures. Collectively, past issues also provide historical information about the organization and the profession of performing arts librarianship. *BROADSIDE* has no ambition to serve as a scholarly journal. Scholarly and other articles or monographs may be considered for TLA's other principal publication, *Performing Arts Resources*.

In addition, *BROADSIDE* serves 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 a newsletter, and to help the Editor and the TLA Publications Committee to maintain fair and consistent editorial policies, the Publications Committee has developed the following guidelines.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Letters to the Editor are encouraged, but must be limited to 200 words, due to space considerations.
4. Reviews of books or other resources are an excellent way for members to contribute to TLA and the profession. Reviews must be limited to 500 words and 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.
5. The copyright of all articles published in *BROADSIDE* will be owned by TLA. Permission to republish an article may be requested from the Editor.
6. Ideas for articles – other than brief news items, book reviews, or submissions from officers and committee chairs – should be submitted to the Editor 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.

HOW TO CONTACT THE TLA BOARD

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TLA 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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Executive Board Meeting, May 23, 2008,
Lehman College/CUNY.

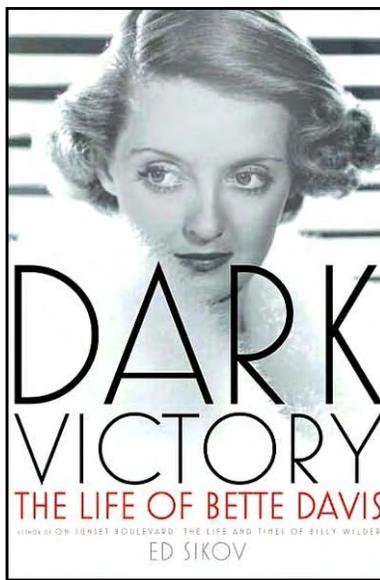
BOOK REVIEWS

Ed Sikov. *Dark Victory: The Life of Bette Davis*. New York: Holt, 2007. 479 pp. ISBN 978-0-8050-7548-9.

“Fasten your seat belts,” this read is a bumpy ride. Does the world need another biography of Bette Davis? We have had Charles Higham (1981), Barbara Leaming (1992), James Spada (1993), Lawrence Quirk (1996), and Charlotte Chandler (2006); Sikov uses the first four (apparently Chandler published too late) to comment on conflicting facts and theories about one of most examined lives of twentieth century entertainment. In search of “truths” behind published books, articles, and gossip columns, Sikov makes extensive use of interviews, as well as letters and unpublished remembrances of co-workers and friends. Since he begins the story almost at her birth, his use of the Davis archive at Boston University is essential for the background on her mother, father and her mentally disturbed sister, Bobby. An understanding of her dysfunctional early family life, and her later relationship with mother and sister, as related by Davis in her autobiographical memoirs and extensive interviews conducted by Sikov, help greatly in understanding why, even before her contretemps with Warner Bros., she was often filled with rage.

Sikov writes that “I write more about her films than about, say, her marriages because I care about them a great deal more and because they define her legacy in a way a series of failed husbands cannot” (p. 3). Indeed, he devotes more space to films

than her personal life, and one might say that except for the most ardent Davis devotee there is too much of a muchness. The Internet Movie Data Base lists 121 titles for Davis, including television appearances; it would seem that Sikov looked at most of them again, and except for the most obscure he gives at least a sentence or two about



them. That she made fifty-two films under her eighteen-year contract with Warner Bros., with only a few loan-outs to other studios (including *Of Human Bondage* for one of her finest performances), and went on to play the iconic role of Margo Channing in *All About Eve*, as well as several more of merit, culminating at age 78 in *The Whales of August*, in 1986, gives Sikov much to discuss.

Davis’ major films are covered in detail, and through the roles she played we can see why,

though she herself never seemed to understand it, Davis became a gay favorite. As Sikov puts it, she “became an icon for several generations of gay men, who learned that they could, through wit and style and camp, rise above this oppressive, second-rate world and, inside at least, be the men they were meant to be” (p. 206).

As at least part of an answer to the question posed at the beginning, I suggest going to the Customer Reviews at amazon.com; although most are from Davis devotees, they tell us pretty clearly that Sikov’s biography is a welcome addition to the many Davis books. *Dark Victory* is recommended for all performing arts collections of any size.

