

Theatre Ephemera

Little survives of the vast majority of posters, play bills, programmes and other printed papers created for the public in the course of theatrical performances. Such material can however provide the only source for evidence on aspects of theatre history. Their contents cover a range of subjects – names of the cast and others involved in

the production; photographs of stage sets and actors in costume; background notes which tie particular productions to particular interpretations of the drama; references to the histories of particular theatres or companies of actors; and advertisements which reveal incidental glimpses of the lives and tastes of the theatre-going target audience.

Theatrical ephemera are scattered throughout the relevant library collections, both manuscript and published. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, publications of entire play texts often included information about actors, costumes, circumstances of performance and other aspects specific to a particular performance. From the modern period, such details are most commonly preserved in programmes and play bills.

The history of local theatre in Nottingham, both professional and amateur, depends heavily upon surviving programmes and other ephemera. Sir Hugh Willatt's collection is particularly rich in this area.



From Shakespeare Illustrated

Location

Manuscripts and Special Collections have moved to:

University of Nottingham
King's Meadow Campus
Lenton Lane
Nottingham
NG7 2NR
Tel: +44 (0)115 9514565
Fax: +44 (0)115 8468651

Directions

From M1 Motorway:

Leave motorway at Junction 25 to join the A52 to Nottingham. Turn right at the Queens Medical Centre roundabout (about 5 miles from M1) following signs to Grantham. After going over the flyover get into the left hand lane marked A453 City Centre then turn left after the footbridge, signposted Lenton Lane Industrial Estate. Turn left at the T-junction and King's Meadow Campus is about a quarter of a mile on the right.

From Nottingham (approximately 3 miles):

There are regular Link 1 buses from the Victoria Centre, the Broadmarsh bus station or Nottingham train station. Alight at the Clifton Bridge North stop, then walk north along Lenton Lane via the subway. The Campus is about half a mile on the right. Nottingham City Transport's website provides timetables and information about other routes.

There are taxi ranks throughout the City Centre and immediately adjacent to the main railway and bus stations. The journey to the campus takes about 15 minutes.

From the main University Campus:

The University runs free Hopper bus services between its main Campuses. Timetables are available on the University website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk>

Access to Manuscripts and Special Collections

Reference use of reserved collections is allowed to all bona fide researchers at the discretion of the Keeper; readers must provide proof of identity and complete a registration form. The University reserves the right to refuse admission.

It is strongly recommended that researchers make an appointment in advance of their proposed visit to ensure that the material they wish to consult is available.



Research Collections

For the British Stage



Studying Drama at the University of Nottingham

Drama as performance and text is studied within different European cultures across several departments and of the Faculty of Arts. The School of English and the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies collaborate with the Nottingham Playhouse in running an MA in Performance Practices, and the School of English accepts students for practice-based as well as traditional PhD research. The recently completed Djanogly Theatre at the Lakeside Arts Centre offers excellent resources for collaborative and interdisciplinary work in practice.



The University of Nottingham Dramatic Society production of Coriolanus, 1959



Student Performance at the University

Occasional records of student performance at the University date back to the early twentieth century. Although there are many gaps in the coverage, some useful series have survived, and the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections seeks to extend its coverage of this aspect of the student community's history

at Nottingham. The available material is located both in university archive series and the papers of alumni who were involved in the Dramatic Society. It includes posters and photographs as well as references to production and reviews of performance.



The Collections

Publications relevant to drama and the British theatre lie within a number of different categories of material in library resources. Play texts and criticism are found in the core literature collections, both in English and in the different language areas which hold works of international significance.

Local access to rare editions is enhanced by the extensive reprographic collections in the core library holdings. *Three Centuries of English and American Plays* provides (on microcard) comprehensive coverage of plays in the English language from the sixteenth century onwards, while *Nineteenth century English and American Drama* offers texts of over 23,000 plays (on microcard and microfiche).

Of particular interest among local holdings are the named collections described in this leaflet which are found in the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections.

The Catalogues

Access to the collections is provided through a variety of catalogues and index tools. Records for standard texts and modern literature are generally available through the online library catalogue. Some of the named Special Collections are also covered in this resource, but a number of the older collections are still dependent on card catalogues and some recent accessions await processing. Researchers should consult the online collection level descriptions for the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections and seek staff advice for details of the extent and depth of records available for specialist resources. Separate leaflets, providing general summaries of the scope of the holdings, are available for a number of the named collections.



From Tallis's Shakspeare (1851)

M^{rs}. Leoni as Arbaces.

*Little Syren of y^e Stage,
Charmer of an Idle Age;
Empty Warbler, breathing Lyre,
Wanton gale of fond Desire;*

Pw V 332

Named Collections

Within the archives and rare book collections of the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, holdings about drama and performance range from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. Listed here are the principal relevant resources. Some collections focus on play texts and the theatre, while for others this literature is an incidental element. The list is not comprehensive: relevant material can be buried in a large number of collections and readers are advised to discuss research needs with staff in the Department.

Cambridge Drama Collection, 1750-1850

The Collection, which includes a few records of the Cambridge Garrick Club, was assembled in the late nineteenth century by H T Hall (1823-1894) of Cambridge. With close to 2,000 items, including play texts, theatre history, biography and ephemera, it is a very substantial resource.

