ACTIVE ARCHIVING AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE:

CREATING A COLLECTION FROM EMBEDDED AND PARALLEL PRACTICE WITH *TILL THE STARS COME DOWN* (2024)

by

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A dissertation submitted to the

Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

April 2025

67,618 words

Signed Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

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Abstract

As an in-house theatre archivist for the National Theatre (NT) since 2012, I have discovered that there is a lack of tailored archival theory for archivists in performing arts institutions. This has resulted in archival science failing to consider the practicalities and nuances of being based in a live, working theatre. This thesis explores how a model of active archiving can be adopted by an in-house theatre archive to create a more representative collection of theatre-making processes. Grounded in the fields of both archival science and theatre and performance studies, the research investigates alternative methods for capturing the process of creating a production with specific focus on the 'development period.' I carried out an embedded and parallel archiving practice with *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) written by Beth Steel and directed by Bijan Sheibani. I underpinned this by interviewing researchers from the NT Archive audiences and theatre archivists alongside auditing the NT Archive collections. As a result of the practice, I added context for the materials normally sent to the NT Archive, gathered materials that were usually created but not transferred to the NT Archive, and finally, collected new materials sustainably, with an eye to what was being asked of practitioners. This produced a catalogue of over 1,500 items and revised retention schedules for NT departments and artistic teams. The findings suggest that a new method of archiving can make the NT Archive more representative of performance in terms of the periods of a production, people involved, types of materials created, and how materials are catalogued. By pushing the boundaries of in-house theatre archiving using practice I created a new and sustainable model of archiving. I make recommendations for the NT and wider performing arts archive sector, proposing opportunities for archives to become part of a cycle of creativity.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the unfailing support of the National Theatre. I am indebted to Alice King-Farlow, Director of Learning and National Partnerships, and Lisa Burger, former Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive, for their willingness for me to embrace a PhD as part of my role as Head of Archive. Thanks to Rufus Norris, former Artistic Director and Co-Chief Executive, and Nina Steiger, Director of New Work, for their support and championing of this project with the staff and practitioners involved. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with all the staff mentioned in this thesis and thank them unreservedly for their enthusiasm and grace in welcoming me into their world. I give special thanks to the NT Archive team, who have supported me on this journey from backfilling my role to dissecting reports I've created and answering my countless questions.

Thank you to the artistic team of *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024), especially the writer, Beth Steel, and staff director, Stepan Mysko von Schultze. The materials collected from the artistic team were not only invaluable to this thesis but also form an unparalleled archive of process within the NT. Thanks too to the artistic team of *Nye* (2024) for welcoming me into their workshops so warmly.

Thank you to all the archivists, researchers, and staff I interviewed for the thesis, who all gave their time generously. I am so fortunate to be part of the Association of Performing Arts Collections, who have helped me to advocate for and share my research.

Thank you to my supervisors, Professors Kate Elswit and Maria Delgado, who have guided me with such care, curiosity, and openness. Their wisdom and depth of knowledge have encouraged me to view my profession in a new light and made me see the potential for true collaboration between archivists, practitioners, and academics.

Finally, thank you to my family and Kate Guest for their readership and editorial assistance. And to my husband, Robbie, for having the belief in me to suggest a PhD in the first place and for the unwavering support to guide me through. This is for him.

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Introduction

1 The gap in collecting

In my experience as an archivist for the Royal National Theatre (NT), I have discovered that there is a lack of tailored archival theory for archivists in performing arts institutions. I head up the in-house theatre archive, [1] which is housed at the NT Studio with a staff of seven and open to the public by appointment. As a professional archivist, holding a relevant master's level qualification, my daily work is shaped by the field of archival science. Many principles of archival science are confronted by the practicalities and nuances of being based in a live, working theatre. The ephemeral nature of the artform, the informality of the working environment, the high numbers of freelancers engaging with each production, and the many differences that exist between productions means that it is challenging for an in-house theatre archivist to follow the strict guidelines of archival science to implement archiving procedures across the organisation. This challenge has been little addressed in academic or archive discipline-specific literature. In order to explore how archival science can be applied to a performance environment, I investigate how an archivist within an in-house theatre archive can create a more representative archive of theatre-making processes and make this available for researchers.

Archivists and academics are discussing this topic though not in an interdisciplinary manner. There is limited literature within archival science that deals with performance, and even less that deals with process. There are conversations happening within the archive sector on how to establish a theatre archive and care for a collection (such as Koffler (2014) and Ellis (2005)). Het Firmament in Belgium also produced a report on the development of arts archives (Het Firmament, 2015). This organisation merged with Resonant (centre of expertise for musical heritage) in 2019 to form CEMPER, which is now a centre for music and performing arts in Flanders. One of CEMPER's projects is to assist music and performing arts institutions in receipt of multi-year government funding to archive their work in accordance with the funding mandate. CEMPER use TRACKS (Toolbox and Richtlijnen voor Archief-en Collectiezorg in de

[1] For more information, see the webpage: https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us/archive/.

Kunstensector), which has been designed to provide a toolkit that contains all the tools artists and arts organisations need to create and preserve their own archive (TRACKS, no date). The Emergency Performing Arts Archives and Digital Theatre Support Project (EPAD) developed by the Japan Performing Arts Solidarity Network (JPASN) during the Covid-19 pandemic supports theatre staff with training and information on digital preservation of video recordings (Okamuro, 2024). Alongside these manuals and toolkits, there is academic research discussing archiving within theatre and performance studies as highlighted in Section 2.3 below (p.19) and including the seminal works of scholars such as Philip Auslander (2006), Peggy Phelan (1993), and Rebecca Schneider (2011). In this thesis I situate myself between archival science, theatre and performance studies, and theatre practitioners who are the NT's content creators, so that I can explore issues around documentation and create a new method of archiving.

This is the gap in archival science that this thesis aims to address through embracing learnings from theatre and performance studies, the fields in which theatre practitioners and researchers are based. To do this, I conducted a multi-year case study[2] where I brought these fields into dialogue to expand the principles of archival science in relation to a working theatre. The case study focuses on archiving the development period of a production, which is a gap in collecting identified in the NT Archive,[3] to construct a more representative archive of performance. I carried out an embedded and parallel practice with the production *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) *(TTSCD)*, written by Beth Steel, directed by Bijan Sheibani and staged in the Dorfman Theatre January – March 2024. This thesis proposes recommendations for creating more representative collections of productions for the NT, its Archive and, more broadly, other theatre archives by adopting an active archiving approach and collaborating with practitioners.

The concept of 'representativeness' of an archive is tackled in the archive sector as far back as the 1970s when F. Gerald Ham, the then President of the Society of American Archivists, suggested that 'Our most important and intellectually demanding task as archivists is to make an informed selection of information that will provide the future with a representative record of human experience in our time' (Ham, 1975, p.5). Ham encouraged archivists to 'hold up a

[2] I acknowledge the limitations of conducting one case study, but I benefit from the otherwise impossible insights provided by a study conducted within the NT by a senior staff member.
[3] To be discussed in Chapter 1 Section 2.1 (p.35).

mirror to mankind' (Ham, 1975, p.13) with their appraisal practices and move away from the traditional Jenkinsonian focus on important people (Johnston, 2001, p.214). Ham and the historian and playwright Howard Zinn, who called for 'active archivists' in the 1970s, were speaking of and to the full breadth of the archive sector, encouraging the documenting of all: such as the poor as well as the rich, the failures as well as the successes, the young and the old, the women and the men (Zinn, 1977, p.21). When discussing representation in this thesis, I do so in the way presented by Geoffrey Yeo, archival science scholar, where he defined representations as surrogates i.e., 'things which stand for something else' (Yeo, 2008, p.1). Taking the centrality of representativeness to the archive sector, this thesis explores how to construct an archive actively so that the resulting collections are more representative of productions on stage at the NT.[4]

The NT Archive operates using a variety of policies, a key one of which is the Collection Development Policy. This policy is the reference point for all collecting decisions made by NT Archive staff. The policy outlines the subject areas and chronological period collected, the types of genres or media held, repositories with which the collection policy overlaps, methods of acquisition, the conditions accepted on accession and the selection and deaccessioning policy. This policy includes information on what materials the NT Archive collects for each production and is signed off by the Executive Committee of the NT. Production materials to be collected are mentioned in the subject area section of the policy and cover 'the creation of each production staged at the National Theatre', and includes 'supporting materials will be collected from relevant National Theatre departments' (National Theatre Archive, 2022a, p.3). This broad statement currently translates into a selection of materials being collected, which are detailed in Appendix A (p.198) and focus on the period a production is in rehearsal and on stage. What is not captured and yet is significant to researchers, as will be shown in Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44), is the 'development period' of a production at the New Work Department (NWD). Archiving this period as well as the rehearsal and production periods is the focus of my case study.

[4] I discuss representation as it relates specifically to performing arts archives in Chapter 3 Section 1 (p.104).