Richard M. Buck
The New York Public Library for the
Performing Arts (retired)

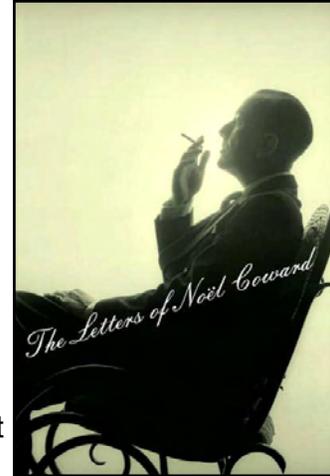
Noël Coward. *The Letters of Noël Coward*. Edited and with commentary by Barry Day. New York: Knopf, 2007. 780 pp. ISBN: 798-0-375-42303-1.

To most performing arts librarians and academics, Noël Coward is known as a playwright/actor/director who was involved in some of the most sophisticated comedies and “drawing room” dramas of the 1920s and 30s, both on the West End and Broadway, and who, after World War II, evolved from elegant playwright to elegant cabaret performer. Many of us forget or never knew that he wrote, starred in and directed *In Which We Serve*, a film masterpiece evoking the greatness of the Royal Navy in World War II.

Anyone who delves into this lengthy, but somewhat uneven, edition of the letters, will be fascinated by the more than 100 pages dedicated to Coward’s WW II experiences, from “undercover” agent to troop entertainer in some of the most dangerous fields of combat. If he had done nothing else for the English people whom he loved (he seldom loved the Government), he would deserve the knighthood that he received all too late in life.

The letters from and to Coward are interspersed heavily with Day’s commentary, sometimes with such careless editing that is difficult to tell what voice is speaking. When the reader is trying to follow closely the production process of a play, a useful date is missing, usually the year, which could have been easily added in brackets. There is a year-by-year chronology which is interrupted by a series of “Intermissions,” which deal with one person or production. The most fascinating of these is the plethora of agonized letters from Marlene Dietrich while she was in the throes of a passionate affair with Yul Brynner. Of course, the correspondence with the Lunts, Olivier and

Leigh, producer Binkie Beaumont, and other theatrical luminaries fill many pages, but his most consistent correspondent until she died was his mother, Violet, to whom he wrote almost weekly for years. Those letters give us more insight into the real Coward than any of the others.

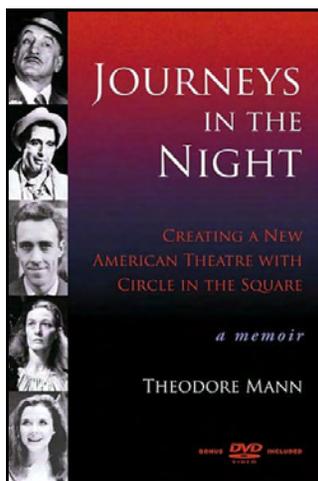


Although anyone who knew anything about Coward and his “circle” knew that he was homosexual, he lived his prime in the period that “coming out” publicly was verboten. In the introduction, Day snidely says “He would not have been well pleased to become a gay icon at the expense of his work or to observe . . . a generation of young gay directors giving us Coward plays, ‘as darling Noel would have produced them,’ had he been able to in the prehistory of sexual liberation” (7), adding, “To the end of his life—even when the social climate had become more permissive—he remained firmly private in his private life, a decision that one wishes today’s gay community would honor” (730). Methinks Day protests too much. There is much to learn in these epistles about life and the theatre. Highly recommended for all theatre collections in public and university libraries.

**Richard M. Buck
The New York Public Library for the
Performing Arts (retired)**

Theodore Mann. *Journeys in the Night: Creating a New American Theatre with Circle in the Square: A Memoir.* New York: Applause, 2007. 419 pp. ISBN 978-1-55783-645-8.

A theatre-loving reader approaches Theodore Mann's memoir with understandable excitement. As a major figure in the evolution from the Golden Age of Broadway to the birth of Off-Broadway via his Circle in the Square Theatre, Mann is without question a seminal American producer-director. It is no surprise that his memoirs are replete with fascinating stories of triumph and failure in a half century of theatrical experimentation and of the extraordinary personalities involved. Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, Jose Quintero, Thornton Wilder, Geraldine Page, James Earl Jones, Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, George C. Scott, Colleen Dewhurst, Vanessa Redgrave, and scores of others are among the cast of characters in Mann's reminiscences, providing a decidedly starry glow. Yet *Journey in the Night* ultimately disappoints, mostly as a result of a too loosely-constructed, anecdotal style. While individual stories provide amusement and pathos, the lack of ample background research and fact-checking reduce what could have been a much-needed definitive record of a major theatre into a sketchy gloss crying out for



deeper analysis and a more detailed historical accounting.

