

SA DRAMA AND THEATRE HERITAGE:

A RESEARCH PROJECT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRIKAANS AND THEORY OF LITERATURE, UNISA AND THE UNISA LIBRARY ARCHIVE

In 2013 The Department of Afrikaans and Theory of Literature, in collaboration with the Unisa Library Archive, launched a South African drama and theatre heritage project.

Various institutions which have developed valuable collections in the past (inter alia the State theatre's Archive in Pretoria, as well as the Centre for Theatre Research at the HSRC) have closed these collections, while access to these collections can also often be difficult. The important role played by the old Performing Arts Councils (PACOFs, PACT, NAPAC, CAPAB) in terms of preservation matters, has in most in disappeared. A new era of theatre practice was introduced with the establishment of a large number of arts festivals in the country. The matter of preservation is in most cases not a high priority for the management of these festivals and only the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown is relatively well archived.

The Unisa project has the following main objectives:

- (1) To establish a database of current information, i.e. which performance arts archives and collections are still active, which is dormant and which is in dire need of intervention. This information will be placed and updated on our facebook page, as well as on our departmental website. This will include links to specific websites (institutions, production houses, individual artists, etc). Short descriptions of the various collections ("directories") will be given in order to assist potential researchers to find information on a particular matter. We will insert as many relevant links as possible to make the information as comprehensive as possible.
- (2) To establish a network of interested people (academics, performers, archivists, etc.) We are collaborating with Prof Temple Hauptfleisch on this project (and also see his ESAT project as complementary to ours), and colleagues from the Drama Departments of the Free State, Stellenbosch and TUT have also expressed their support for this project. We want, however, to enlarge our network of partners and thus invite any interested parties who want to participate in this project to contact us.
- (3) To establish a safe repository for any drama/theatre material in the Unisa Library archive. We thus invite any production houses, as well as individual artists, to contact us if they have any material (texts, photos, posters, programmes, etc) which they would like to preserve according to established archival standards. The invitation

entails that this material will be professionally archived, indexed and made accessible for research purposes. The production house/ individual artist retains the copyright and performance rights of all material submitted.

For a fuller description of this project and how it envisages the future of theatre archiving in South Africa please read the two articles published in the South African Theatre Journal:

- (1) Keuris, Marisa & Krüger, Lida. 2014. "South African drama and theatre heritage (Part I): a map of where we find ourselves." *South African Theatre Journal*, 27, 1, pp 19 - 31. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10137548.2014.846662>
- (2) Keuris, Marisa & Krüger, Lida. 2014. "South African drama and theatre heritage (Part II): what does the future hold? *South African Theatre Journal*, 27. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10137548.2014.876805>

Collections already housed in the Unisa Library Archive:

- Teaterhuisie (material donated by Carel Trichardt and Petru Wessels)
- Aardklop material
- Innibos material
- Nicola Hanekom donated material

Projects currently ongoing:

- Nerina Ferreira (Afrikaans translations of European texts; received from Prof Petrus du Preez, US Drama department)
- Mamelodi Theatre Organization (donation received from Mr Junior Makhoere)
- State theatre archive to be moved to Unisa Library archive

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UnisaDramaAndTheaterHeritage>

Website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=13256>

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