The NWD develops work and artists for the NT stages as well as those around the UK and the NWD team tend to have around two hundred projects in development and engage with over one thousand artists per year. In 2024/2025, the NWD had a staff of fifteen and a budget of £1.94 million and they manage the development period of productions. The term 'development period' is used by NT staff to refer to the period of production that is more commonly known as 'Research and Development' in the broader theatre sector. The development period lasts from the time a show is first explored by the NWD team until the show moves into rehearsal on the main NT site or is not taken forward by the NT. This period covers 'green lit' and 'in development' workshops that take place, with each production most commonly receiving one or two two-week workshops.[5] According to Rachel Twigg, Head of Studio,[6] these workshops are opportunities to (Twigg, 2020):

- work on aspects of a production that would not otherwise be possible due to time or financial constraints,
- develop a script that has yet to be commissioned,
- test out if a concept or idea for a theatre show has the potential for development,
- test out if theatre is the correct form for the idea/piece,
- encourage particular actors to participate in a production,
- investigate an area that could not be focused on in the rehearsal period such as an aspect of the stage design or particular movement direction.

The NT is mostly a script-based producing theatre and by the time a production enters rehearsal after the development period, the script, while not locked, is in a state where it will not undergo drastic changes. The journeys of the actors and the artistic team may continue to develop but the vision and direction of the production are set by this point, and the development period has ended.

In my experience as an archivist at the NT, it is this development period that is not well documented within the collections. Chapter 1 discusses surveys I carried out of the NT Archive

[5] A third type of workshop, to support artists or organisations unrelated to the production of work at the NT, lies outside of the remit of this thesis.
[6] The Head of Studio takes overall responsibility for the producing and distribution of resources of the New Work Department and manages the delivery team.

collection, frequent researcher requirements, and publications to provide further evidence for the development period being a gap in collecting and of key interest to researchers. Researchers, internal to the NT and external, often wish to know how major decisions were made such as the design or period setting, and they frequently want to know what other options were considered and why they were rejected. Performance scholarship has been working to remedy the longstanding bias toward studying the production stage, including through rehearsal studies, discussed in Chapter 3 Section 2 (p.107), and the focus here tends to be on studying the development period and its documentation rather than the archiving of it.[7] The archiving of the development period of *TTSCD*, therefore, supports ongoing research in the field of theatre and this thesis demonstrates how archival science can embrace theatre and performance studies to create a more flexible and active archiving methodology.

In this thesis I focus on the following research questions:

- What are the challenges that performance environments pose to archival science?
- What approaches could an active archivist take to archive more representative records of performance?
- How can the active archivist approach to in-house theatre archiving be made sustainable within the constraints of a large institution?

This introduction covers the key concepts of the thesis, in relation to the fields I engage with, addresses my own positionality, outlines the thesis methodology and concludes with chapter summaries.

2 Key concepts

This research sits at the intersection of archival science and theatre and performance studies. This section covers key concepts for the thesis: in-house theatre archives and comparator organisations to the NT Archive, my position within the NT and this research, archival science and how it does not engage in any depth with performance, and theatre and performance studies and how the fields engage with archiving.

[7] The distinction between archiving and documentation is discussed in Section 2.1 below (p.13).

2.1 In-house theatre archives

The archive at the centre of this research is the NT Archive, which aims to document and preserve materials related to the history and ongoing activities of the NT and to interpret and make it as accessible as possible (National Theatre Archive, 2022b). The NT, full title The Royal National Theatre, is a charity whose income is split between an Arts Council England (ACE) grant, Box Office income, commercial income, Learning and Public Engagement income, and philanthropic fundraising. As such, the NT is a public body with National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status with ACE. Despite being a single organisation, and as demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board and Executive of the NT support and advocate for the whole sector including the freelance community. The NT Archive has the responsibility to archive both the business and production-related aspects of the NT, and this thesis focuses on what is called the Cultural Archive, those materials related to the productions on NT stages.[8] Archives held within the organisation that they collect about are called 'institutional', 'corporate' or 'in-house' archives and are viewed as organisations within organisations (Eulenberg, 1984, p.22). Much has been written about these archives held within businesses, including their position, make-up and value as corporate assets (Smith, 1982; Eulenberg, 1984). Little has been written about these archives when the organisation they are held within is a theatre.[9]

I define an in-house theatre archive as one where the staff can set their own collecting policies and store their collections within the theatre buildings. Being located as they are within a working theatre these archives are uniquely placed to work in tandem with the fields of theatre and performance studies. Typically, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 Section 3 (p.78), archival science is rigid with fixed structures and rules, which is at odds with the flexibility and time-based nature of theatre and performance studies. These archives, therefore, provide a site for considering how archival science can experiment with the flexibility and variability of the 'Questioning paradigm'[10] resulting from postmodernism using theatre and performance studies and the theatre setting.

[8] The NT Archive is made up of the Cultural Archive, the Business Archive relating to the running of the NT as a charity, and External Collections that have been donated to the NT.
[9] Key texts are: Petranović (1995) and D'Ambrosio (2017).
[10] To be discussed in this section below (p.19).

For me to consider the wider possibility for and applicability of this research, I have considered comparator organisations to the NT Archive worldwide. Beyond the NT, this thesis further considers what is collected and preserved internationally in similar institutions or by artists in similar fields and how these materials are used by researchers. I explore these in detail in Chapter 1 and the four areas are as follows.

Firstly, I look to other in-house theatre archives as comparators to the NT. By doing so, I ensure that this research is not only applicable to the NT, but its methodology and findings can also be of use to in-house theatre archives elsewhere. I consider a variety of organisations to help with this overview of collections. I focus on those archives that allow public access and those that are on a national or city-wide scale that I deem to be the most comparable to the NT Archive. These are: Comédie Française, Roundabout Theatre, Royal Ballet and Opera, Shakespeare's Globe, and Stratford Festival Ontario. These archives all store their collections in theatre buildings, establish their own collecting remit, and provide access to internal and external users to some extent. They are all centrally funded by their institution and have archive staff. The main difference between these comparators and the NT Archive is the level of investment from the parent body including the comparatively high number of staff at the NT Archive, seven, with three being archivists with a certified professional qualification.[11]

Secondly, as an in-house theatre archive is different to a theatre archive that tends to hold materials from a variety of theatres I have explored the Billy Rose Theatre Division of New York Public Library, Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, National Library of Norway (which archives the Nationalteatret), the University of Bristol Theatre Collection and the Victoria and Albert Museum. While these archives hold material from theatres, the collections are not housed within the theatre and the collecting remit is not set by the theatre or its practitioners. These collections do, however, tend to be well funded, allow public access and are staffed by teams of qualified professionals. By considering all these comparators, I have seen that the location of archives – within theatres, national museums, universities etc. – could affect how the objects and remnants of theatre and performance are framed. This location could affect what is collected, the interpretation, visibility, and use of the materials, which all have different collection remits as a result. When considering the applicability of my findings to

[11] Certain postgraduate degrees are accredited by the Archives and Records Association.

other collections and theatres in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter, I bear in mind the location of archives and the unusual nature of the NT Archive with its secure funding and staffing levels.

Thirdly, in addition to these comparator archives, I broaden my institutional comparators to include some institutions that have been established in a different way to the archives mentioned above but also safeguard performing arts materials. I include examples from Seachange Lab in Denmark and Akademie Der Künste in Germany. These collections and methods of creating them are a fertile area for discussion in relation to this research.

Fourthly, in Chapter 2 Section 4 (p.87), I look to artists who engage in creative documentation. The term 'documentation' refers to the act of writing information down or capturing information in some way.[12] Creative documentation is the capturing of information by the artists themselves, often using creative methods such as photography or filming. This is helpful for considering how theatre practitioners could contribute to documenting their process around a production, particularly when not confined by the rules of archival science.

These four different types and positions of archives demonstrate a variety of possibilities for the NT Archive in terms of collecting and relationships with practitioners while also reinforcing my anecdotal knowledge of the gap in collecting around the development period. Using this understanding of the potential for an in-house theatre archive and knowledge of the gap in collecting that I am tackling, I argue across the thesis that an archivist positioned within an in-house theatre archive will have the access and opportunity to play an active role in archiving the development period of a production, to collaborate with practitioners in record creation and to gather a more representative archive with the potential to be the 'centre of interpretation' for these records (Osborne, 1999, p.52). Using the analogy of the archive as a laboratory,[13] developed by the philosopher Thomas Osborne in response to the works of philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, the archive must hold all the relevant ingredients for a researcher to carry out their research and to be a site of knowledge

[12] This is different to 'archiving,' which involves appraising, cataloguing, rehousing, and storing that information.

[13] The archive functions for the humanities and social sciences as the laboratory functions for scientists, as sites of knowledge production.

production (Osborne, 1999, p.52; Manoff, 2004, p.13). The case study with *TTSCD* explores the role of and potential for an active archivist within a theatre to collect these relevant ingredients for research. I discuss this active archivist stance further in the Methodology section below (p.24), and the wider implications of this research for the NT Archive and other theatre archives in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter.