The central culprit is weak editing. Mann's memory is impressive in recalling the general outline of events surrounding key Circle productions

and without question his insights into the psyches of the personalities involved are pithy, compassionate, and revealing, but too little cultural context is provided and both typographical and factual errors mar the text. Hopefully, subsequent editions can address the typos and errors, but a broader context emphasizing historical events, evolving audience tastes, and concurrent theatrical developments may have to be provided by a subsequent author able to approach the subject with greater objectivity and a more thorough dependence on research.

On the plus side, as previously noted, Mann's anecdotal accounts are a rare and revealing glimpse of backstage life and particularly the problems, as Mann sees them, of those Circle productions that failed to achieve their ambitious goals. The text is peppered with numerous and mostly previously unpublished production photos and, best of all, a bonus DVD is tucked into the back cover, its content featuring *Twenty-five Years of Circle in the Square*, an eighty-five minute 1977 documentary, and excerpted scenes from the Circle's productions of *Death of a Salesman*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *The Lady from the Sea*. These bring some of Mann's text to life and, despite its flaws, *Journey in the Night* is a valuable record for those interested in the post-World War II American stage.

James Fisher
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Tice L. Miller. *Entertaining the Nation: American Drama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007. 229 pp. ISBN 0-978-8093-2779-2.

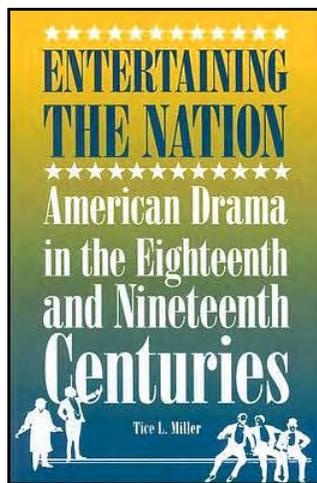
Prolific scholar Tice L. Miller, whose expertise centers on pre-modern American theatre and drama, and is the author of such important works as *Bohemians and Critics: The Development of American Theatre Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* and co-editor of *The American Stage* and *The Cambridge Guide to the American Theatre*, is well-versed to approach goal in *Entertaining the Nation*. Miller offers nothing less than an examination of early American theatre and its interconnectedness to the rapidly changing culture of a burgeoning nation.

The pre-modern American stage has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years, giving the lie to the long-held notion that little important American drama can be found prior to Eugene O'Neill. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Miller handily demonstrates, even as his emphasis is focused on the humanizing mission of the stage in any period or within any culture. By merging images of the evolution of America's stage with the socio-political formulations and expansion of its society, Miller insightfully depicts the ways in which its citizens were profoundly civilized by their theatre, as well as the ways the stage changed to meet the needs and tastes of its audience. A microcosm of American life, even as it continued to cling to its European roots, the stage, as Miller sees it, emerged as the national forum and the proverbial mirror held up to reflect its nature.

Miller distills much previous scholarship on

this elusive subject in *Entertaining the Nation*, producing an essential study of the ways in which the pre-twentieth century stage influenced and was influenced by the titanic social developments taking place. Tracking changing tastes of the audience from classical and European works to plays dealing both with matters of contemporary significance and romanticized images of emerging societal values, Miller surveys a range of plays and playwrights from the French and Indian Wars through the Revolution (and its struggle between egalitarianism and republicanism), the economics of slavery, the tragedies of the Civil War, rural versus industrial tensions, the rise of Wall Street, and the flood of European immigrants to U.S. shores. Chapter titles reflect Miller's chronological approach, but also transitions of stage and society: "British Drama and the Colonial American Stage," "American Drama in the New Republic," "Drama in the Age of Jackson," "The Age of Melodrama," and "Realism and American Drama." These five chapters are well-connected steps in Miller's journey, but each stands alone as a mini-history of an era. Miller also includes an epilogue chronicling the impact of modernism, revealing the canyon between the twentieth century American stage and that which came before, stressing that what came before was vital to what followed. The overall result of Miller's effort is a tightly-constructed, well-reasoned (if occasionally dryly written) study that is essential reading for students and scholars.