Cambridge Shakespeare Collection

Collected editions of Shakespeare, individual texts, works about Shakespeare, and records of famous Shakespearian actors are found in this extensive Collection, which was also the creation of H T Hall of Cambridge, and formed part of the Cambridge Public Library until it was given to Nottingham in 1960.

D H Lawrence Collections

Editions of Lawrence as a playwright and modern criticism are comprehensively covered in the Collections. In addition, the manuscript series contains texts of *David* and *Touch and Go*, and scattered references to his other plays.



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Woodward Collection

The local solicitor Parker Woodward assembled a collection of over 300 items, primarily concerned with Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and the claim that he wrote the plays commonly attributed to Shakespeare. The Collection is primarily late 19th century, but includes some 17th-century imprints.



William Cavendish

Portland Literary Collection

Manuscripts from the Welbeck library of the Dukes of Portland include significant drama resources, the earliest being a copy of Thomas Middleton's *Hengist*. The majority date from the 17th century and the circle of William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle upon Tyne (1592-1676), including some of his own texts. These resources form part of the much larger Portland of Welbeck Collections, in which other series also contain occasional correspondence and ephemera of relevance to theatre history.

Twentieth-Century Theatre Collection

A collection group was established in the 1970s to accommodate what was anticipated as an expanding subject area for the manuscript holdings. Series within it include the papers of the communist and writer Charles Montague Slater (1902-1956); local theatre ephemera, including programmes, posters and news cuttings; and some twenty scripts from Nottingham Playhouse (1960s -1980s).

Willatt Collection

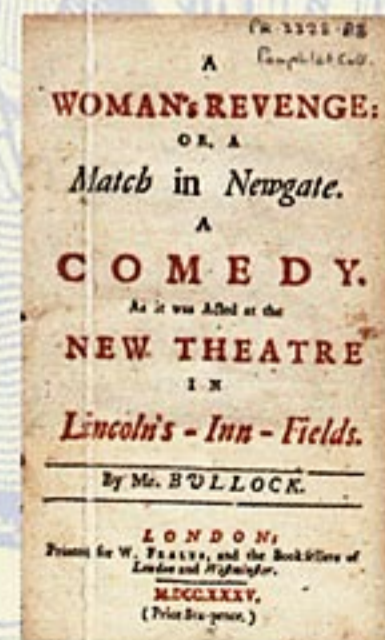
An extensive library of dramatic works and theatre history was bequeathed to the University of Nottingham by Sir Hugh Willatt (1909-1996). The Collection reflects Sir Hugh's Nottingham associations and his life-long involvement with the theatre, including his period of office as Secretary to the Arts Council. A particular strength is its long runs of theatre programmes and other forms of theatre ephemera.

General Special Collection

Some drama-related materials, including early publications of plays and occasional rare modern printings, are found in the main Special Collection series.

Miscellaneous Manuscript Collections

Manuscripts of significance are also scattered throughout the individual and family collections – such as the Marlay Collection, comprising the papers of the Earls of Charleville, an Anglo-Irish family with literary connection. These and other collections include instances of amateur dramatics, evidence of theatre visits, occasional ephemera, and examples of financial sponsorship or management of theatrical events. They add to the sources for theatre and popular culture, and sometimes provide evidence about particular writers or actors.



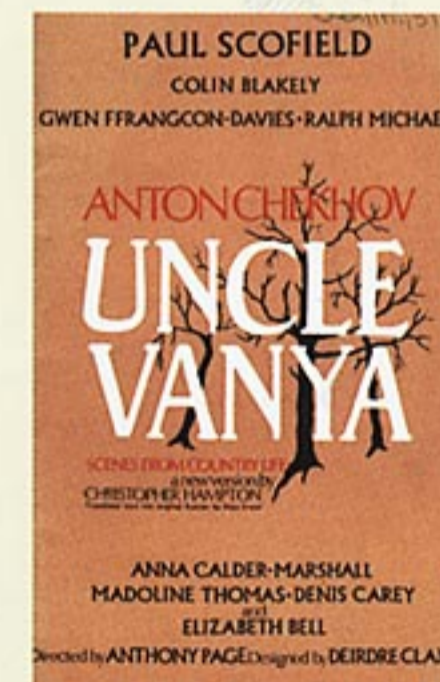
ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE



Chekhov and the British Stage

The Patrick Miles Chekhov Collection was acquired by the University of Nottingham in 1999. It is entirely concerned with the life and work of Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), the Russian playwright.

At the heart of the Collection is a long series of theatre programmes, playbill and review literature, which record British (primarily English) performance of Chekhov in the twentieth century. This material supports researchers seeking to chart English language reception of Chekhov's drama, and the relative popularity of particular titles. Translators and writers who adapted the Russian originals can be identified, often with extensive notes of explanation about Chekhov or the production in question.



This theatre ephemera extends the interest of the Collection to wider issues concerning performance on the British stage in the latter half of the twentieth century. Photographs and programme notes about actors and other individuals involved in productions provide evidence about the personalities active in the theatre during this time, while the programmes and advertising literature

themselves illustrate the presentation of theatrical events for audiences across different parts of the country and at different times.