2.2 My position within the NT and as a researcher

As a researcher and a staff member at the NT, I acknowledge the intricacies of my position and the complexities of my roles in this research. Throughout the thesis I distinguish between my activities and interventions undertaken as a researcher and as the Head of Archive at the NT. I used the opportunities attached to my role to gain entry to the development period where I observed the process of the practitioners and involved them, as the records creators, in decisions around documentation. By collaborating with practitioners in identifying which records should be added to the NT Archive I was working actively in the appraisal of transfers and creating a more representative collection in the most informed way possible while expanding and challenging how archiving has been undertaken at the NT to date. I acknowledge the privilege that I am afforded at the NT as their in-house archivist. I benefit from the exclusive insights provided by a study conducted within the NT by a senior staff member. I have also benefitted from the willingness of practitioners to work with the NT on its projects. The NT Archive is an unusually well-resourced and managed archive, and this prime position and level of resource has led to the Executive team supporting this research. This is partnership-based research benefitting from the resource of the NT, who seek a better understanding of how the NT Archive is used and how an archivist can build more productive relationships with practitioners to establish a more representative collection.

As part of my role as an in-house theatre archivist, I am also a business archivist,[14] which can be a role requiring a delicate balance between opening up collections and restricting access where necessary (Business Achives Council, 2015, p.1). Within a business archive there can be pressure from the organisation for an archivist to work in a certain way or focus attention on or

[14] An archivist based within a business, responsible for documenting the history of the organisation and serving day-to-day business needs using the archive.

away from particular parts of the collection for marketing or brand reasons. A business can pressure an archivist to value certain records over others or make some less accessible than others if they show the organisation in a negative light. Business archivists can play a role in rhetorical history, the deliberate construction by an organisation of a historical narrative to suit a particular goal. Ian Jones, a business historian, discussed this rhetorical history in the context of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and other sport franchises, who actively construct their history by manipulating access to their archives (Jones, 2023). This ties with musicologist and academic James Steichen's term 'institutional dramaturgy' relating to an organisation's role in how it is viewed externally (Steichen, 2011, p.446).[15] An archivist can, therefore, be placed in a difficult position, caught between their ethical code and their role within the business, which may not be legally mandated to keep archives or make them available to the public. This is a challenge for business archivists and each organisation will have a different approach to the freedom of their archive team to document and make materials accessible. Businesses can view their archivist as the 'keeper of the organization's memory' (Goldstein, 1997, p.44) like a company historian and in interviews with internal staff,[16] the terms 'indispensable', 'company history' and 'like the staff member who never leaves' were used to describe the NT Archive.

This role of the company historian thus brings power, a concept discussed at length within academic discourse in archival science (Cook and Schwartz, 2002; Jimerson, 2006; Oke, 2020). The postmodern shift in archival science, to be discussed further under Section 2.3 below (p.19), moves focus away from striving for completeness and static records towards embracing the dynamic nature of records and their context (Ridener, 2009, p.150), and considering images, texts, and languages as 'all signs to be interpreted and interrogated, none of them maintain a stable, static, meaning' (Lane and Hill, 2010, p.8). I recognise that I am in a powerful position in deciding which records can or should be archived related to the NT and as such, I intervene in the making of history. Archivist Arike Oke commented that archivists should embrace the power they are given and use it in the best way they can to create their collections (Oke, 2020). I am particularly influenced by Oke's argument that bias needs to be

[15] At the NT, this refers to activities such as the interval film in the NT Live broadcasts, mailouts from Box Office, visual branding of productions, and production trailers.
[16] Discussed in Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44).

acknowledged and that archivists need to be aware of their positions and how that determines their decision-making.

Such shifts in the role and position of the archivist require some flexibility in the running of the archive service, which can be at odds with the rigid structure within the archive sector. The NT Archive is a formal environment with policies in place describing how the collection is developed, catalogued, conserved and made accessible, which is partly why it has been awarded Accredited status[17] by The National Archives and why the NT Archive staff frequently present internationally on activities and author good practice guidance for the sector. In this research, I operated within this formal environment while experimenting with the flexibility of archival science to establish new good practice for the NT and wider field.[18] The formal environment in which I work, which I discuss in Chapter 2 Section 2 (p.71), can incur challenges to this process. Whilst the NT Archive is not as formal as an archive based within other businesses such as a bank or legal office, there are some areas where flexibility is less possible such as the emergency response plan, rights management, or the cataloguing software, and my research was conducted within these confines while simultaneously challenging them. There are implications from this research for this wider archival field, which are discussed in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter.

As I conducted this research, I needed to consider how my positionality as a researcher, while also an archivist, affected the work I did. During this research I held two roles:[19] a researcher in terms of my presence in the room and my work to explore the archival possibilities of the development process to suit the needs of future researchers; and an archivist capturing materials for the archive and establishing practical workflows for the NT Archive staff for all NT productions. These two roles are not distinct but overlap and are porous, positioning this work between academic research, the archive profession and theatre practice. This relates to the 'in-between' role I find myself in, where I am caught between the formal requirements of my

[17] Accredited status is bestowed by The National Archives on archive services, which are running at or above the national standard for archives. The NT Archive achieved this status in 2017 and retained the award in 2024.
[18] See publication about existing projects at the NT Archive, which tried to flex the formality of archival science (Lee, 2018b).
[19] Discussed in Chapter 3 Section 2 (p.107) and Chapter 4 Section 6 (p.154).

sector, the flexibility and creativity of the subject I am archiving, including the use of creative documentation by practitioners, and the experimentation required to establish good practice. I explore this in-between space using my practice, to be discussed in Section 3 below (p.24). Tensions emerged during this research as I occupied this space, but it is by positioning myself in this unknown terrain between archival science, theatre and performance studies, and theatre practitioners, that I created a dialogue about archiving and performance. In this way, my research pioneers an alternative approach to my job role, one which allows me to work to ensure a more representative archive is created for productions.

2.3 The fields of archival science, theatre studies and performance studies

To support my collaborative approach to engaging with practitioners around record creation and with the researcher in mind, it is necessary to take other relevant fields into account beyond archival science. In this section I outline these relevant fields and propose the definitions and interpretations that I use throughout this research. I discuss how performance is a test case for archival science in the current Questioning paradigm and where changes in theatre and performance studies mean that the archiving of practice is now discussed more by academics and practitioners in these fields. These conversations will be expanded on in Chapter 2 and feed directly into the planning for the embedded and parallel practice in Chapter 3.

Archival science is 'a systematic body of theory that supports the practice of appraising, acquiring, authenticating, preserving and providing access to recorded materials' (Society of American Archivists, 2019) and 'the study of an applied profession' (Ridener, 2009, p.1). Archival science has been developed over the past one hundred and twenty years with several marked paradigm shifts. The Dutch Manual was the first widely recognised treatise on archival theory, published in 1898 (Muller et al., 2003) and was written out of a desire to professionalise the archive sector by portraying archivists as *record organisers*. This was followed twenty four years later by another manual focusing more on the moral and theoretical reasons for keeping archives and advocated for archives to be substitutes for memory (Jenkinson, 1922). Thirty four years later came a more pragmatic manual, that cast archivists as *record selectors* (Schellenberg, 1956). Forty years later, emerging from this history and postmodernism, the Questioning paradigm offers a useful perspective on authenticity. This

paradigm developed during the 1990s and 2000s from four ‘roots’ within the archival profession: the importance of context in culture, the desire to marry theory with practice, postmodern critical thought and the impact of technological advances on archiving (Ridener, 2009, p.102). The Questioning paradigm ‘has sought to question the assumptions and knowledge of past archival theory and to define new archival theories based upon the possible answers to those questions’ (Ridener, 2009, p.121). One of the concepts resulting from this paradigm shift is the more active role of the archivist (Ridener, 2009, p.132) and one where they are ‘very active builders of their own "houses of memory"’ (Cook, 1997, p.46). John Ridener, an archival science scholar, focuses on communication as being key to this paradigm shift, with knowledge transferred from record creator to the document or from the document to the user and with every moment of communication there is the possibility for interpretation of the information (Ridener, 2009, p.117). This supports a shift towards a more adaptable and flexible model of archiving encouraging ‘variability’ in collecting (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.169). In the context of this thesis, the Questioning paradigm suggests a potential move towards the acceptance of a multitude of sources and materials, a questioning of authenticity as a benchmark of best practice and archivists becoming more active agents, encouraging a move away from the knowledge being held in fixed formats (Ridener, 2009, p.101).