**James Fisher
The University of North Carolina at
Greensboro**



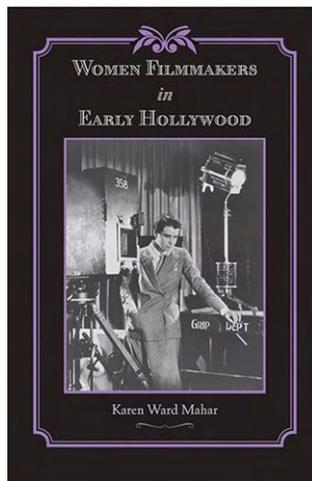
Karen Ward Mahar. *Women Filmmakers in Early Hollywood*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 291 pp. ISBN 978-0-8018-8436-8.

While our trailblazing twenty-first century women film directors undeniably deserve their applause, we present-day filmgoers also deserve to know that, due to a plethora of gifted, visionary women behind the camera, American cinema blossomed with innovation even in its earliest days. Thanks to Karen Ward Mahar's detailed study, a seminal era's hidden feminine riches are now revealed. Female creative artists were, in fact, prominent in all realms of silent moviemaking. As Mahar puts it, "The American film industry offered women opportunities that existed in no other workplace." How was this possible?

In the early 1910s, once movies became less novelty and more serious entertainment, the film industry became structured along a "theatrical" model: an egalitarian work culture in which male and female alike labored together in a variety of tasks. In addition, nickelodeon audiences consisted predominantly of women who in turn became attracted to cinema production in all its variety. Actresses such as Florence Lawrence often became filmmakers by forming their own production companies to gain greater mastery over their careers. When the government later attacked certain film genres and themes as unwholesome and vulgar, Lois Moran and other female directors became even more vital to the industry by creating works featuring gentler messages and images as part of an unofficial "uplift" movement. Eventually, the Progressive era's "New Woman" also graced the screen in the form of adventurous lasses

who drove fast cars, saved men from danger, disdained proper manners, and bent gender roles.

However, after World War I, the film industry refashioned itself according to a "big business" prototype, and the subsequent

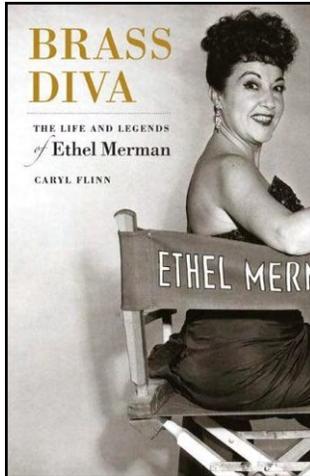


revival of traditional gender roles threatened women's leadership roles behind the camera. Wall Street investors and bankers brought with them a masculine work culture which, along with the creation of the legendary "studio system," would ultimately prove devastating to female filmmakers. While some female stars still formed their own companies, by 1925, their "independent" product was largely absent from first-run film palaces. As sound overtook the

industry, moviemaking now apparently required qualities of *male* leadership and vision only. As a result, by 1928, Dorothy Arzner was the only woman in Hollywood still directing feature films.

This book's title may disappoint readers expecting a "popular" overview of historic female directors. While Mahar spotlights many pioneering individuals, she devotes much of her text to sociological analysis of work "gendering" and its concomitant economic forces, as applicable to the film industry. Such discussion, while enlightening, does slow the book's pace considerably. However, her effort does shed a unique light on Hollywood's early gestation above and beyond the boys' club milieu of Chaplin, Keaton and Sennett. This book includes extensive notes and a bibliography and is recommended for film history and women's studies classes, plus the general reader with an interest in early 20th century American business development.

**Catherine Ritchie
Dallas (TX) Public Library**



Caryl Flinn. *Brass Diva: The Life and Legends of Ethel Merman*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007. 542pp. ISBN 978-0-520-22942-6.



Brian Kellow. *Ethel Merman: A Life*. New York: Viking Press, 2007. 326pp. ISBN 978-0-670-01829-1.

To paraphrase a famous advertisement, “What becomes a musical theatre legend most?” The simultaneous appearance of two excellent biographies in sync with Ethel Merman’s 100th birthday anniversary would seem to provide the answer. Kellow and Flinn both offer readers the extraordinary achievements of Broadway’s arguably all-time greatest “belter.” While the authors fashion the raw material differently and at varied lengths, each title has much that will appeal to both the casual reader and enthusiastic Merman aficionado.