My thesis deals directly with archives and documentation from my perspective as a professional archivist trained in archival science. It is important to establish my definitions of these terms early in the thesis as these terms mean different things in different contexts. The term ‘archive’ can be used as a verb to mean the practice of archiving, which includes making decisions about what is collected, cataloguing, re-housing and deaccessioning. ‘Archive’ can also refer to the physical places where records are kept, whether that be buildings or rooms. ‘Archives’ also means the ‘documentary by-product of human activity that are retained for their long-term value’ (International Council on Archives, 2016a; Het Firmament, 2015). I am aware of poststructuralist critiques of ‘the archive’ such as by Derrida, who used the term ‘archive’ as an analogy for human memory or history with the ‘archivist’ as an ‘archon’ or ruler of the content but these are not the definitions that I find most recognisable to my experience as an archivist (Derrida, 1996, pp.1-2). Nonetheless, such conversations impact on those creating and using records in archives and how these can inform my practice. In my case, in an in-house theatre archive, the most relevant people to look to for identifying how they approach

archiving their own work and using the records they find in the NT Archive are practitioners and theatre historians. Their views may well differ from my definitions above, but it is necessary to comprehend both the understanding of an archive from within the sector and from outside so that I can ensure that the work of the NT Archive is outward facing and serving those whose work it captures and those who wish to use the collections.

Alongside these alternative approaches to archives are the gaps between the theorisation of the archive sector in archival science and the practice of working in an archive. I have experienced these gaps in my current role, which I mentioned above (p.16) and will expand on in Chapter 2 Section 2 (p.71). The gap between the formality of archival theory and the practice of implementing archiving has led to a variety of conversations in the archive sector around how to implement archival science. One such discussion is around community custodial care and archives. In a study of community archives in Southern California in 2015-2016, it became apparent that archival practices were challenging the dominant narratives of archival science (Zavala et al., 2017). These community archives used a post-custodial method of archiving, where the archive staff received loans of materials from community members. The staff then digitised these and returned the originals leaving digital surrogates in the archive (Zavala et al., 2017, p.208).[20] This method was useful for building trust between the community and the archive by working through tensions around ownership, access and the established understanding of archival custody. This is in opposition to archival science, where traditionally the original material would be held within the archive. Using a post-custodial method, the archive was constructed in a far more collaborative manner, which empowered the community members and encouraged a breaking down of traditionally hierarchical archival structures and user participation in archival practices such as appraisal and cataloguing (Zavala et al., 2017, p.209). These new forms of archival practice can also encourage community members of under-represented communities to engage with mainstream archival institutions and provide feedback on how to collect, manage or describe collections, which will improve the preservation of their community and the diversification of collections (Zavala et al., 2017, p.213). Michelle Caswell, an archivist, archival science scholar and one of the authors of the above study, published earlier on her work with identity-based community archives and came to similar conclusions about the need for archivists to let go of some of their traditional

[20] Participatory archive projects will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 Section 5 (p.94).

professional identity and to question how archives are constructed and the motivations for doing so (Caswell, 2013, pp.51-52). These community archives demonstrate a tangible but productive tension between archival theory and new archival practices, which produces new theory, processes and best practice.

Discussions around archival science have developed over the past three decades to situate archivists in more active and creative roles. For example, Daisy Abbot, an arts data specialist, and archivists, Sarah Jones and Seamus Ross, encourage archivists to recognise performances as live events and to consider how archives can reflect the mode of creation (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.170). This casts the archivist in a more active role than had previously been advocated by Jenkinson and Schellenberg, as discussed above (p.19). This role is similar to archivists working with community records who must have 'deep knowledge' of events to be able to archive them (Bastian, 2013, p.122). Terry Cook, an archivist and archival science scholar, claims that 'the archivist is an active agent shaping the archive, a mediator and interpreter of meaning' (Cook, 2009, p.xvii). This is a powerful role and suggests that the archivist can have greater agency than is currently typical at the NT. While this shift took place within archival science, the archive became central across a range of disciplines and domains from sociology to colonial historiography opening up the concept of the archive to new possibilities and the production of new knowledge, which paves the way for a more interdisciplinary approach to archival science (Derrida, 1996, p.34; Manoff, 2004, p.19; Geiger, Moore, Savage, 2010, p.4).

In this thesis, interdisciplinarity comes from the use of archival science alongside theatre and performance studies. Theatre studies has developed from being a study of dramatic texts and specifically focusing on spoken theatre with critical and historical perspectives to the text being only one of many elements relating to theatre. I am using 'theatre' to refer to a building that houses theatrical performances as well as particular types of performance. I have examined the performances staged at the National Theatre, which is the most highly subsidised theatre in the UK[21] and where performances are predominantly script-based. The field of theatre studies is

[21] The NT receives £16.1 million from ACE in the current funding cycle (2023-2026) while the Royal Shakespeare Company receives £15.3 million and the Royal Exchange Theatre £2.4 million. The Royal Ballet and Opera receives the most subsidy as a performing arts venue with £22.3 million (Arts Council England, 2022).

multi-dimensional and composed of a variety of fields and perspectives, which can be grouped as historical, aesthetic/theoretical and social/cultural (Balme, 2008). This is reflected in the types of materials that theatre academics[22] search for or expect to find when they come to the NT Archive. This shifting to a multitude of elements being part of an analysis of performance developed further with the growth of the field of performance studies.

Performance studies emerged during the 1980s and 1990s and encouraged an extended view of performance outside of the realms of the performing arts and it sees theatre as one facet of performance (Bottoms and Delgado, 2010, p.181). Richard Schechner became a leader of this paradigm shift and encouraged the inclusion of studies of performance in ritual and social contexts and to move emphasis from text-based to performance-based analysis. While the fields of theatre and performance studies might be conceived as separate fields by some (Schechner, 1992, p.9), there is a fluidity and lack of fixed boundary. Due to the intermingling of these disciplines and the mix of people engaging with the NT Archive, I often speak of 'theatre and performance studies' in this thesis, referring to the relevant fields for the practitioners and researchers who use the NT and its Archive.

This expanded idea of what a performance *is* has extended the ways in which theatre can be studied and, in turn, challenged the previous notions about what it means to 'archive' performance. This has been taken up by scholars across performance fields, who discuss the archive from a different perspective to archivists and their insights should be considered alongside those of professional archivists.[23] There are extensive discussions within performance studies around the 'live' and the difficulty of capturing an ephemeral act.[24] It is argued that this cannot be documented because it is embodied, as Diana Taylor, a performance studies scholar, discusses in *The Archive and the Repertoire* (Taylor, 2003, p.22). Taylor makes a distinction between the material created as part of the production process, such as

[22] I carried out an audience segmentation of the NT Archive, discussed in Chapter 1 Section 2.2 (p.37), which identified academics, theatre practitioners, the general public and NT staff as the largest segments. I then interviewed representatives of academics, practitioner, and NT staff to discuss their use and expectations of the archive collections.

[23] The wider use of the term 'archive' within performance studies should be considered alongside the fixed use of the term by archivists. A shared vocabulary could encourage more productive interdisciplinary conversations.

[24] See Auslander (2006), Phelan (1993), Reason (2006) and Schneider (2011).

programmes and photographs, which she terms the 'archive,' and the non-textual remnants of performance, such as memories, which she terms the 'repertoire.' This distinction, she argues, is not one of '" true" versus "false," that is to say that the archive and the repertoire are not entirely opposed, and material in the repertoire can survive for longer than materials in an archive. Her argument considers the types of knowledges in performance and the 'many and mixed' methods of storing and transmitting them (Taylor, 2008, p.100), which provides a rich foundation for discussion with archival science.

While theatre and performance studies scholars have encouraged new thinking around archiving performance, archival scholars have not considered extensively how theatre and performance studies can impact on their theories and work. In this thesis I stage a dialogue around three areas of overlap between theatre and performance studies theories and archival science. I consider it more productive to use and consider the theories involved in the creation and study of the performance itself in the archiving of that performance.

3 Methodology

Archival science can look to theatre and performance studies to challenge the inflexibility, passivity and objectivity of archival science. The concept of active archivists within archival science is integral to my work. Within the performing arts archive sector, there are no published examples of active archiving being used during the development period of a production, but the Questioning paradigm allows me to trial the concept of an active archivist through an embedded and parallel practice to explore how an archive can hold representative materials of this period. This section introduces my active archiving methodology and my approach to the embedded and parallel practice with *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) (*TTSCD)*.

3.1 Active archiving

I use the concept of active archiving extensively in this thesis, which builds on the work of performing arts archivist and archival science scholar, Francesca Marini. This active archivist concept is a relatively recent development within archival science and allows archivists to explore a postmodernist approach to softening the definition of archival science and embrace

'variability' (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.169). Marini considers archivists to hold an active role in record creation and she specifically discusses what role an active archivist can play in documenting theatre. Marini held the role of Archive Director at the Stratford Festival in Ontario from 2010 to 2013, and so some of her work relates directly to in-house theatre archiving. She claims that 'in the performing arts, a proactive approach seems to be a reality, which emerges in an almost necessary way from the characteristics of theatre and performance' (Marini, 2007, p.28), which is a view supported by interviews she carried out during her PhD (Marini, 2005). Marini focused on the relationship between archivists and scholars in her research and stated the need for archivists to be proactive in their work (Marini, 2007, p.30). In a later article, Marini states that:

> Performances are instantaneously past, so you cannot wait for performing arts sources to come to you – you have to go out and gather everything available, as well as actively document what is going on and create sources when appropriate. […] Archives play an active role in the creation of new documentation; among other activities, archivists may be involved in conducting oral histories or promoting the recording of performances and events. In more traditional archival theory and practice, archivists are usually not actively engaged in documentation efforts. (Marini, 2008, pp.32-33)

Marini nods to the traditional theoretical arguments of Jenkinson and Schellenberg, mentioned above (p.19), who did not advocate for the active role of archivists. Her position aligns with the concept of active appraisal or 'documentation strategies', introduced by the archivist and archival science scholar Helen Samuels in her 1986 paper *Who Controls the Past?* (Samuels, 1986), which is a strategic approach by an archivist to identify records for an archive. These documentation strategies are designed to support an archivist with an active role in record creation, therefore playing a part in the documentation and not just the archiving. Marini acknowledges that such an active approach is at odds to the more traditional archival science scholars 'but in the performing arts a proactive approach seems to be necessary owing to the temporal and dynamic characteristics of theatre and performance' (Marini, 2008, p.33). I agree that this seems to be the only method for ensuring that records are preserved from the production of a theatre show. It often feels that archiving is thought about too late in the

process, always at the end of the run of a show, and as Toni Sant, a scholar in digital curation and performance studies, terms 'an afterthought or, at best, a necessary evil to ensure that there is some evidence that the performance actually took place' (Sant, 2017, p.4). In the NT Archive, this documentation strategy is the set of retention schedules and crib sheets already implemented with each department, which outline the records that they create, which ones should be transferred to the NT Archive, the timeframe for transfer and the purpose of archiving the records, whether for historical or legal reasons.[25] These have been implemented across the organisation with a varied degree of success and only cover NT departments, not the freelance artistic teams working on productions. These retention schedules do not include work from or collaboration with the artistic team, who are heavily involved in productions but are currently not contracted to deposit any materials with the NT Archive. The retention schedules focus on materials produced by NT staff such as costume bibles, which do not tend to include the costume designs created by a freelance designer. At the start of this research, the retention schedule for the NWD, where the development period takes place, was not as detailed as it needed to be to capture the facets of their work that researchers are interested in[26] nor did I know enough about the process of their work to provide an accurate and useful schedule. I wanted to experiment with an active archivist collaborating with the artistic team and NT departments to create a more representative archive of a performance in order to develop sustainable retention schedules for productions moving forward.

An active archivist role requires a level of collaboration with the practitioners involved in a production. This collaborative approach to record creation, working with theatre practitioners in an active role requires archivists to fully understand the sector in which they work. Marini views archivists as researchers in their own right and that archivists and librarians must understand the subject matter they are archiving to preserve it well and provide access to it (Marini, 2007, p.26; 2024, p.585). She argues that the level of knowledge and interdisciplinarity required to collect and catalogue performing arts material is deep enough to warrant theatre archivists being termed researchers. They need to be familiar with the disciplines and fields relevant to the creators and users of the records including theatre history, theory and practice.

[25] The current retention schedules are discussed in Chapter 4 along with the suggested retention schedules as a result of this thesis research (Appendix C) (p.230).
[26] As discussed in Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44).

Marini speaks to this in her 2008 article: 'Direct involvement in and understanding of practice is a key element in the study of theatre and performance and in the management of its sources held in archives. Performing arts archivists are always in close contact with theatre practice and are often directly part of it' (Marini, 2008, p.30). Marini herself states that she is both an archivist and a researcher, which allows her to see the possibilities of collaboration and where the two groups can misunderstand or downplay the other's work (Marini, 2007, p.8). Similarly, Jane Pritchard, Curator of Dance at the Victoria and Albert Museum, claims that it is essential for her to be part of the dance world in order to build up relationships with practitioners and archive their work (Pritchard, 2024). The involvement of archivists in the field in which they operate and collaboration with the practitioners creating the records is key to the creation and development of performing arts collections. For practitioners, having a dedicated archivist collaborate with them helps them to capture their process, which they may not even fully understand until they view it from an outside perspective.[27] In my practice, I explore the relationship between the archivist and practitioner to see if a deeper understanding of each other and stronger working relationship could have a positive impact on the archiving process, with findings and reflections discussed in Chapter 4.

I am focusing here on active archiving as a method for archiving the development period for an in-house theatre archive but there is also 'creative archiving,'[28] which further informs this research. Velios, a scholar working in the area of documentation, discusses this type of archiving and uses the archive of conceptual artist John Latham as a case study (Velios, 2011). Creative archiving 'is taking partiality to an extreme and celebrates the archivist's role in history while at the same time clearly admitting that this is only one version of the truth: the archivist's own interpretation' (Velios, 2011, p.260). This type of archiving embraces the Questioning paradigm and relies on the archivist's ability to communicate their decisions and knowledge of the archive to researchers. In John Latham's Archive this is achieved through a new classification system, developed specifically for this collection, which allows the archivists to

[27] This concept is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 Section 4 (p.87).

[28] Creative archiving is separate to creative documentation. As discussed in Section 2.1 above (p.13), archiving relates to the work being done by the archivist in managing the archive materials, and so 'creative archiving' relates to the archivist and the process of cataloguing in a creative way. Documenting relates to the act of capturing information, usually by the practitioner, so 'creative documentation' relates to how practitioners document their work in creative ways.

add an interpretation layer on top of the catalogue, providing researchers with a variety of methods to engage with the content. The online catalogue is based on three characters from Latham's work, which allows interaction in different ways to suit the depth of engagement the 'characters' would like, which mirrors themes in the collection itself (Velios, 2011, p.266). The downside of this type of archiving, with its focus on the archivist's knowledge, is that researchers can accept what is presented as a universal truth and not realise the inputs and imprint of the archivist. This online archive is marked clearly as being interpretative to let researchers know the context so that they factor this into their understanding. In this example, the cataloguing structure was developed from scratch to relate directly to Latham's work. I am not able to change the NT Archive cataloguing structure to add contextual information as with the Latham Archive because the NT Archive needs to work across multiple artists, productions and spaces, but I can learn from creative archiving to add context to the records collected, ensuring that the decision-making process behind my active collecting, appraising and cataloguing of records is clear for researchers.

Using such active archiving methodologies, I experimented with documenting and archiving the development period in a deeper and more collaborative manner and the findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.2 Embedded and parallel practice

The practice was conducted at the NT with internal departments and with the artistic team of *TTSCD*. This engagement with the development period was experimental as NT Archive staff did not previously have any active input into the documenting of this period. This provided me with the chance to experiment with active archiving therefore creating a more representative collection for preservation and education while for practitioners it ensured that a record of their work was preserved for posterity and that they could, amongst other things, continue to learn from their experiences. I acknowledge, however, that there are always gaps in archives of all kinds, particularly around the context of record creation, which is most commonly outside of the control of an archivist, and that it is not always possible to fill these. Barry Houlihan, a performing arts archivist and archival science scholar, notes that 'the responsibility of the archive is to counteract memory gaps and also the hegemonic biases in terms of who and what

we actually remember in the first place' (Houlihan, 2018, pp.830-831). Houlihan is embracing the power of the archivist to actively challenge the way archives are constructed, questioning the inherent biases within collections. Archives reflect the knowledge hierarchy of the institution in which they are situated, in this case, the National Theatre, and I acknowledge that the NT Archive's cataloguing system reflects a particular worldview. As a result, an archive can never be unbiased or objective, and any identification of gaps and deliberate collection development needs to be undertaken in a transparent manner with relevant context provided by the archivist. I explore to what extent an active archivist embedded in the development of a production could capture more of the process that generated the production, eliminating some of the gaps identified by the usage of NT Archive and better meet its collecting remit.[29]

I employed surveys, historical archival research, interviews and questionnaires with archivists and a range of users of the NT Archive. Results from this activity fed into the planning for my practice of active archiving. During the embedded part of the practice, I was as involved as possible with correspondence and documents created as part of the development period and worked with NT teams on a range of activities related to the production, from marketing and graphic design to production and technical meetings. For the parallel practice, I have interviewed members of the artistic teams up to the press night when the production was termed 'fixed' (Twigg, 2020) to understand what was happening during the workshops and rehearsal weeks. I was included on or subsequently examined discussions via email or in person involving the NWD. Alongside this and where appropriate, I have physically/digitally collected the materials to be archived from this development period and accessioned them into the NT Archive.[30]

During both the embedded and parallel practice, I take three examples of challenges, identified and developed in Chapters 2 and 3, which have relevance to both archival science and theatre and performance studies. I use these areas of overlap between the fields to test an interdisciplinary approach to archiving this development period. The first was that materials of a production can lack authenticity, provenance or the context of their creation. This area of

[29] These gaps were identified during the surveys of in-house theatre archives, the review of the NT Archive and the conversations with representatives of the audience segments, discussed in Chapter 1.
[30] The catalogue of these materials is available in Appendix B (p.200).

overlap looks at how the context of record creation during the development period can be captured to provide a longitudinal understanding of how these records are used throughout the three periods of a production by writing a commentary of 'exemplary moments' (Prior, 2015, p.44). The second of these challenges is that the remnants of performance are ephemeral and lack fixity, and archivists struggle to capture and present these in an archive. This area of overlap draws on the existing experimental archiving practices surrounding live art where fragmentary documentation is used to capture partial truths of a performance and to create a web of experience for researchers to investigate.[31] The third is that individual contributions of knowledge are difficult to trace during the development of a production. This area of overlap considers the different knowledges at play in the development period and explores how these can be evidenced in the archive through the use of new materials created by those involved.[32] While experimenting with these three areas of overlap during my practice, I consider:

- what materials were already created as part of productions at the NT,
- where I was archiving material that already existed as part of the process but had not previously been archived,
- where I was contextualising existing materials to offer context,
- where entirely new materials were being created.