Ethel Zimmerman was born in January 1908 in Astoria, Queens, New York, the only child of Agnes and Edward “Pop” Zimmerman, to whom their daughter would be devoted throughout her life. After high school, Ethel became a secretary, and would utilize her office skills for years to come, from composing her own business correspondence to maintaining voluminous scrapbooks depicting every aspect of her career. Ethel’s remarkable vocal talent was evident early. She began performing in local nightclubs, and permanently changed her last name to “Merman.” Hollywood also beckoned in the late 1920s, and Ethel appeared and sang in several short movies. However, film would become Merman’s *bête noire* – a medium for which her enormous

energy and showmanship always seemed somehow ill-suited.

Word spread about the fledgling singer, and the Gershwins came calling. On October 14, 1930, theatre history was made with Merman’s Broadway debut in the brothers’ *Girl Crazy*, as she unveiled what became a signature song, “I Got Rhythm,” for rapturous audiences and critics alike. The following decades found Merman starring in many other critical and popular successes, written by Cole Porter (*Anything Goes*, *Red, Hot and Blue*, *Dubarry Was a Lady*, and *Panama Hattie*) and Dorothy Fields (*Something for the Boys*). In 1946, Merman became the toast of Broadway in Irving Berlin’s *Annie Get Your Gun*, followed by her sole Tony Award-winning portrayal, Sally Adams in 1950’s *Call Me Madam*, also by Berlin. She would recreate the latter role in the 1953 film version – her only stage creation to find its way to the screen (except for a severely truncated version of *Anything Goes*). In 1959, Merman unveiled *Gypsy*’s Mama Rose, in what by all accounts was one of the greatest musical performances in Broadway history. However, her undeniable triumph was somewhat overshadowed by her loss of both the Tony Award to good friend Mary Martin (who won for *The Sound of Music*) and of the lead in *Gypsy*’s film version to

Rosalind Russell.

In later years, Merman made frequent guest television appearances and concertized with America's leading symphony orchestras. Despite the fact that she had always disliked touring, she now enjoyed bringing her classic song medley to nationwide audiences. And even as live performers became "wired for sound" no matter how large the venue, Merman would remain proudly "un-miked" to the end. While she would never again appear in an original musical, in 1970 Merman briefly and triumphantly returned in Jerry Herman's *Hello, Dolly!* as that show then became the longest-running production in Broadway history.

Though Merman's professional career was largely stellar, her personal life proved more troublesome. She married four times – most notoriously to Ernest Borgnine for a scant thirty-two days – and allegedly endured domestic abuse, along with the death of her children's father via an accidental drug overdose. Merman would face tragedy yet again decades later, when daughter Ethel committed suicide and son Robert became estranged.

Merman died in February 1984 at age 76. As Carol Channing remarked, "It's like the Statue of Liberty has fallen." Despite frequent forays to Hollywood, and several years living in Colorado with husband #3 during the 1950s, Merman was a New Yorker to the core, albeit never unaware of her own importance to her native city. As she often reminded us, "Broadway's been good to me, but I've been good to Broadway."

Both Kellow and Flinn tell Merman's story effectively. Kellow's book is thorough and breezily written, but he eschews much of Flinn's copious detail. The latter author, by contrast, offers detailed plot summaries of Merman's earliest films, and lengthy

psychological analyses of her life and the "legends" that surrounded her. This material will likely please the diehard devotee, but casual readers may find it unnecessary. Each author skillfully depicts Merman's unyielding professionalism and work ethic, her elusive search for permanent romantic happiness, and a personality by turns down-to-earth and loving, yet often abrasive. Both authors provide chronologies of Merman's stage work, along with numerous photographs, and Flinn includes listings of Merman's recordings and films.

While both these fine works have much to offer musical theatre fans in general, and Merman-lovers in particular, Kellow's is recommended for general readers and musical theatre students, while Flinn's will appeal to those seeking more in-depth treatment. For over four decades, Merman was Broadway in all its glitz and grittiness, and in this centenary year of her birth, we are fortunate to have Kellow and Flinn reminding us of the true star we have missed for too long.

**Catherine Ritchie
Dallas (TX) Public Library**

BOOKS RECEIVED

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