I documented this in the spreadsheet of content that I created during the practice, which led to the production of the catalogue, in Appendix B. Alongside this I also considered what of these materials was already transferred to the NT Archive, what was earmarked for transfer but never was, and what materials were new to the NT Archive and this has resulted in the retention schedule in Appendix C.

[31] This looked to the work of Marina Abramović (Santone, 2008, pp.150-151) and discussions within performance studies (Phelan, 1993; Auslander, 2006; Reason, 2006; S. Abbott et al., 2009; Manzella and Watkins, 2011; Schneider, 2011; MacMullan, 2019).

[32] This considered the range of knowledges that people can bring to a production, pulling on research in performance studies and ethnographic methods (McAuley, 1998; Dixon, 1999; Knowles, 2004; S. Abbott et al., 2009; Mazer, 2017).

During the process of active archiving, gathering materials and subsequent cataloguing, I realised that there are several facets to the concept of 'representation' within a performing arts archive: periods of a production, people involved in a production, types of materials created during a production, and how those materials are catalogued. The case study with *TTSCD* has produced materials that contribute to all four of these areas of representation. As a result of the findings, I consider the sustainability and replicability of the research not just for the NT Archive but for the wider theatre archive sector.

4 Chapter overviews

Chapter 1 identifies the gap in collecting that this thesis addresses. The chapter begins with an overview of the methods used: a survey of international theatre archives, a review of the NT Archive collections, a survey of and interviews with NT Archive researchers, and a review of NT related publications. This comparative study results in two main findings around the areas of interest to researchers in performing arts archives. One area of interest is the process and decision-making related to productions, with researchers preferring to learn about this from first-hand accounts such as interviews and diaries. The second is audience experience and the impact of 'institutional dramaturgy' (Steichen, 2011, p.446) on this experience. The first area can be addressed by a more representative archive of the development period and the latter sits outside the remit of this PhD but will be tackled as part of my role as Head of Archive. The surveys also identified that there are many locations of knowledge around the NT and that the archive is not the only source of information about productions. This leads to a consideration of the position of the NT Archive and the potential for it to be a facilitator of research rather than a gatekeeper of information. The chapter ends with a study of how these findings inform the embedded and parallel practice.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the foundations of this interdisciplinary project in terms of the intersections and divergences of theories and practices from archival science and theatre and performance studies. I discuss my role at the NT Archive and areas of conflict between archival science and theatre and performance studies, which offer areas of learning and knowledge generation. I then consider in particular the seeming contradictions between archival science and theatre and performance studies with the former's emphasis on authority, impartiality and

fixity (Ridener, 2009) and the latter's on liveness and fluidity (Bial, 2004; Schechner, 2013). I focus on three areas of overlap of these fields: the concepts of authenticity and provenance, the fixity of materials, and the transmission of knowledge, which form strands of activity through the practice. I consider the experimental archiving by live artists as practitioners not confined by the traditions of archival science and look at the signs of opening up the field of archival science to encourage an interdisciplinary and more active approach to archiving performance in particular (Houlihan, 2018; Abbot, Jones, Ross, 2009). I conclude by considering what opportunities these fields suggest for active archiving at the NT.

Chapter 3 sets up and discusses the embedded and parallel archiving practice of a single production. Following the theoretical review of theatre and performance studies and archival science fields in Chapter 2, I look to practical examples and solutions for each area of overlap. I outline how I tackled each area during the practice using three approaches: capturing materials already produced but not currently archived, contextualising existing materials to provide more information to researchers, and strategically creating new materials. Through these three approaches, I further trialled the sustainability of the practice in terms of how they not only create new processes, but dovetail with existing practices at the NT that are currently not represented in the archival holdings. The second half of the chapter outlines the embedded and parallel stages of the practice as well as the institutional considerations for the practice.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings from my practice, which fall into four areas of representation. I look at the material collected representing all periods of a production, from development through to staging, a catalogue of which is included as Appendix B with a finding aid in Appendix D (p.243). I discuss the materials gathered from a broad range of people involved in the production, from workshops and backstage staff to artistic team and cast. I consider the wide range of materials that I have captured representing all media used to produce the show. Finally, I consider how all these materials are represented in the archive catalogue to ensure their discoverability by researchers. Throughout this chapter I discuss where the collected materials are now part of departmental retention schedules, a comprehensive list of which is found in Appendix C. All these areas are underpinned by findings from interviews with NT Archive researchers focusing on the collected materials and how useful they would be to their own research. I then reflect on a variety of aspects of the practice including which materials I

have not been able to collect, how much of the production process is verbal, the impact of personal relationships on what can be collected, my impact on the project, and the sustainability and replicability of the practice.

The Conclusions and Recommendations chapter begins with an overview of the changes that I have implemented at the NT to date as a result of this research. These are wide-ranging and include improvements to the public archive service, building better relationships between practitioners and NT Archive staff and greater awareness among staff of academic research about the NT. I then discuss the recommendations moving forward specifically for the NT, which include a tiered approach to archiving as a pragmatic solution to limited staffing and capacity. I also include recommendations for the wider performing arts sector. This research, whilst not replicable, does provide a template for similar studies and innovations in other theatre archives. I propose that adopting an active archivist stance in a theatre archive can result in more representative materials being kept for a variety of archive users.

5 Conclusion

The embedded and parallel practice of archiving the development period of *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) provides an opportunity to explore what archival science can learn about flexibility, passivity and objectivity from theatre and performance studies. It is this development period that lacks records in archives and the archiving of which is seldom discussed in the archive sector or theatre and performance fields. I see the compatibility of archival science during the Questioning paradigm and theatre and performance studies as the basis for my interdisciplinary approach. The implications from this case study allow me to form good practice methods of working at the NT, such as fostering better relationships with production teams around archiving, and involvement with freelancer inductions and exits. Some of the practices can be applied to other in-house theatre archives, such as a methodology for active archiving, building a relationship with practitioners to encourage documentation, and having the right language/mentality/confidence/way of discussing archiving as a creative practice. This all feeds into discussions about how malleable archive science can be within the performing arts and what subsequent role a future archivist can have within such venues and

suggest possible routes forward for them. There are broader implications for the archive sector more generally, such as around active archiving and record creator communications.

Chapter 1 – Comparative study of the National Theatre and other theatre archives

1 Introduction

This chapter reviews what the National Theatre (NT) Archive holds, how this compares to other theatre archives, who uses the NT Archive and what they try to find in the collections. This comparative study falls into four areas and the methodology is discussed below:

- a review of what the NT Archive holds for productions during the sample period 2015-2019,[33]
- a survey by interview of researchers of the NT Archive following an audience segmentation,
- a review of NT related publications,
- a survey by interview of international theatre archivists to understand how comparative the NT Archive collections and researcher experience are to similar institutions worldwide.

Findings from these four areas identify what is held within theatre archives, what is missing, and what researchers at these theatre archives are interested in locating. Three areas of interest emerged from these research projects, all discussed in Section 3 below (p.44), which provide a basis for my practice. I explore how an active archivist can begin to fill these gaps in collecting and provide a more representative archive of performance and process for researchers in the future.

2 Scoping the comparative study

2.1 Review of the NT Archive

As a foundation for this comparative study, between January and March 2021, I undertook a review of the NT Archive's collections to understand what materials are held and where there

[33] This time period was selected because materials from productions during these years will have had the time to be transferred to the NT Archive. A five-year period was selected to form the sample as these number of years provided a cross-section of types of productions at the NT.

are inconsistencies in collecting and then to explore why this might be.[34] The NT Archive aims to document and preserve the history of the Royal National Theatre and its predecessor bodies and its ongoing activities while interpreting and sharing that history widely (National Theatre Archive, 2022b). While the NT Archive holds materials relating to rehearsals and final productions such as photographs, posters, programmes, prompt scripts, and costume bibles,[35] from my experience working day to day in the NT Archive, I know that there is very little captured from the development period of a production. I have used this review to document the typical materials that are captured from the full life of a production (from development period through to the final production on stage).

I have studied one production per theatre space per year from the period 2015-2019 to gain an understanding of what was archived for shows in a variety of spaces and of differing types, which gives an overview of the habitual materials kept.

There are three permanent theatre spaces at the NT: Olivier (built in the style of an amphitheatre with around 1,100 seats), Lyttelton (a proscenium theatre with around 890 seats), and Dorfman (a flexible auditorium with up to 450 seats). Furthermore, the Temporary Theatre was in use in 2015 and 2016 as an alternative venue while the Dorfman Theatre was being refurbished so I have also analysed one show from 2015 and one show from 2016 from this theatre. To select the productions to examine, I listed all staged productions and then selected productions, which covered a range of activity at the NT: new writing, adaptations, productions that had an NT Live broadcast,[36] co-productions, productions that transferred or toured, Christmas productions, Shakespeare productions, education productions, visiting productions and musicals. I have ensured that I have represented at least one of each of these types of productions within my sample and I have selected productions with an even balance between male and female writers and directors.

[34] Full report (Lee, 2021b).
[35] These 'bibles' are constructed by the Costume department staff and include budgets, actors' measurements, swatches of material, information on treatment of the costumes such as by the dye studio, reference materials, fitting photographs and sometimes the original designs, depending on whether the freelance designer has deposited them with the NT.
[36] NT Live is the broadcasting initiative that the NT launched in 2009 with *Phèdre* and streams theatre live to cinemas around the world. For further information, see https://www.ntlive.com/.

For each production, I carried out a catalogue search for the related content that exists in the NT Archive. This resulted in 35 distinct categories of materials, each of which I refer to as 'type of archive materials.'[37] I acknowledge that this dataset represents only a sample of the available data. By ensuring that I have encompassed different types of performance at the NT, by studying productions from all theatre spaces, and across a five-year period, I have used this data to extrapolate what archive materials are available and to identify trends in how many archive materials there are for certain types of productions.

This review demonstrated where there are inconsistencies in what is collected and where there are gaps in collecting. This provides the basis for comparing the NT Archive materials to international theatre archives to build an understanding of what materials are typically missing from theatre archives.

2.2 Survey of NT Archive researchers

For the purposes of identifying what materials are used in the NT Archive and in what way, I carried out a series of interviews with researchers of the NT Archive. To identify the audience segments for the interviews, I conducted analysis of enquiry data for the NT Archive from March 2017[38] to December 2020.[39]

This data was gathered from the NT Archive contact form, which is available on the NT website and is the first point of contact with the NT Archive for researchers. This is the primary means of contacting the NT Archive, but it is not the only method of communication. Enquiries also come in via direct emails to the Archive team and through telephone calls. The number of these is logged but the area of research interest (e.g. academic, general interest etc.) is not captured through this process, though from anecdotal evidence from archive staff members, the types of questions asked are the same as the enquiries received through the contact form. The areas of research are only captured on the contact form and these responses are the most

[37] Full list in Appendix A.
[38] Due to GDPR requirements, the data pre-January 2019 is un-dated and so I am analysing the data from the first use of the contact form in March 2017 through to December 2018 as one set of data and subsequently examining 2019 and 2020 as separate sets of data.
[39] Full report (Lee, 2021a).

accurate and complete set of data, though representing less than 50% of enquiries received,[40] which the NT Archive holds on its enquirers and so I have used this set of data for carrying out the audience segmentation. Even though this is far from a complete set of data, in my and my team's experience of answering enquiries, these are typical and therefore representative of the enquiries received via all modes of contact.

As well as the variety of methods used by external enquirers to contact the NT Archive, there are also internal enquiries, which come from staff through email, telephone and Microsoft Teams and these are logged separately. There was roughly a 60/40 split between external and internal enquiries, with modest variation between 2018 and 2020. The enquiry split has shifted to 42/58 between external and internal enquiries in the most recent year of statistics (2023/2024), which highlights the high number of internal enquiries received in comparison to the breakdown of external enquiries.

The audience segmentation identified academics, including teachers and students, as the largest segment, with over half of the external enquiries coming from this group. Theatre practitioners and the general interest segments made up just over 20% of enquiries each followed by the other areas of research (archivist/information professional, journalist/publisher/writer, media/film and other), which made up 4-11% of enquiries from 2017 to 2020. This split is demonstrated in Figure 1.

[40] Of external enquiries, contact form enquiries made up 42% in 2017-2018 and 35% in both 2019 and 2020.

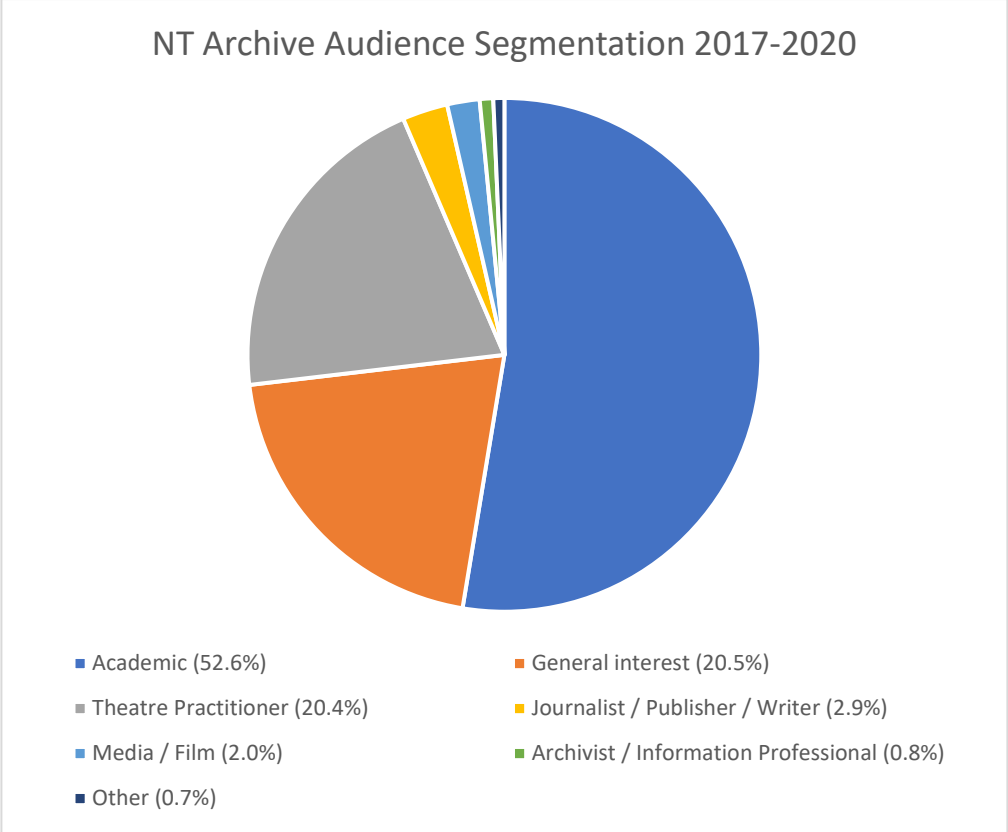


Figure 1 NT Archive Audience Segmentation 2017-2020.

This split was echoed in interviews with international in-house theatre archivists where theatre practitioners were specifically mentioned as engaging with collections while working within the institution. These theatre archivists also mentioned the high proportion of internal enquiries they receive while this was not mentioned in the interviews with third-party theatre archives such as the University of Bristol or Harvard Theatre Collection. The volume of theatre practitioners engaging with in-house theatre archives suggests that there is potential for the NT Archive to increase engagement with practitioners specifically and I am keen to consider how this can result in a collaborative relationship between archivist and practitioner. I carried out the researcher interviews from April to July 2021 with academics, teachers, theatre practitioners and internal staff. I selected the individuals to interview based on their number of previous visits to the NT Archive. I did not approach members of the general public segment because their enquiry data and anecdotal experience of archive staff suggests that there is little consistency in requests or interests, and it is unlikely that there will be cohesion in what these members of the public seek from the NT Archive.

2.3 Review of NT related publications

In a review of 83 publications, published between 1965 and 2024, I identified work that focused on the NT and NT productions and either used or could have used the NT Archive to some extent. This review covered publications by academics from a variety of backgrounds such as theatre history, theatre and performance studies, design and architecture, from universities across the globe. The review also covered work by MA and PhD candidates as well as previous staff members of the National Theatre, who have no academic affiliation. This broad basis for the review has allowed me to gauge how the NT Archive is being used and explore what questions researchers are asking of the NT. These findings, together with those from the other three areas of research, provide the foundation for the practice, including consideration of how the NT Archive can capture more relevant documentation for future researchers. The NT Archive does not keep a record of what has been published about the NT historically and in my interviews with international theatre archivists, there was a split between those who were aware of publications using their collections and those who did not have this record. The method through which the archives kept this record is by requesting a copy of the publication if a researcher licensed a photograph or document from the archive. In two institutions, the archivists undertake an annual online library search for published materials containing the name of their institutions. As a result of this research, in my role as Head of Archive, I have adopted this strategy to ensure that I, and therefore the NT, are kept abreast of current academic discourse relating to the NT, which is particularly important as part of the NT's public function as a national theatre in receipt of funds through its Arts Council England grant.

2.4 Surveys of international theatre archives

These surveys and reviews provide a good understanding of what the NT Archive collects, who uses the materials and why. The survey of international theatre archives, both in-house and third party, provides a comparison to the NT Archive.

In-house theatre archivists are uniquely placed to have the access and opportunity to play an active role in archiving the development period of a production. I define an in-house theatre archive as one where the staff can set their own collection policies and store their collections

within the theatre buildings. I am focusing on those archives which allow public access, whether that is a maximum of one person at a time or an established research room service, and those which are on a national or city-wide scale in order to be most comparable with the NT. An in-house theatre archive is different to a third-party theatre archive, which tends to hold materials from a variety of theatres. Examples of this would be the Harvard Theatre Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Division at the New York Public Library, University of Bristol Theatre Collection and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). While they hold material from theatres, the collections are not housed within the theatre and the collecting remit is not set by the theatre. These collections do, however, tend to be well funded either by their host institution, government subsidy or philanthropy, allowing public access and staffed by qualified professionals. The NT Archive, while being an in-house theatre archive, as defined above, also has the benefits of being funded directly by the NT for all operational requirements including staffing and projects, open to the public and staffed by qualified professionals. I appreciate that this is an unusual case in terms of the extent of funding and number of staff employed and will need to bear this in mind when considering the applicability of the research to other in-house theatre archives.

The location of archives – within theatres, national museums, universities etc. – can affect how the objects and remnants of theatre and performance are framed. This location can affect their interpretation, visibility and use, and the collections will all have different collection remits as a result. The staff that I have interviewed have been selected from institutions from all these areas to give a cross-section of international theatre archives. I have used the membership list of the SIBMAS[41] network as well as my current network of international colleagues to select archivists who represent the variety of locations in which a theatre archive can be situated: an archivist from Comédie-Française, France; a curator[42] from the Harry Ransom Centre, University of Texas; a curator from the Harvard Theatre Collection, Harvard University; an archivist from Nationalteatret, Norway; two curators from New York Public Library; an archivist

[41] SIBMAS (International Association of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts) is a network for performing arts collections worldwide.

[42] In the US, a curator of a theatre collection fulfils a similar role to an archivist in a theatre collection in the other countries in this survey i.e. identifying materials to be deposited and managing access to those materials once catalogued. For the purposes of referring to this set of interviews, I refer to the interviewees as international theatre archivists.

from the Royal Ballet and Opera; an archivist from Roundabout Theatre, New York; an archivist from Shakespeare's Globe, London; an archivist from Stratford Festival, Ontario; an archivist from Teatre Lliure in Barcelona; two archivists from University of Bristol Theatre Collection and an archivist from the V&A.

I also considered institutions that have been established in a different way to the NT Archive but also safeguard performing arts materials. One is the Seachange Lab, Aarhus which is an independent and international centre for practical artistic research in performing arts, encompassing a forum and free space for artists, a centre for practical artistic research and performing arts experiments and a knowledge bank continually collecting ideas, knowledge, and reflections about performing arts processes. Seachange Lab seeks to 'contribute to the development, renewal and qualification of theatre and performing arts, through practical experiments and reflection' and their knowledge bank is part of this cultural production (Seachange Lab, no date). Barbara Simonsen, Seachange Lab's Director, explained to me in an interview that each of their projects is carried out by a Lab staff member, who has both a dramaturgical and practitioner but not an archival background (Simonsen, 2020). The experience and background of the Lab staff member is very different to that of NT Archive staff but suggests the possibility of not only archiving the development period of a production but also of establishing an active relationship between record creators and archivists.

Another example is the Akademie der Künst (ADK), Berlin, where staff archive in the vein of Bertolt Brecht's Modelbooks, published during the 1940s and 1950s. These are an example of rehearsal documentation not only for the purpose of recording that a production took place but also to help other theatre practitioners understand how the productions were made and what Brecht was trying to achieve in his writing and directing (Barnett, no date). ADK staff work to document the productions of their members by tasking a member of the rehearsal process with documentation (Akademie der Künst, no date). They insist on a person documenting who has been selected by the artistic team and not by ADK staff for two reasons: one is because the artistic team are more likely to feel comfortable with a person they know or have selected in the room and two, this person, as someone involved in the production, has a theatre background and will usually be deeply familiar with the artistic team's processes and so can document what is distinctive or unusual about this particular process (Örtel, 2022b). This

documentation includes notes from conversations on preparation and concept development, notes on goals and results of the individual rehearsals and the documenter attempts to make the finished production comprehensible through performance description and photo documentation. In addition to this, the ADK staff require a collection of materials from the staging. A similar example of a theatre practitioner being involved with the documentation is Reimagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South (ReTAGS), which is a practice-as-research project taking the concept of tragedy from its European beginnings and reimagining it in and with an African perspective. Jayne Batzofin, digital archivist for the ReTAGS project and an experienced dramaturg, has been embedded with each of the project productions, tasked with documenting the processes closely. Batzofin has noted the benefit of being a practitioner responsible for archiving in the rehearsal room as she could understand the 'codified theatrical language' used (Batzofin, 2024). The main difference in this method of documentation from what I have seen in other collections, such as at the NT and at Roundabout Theatre in New York, is the involvement of an 'insider' in the process, who can comment on the process in terms of how it compares to the company's other works and set this production in the context of its predecessors for researchers. There are a variety of places where bias can enter this account and ADK staff provide contextual information alongside these assets for researchers.

Between February and June 2021, I posed a standard set of questions to staff members from the above institutions on how their archives collect materials, how researchers use each of these collections and how the archive services are staffed and funded.[43] These interviews provided comparators for the work at the NT Archive and, alongside the other three areas of research in this chapter, have allowed me to identify trends across archives in what is kept, what is missing, what researchers look for in a theatre archive and the position of the archive itself within an institution. In undertaking these interviews, I have grown my network of contacts internationally and not only identified how applicable my research is to other archivists working in the performing arts but also created a network for the dissemination of the research.

[43] Due to capacity of interviewees, interviews with staff from the Royal Ballet and Opera and the V&A took place in November 2024 and February 2025, respectively.

3 Findings from the comparative study

The findings from the interviews with in-house theatre archivists and members of the NT Archive audience segments along with the literature review were twofold, showing that researchers have interest in:

- the decision-making process and how this can uncover 'hidden' aspects of theatre-making,
- audiences and how their viewing experiences can be enhanced to improve understanding of the production.

The publications reviewed covered one or both topics and I explored whether researchers found answers to their questions in the NT Archive or elsewhere, such as in other archives or through interviews with artistic teams. This has led to a key discussion point, which was the position of an archive within a theatre and where else knowledge might exist.

In this section I use examples from the literature review to evidence the variety of uses of the archive materials or knowledge about productions. The examples I use feature academics, industry professionals and students writing about the NT and represent the breadth of the literature review I conducted, in which academics contributed 67.1% of publications, practitioners 25.9% and master's and doctoral students 7.1%.[44] I discuss publications that both used and did not use the NT Archive. Taking the examples of where researchers did not find their answers in the NT Archive together with the survey of international theatre archivists and the review of the NT Archive materials, I gain a better understanding of where the gaps may be in collections and an indication of what materials are important for me to consider capturing during my practice.

3.1 Researcher interest in process and decision-making

A major finding from the interviews with international theatre archivists and a range of NT Archive researchers of all kinds was the desire of researchers to know about process and

[44] Percentages rounded hence total 100.1%.

decision-making. Almost all archivists commented that they lack this type of information as they have few records related to rehearsal and development periods and do not hold directors' notes. Two archivists from in-house theatre archives stated that archivists were not welcome in the rehearsal room, and one did not know if there was a development period for productions prior to the rehearsal period at their institution. The review of materials held at the NT Archive shows that there is little held from the development period of productions with 14 of the 17 sample shows retaining 'general documentation', which is a summary document about the project and only nine retaining any workshop materials such as photographs, audio or video recordings. Rehearsal periods are better documented at the NT with diaries, notes and photographs retained for most sampled shows.

The review of literature concerning the NT shows that there is a definite academic interest in process and in uncovering less visible aspects of theatre productions. The subjects considered include costume, props, the craft of producing NT Live, design, the role of literary managers, the work of directors and the style of verbatim performance. The publications in this section bring to the fore what happens in rehearsal and other parts of the creative process, which are usually aspects of theatre less visible to the theatre audience. To understand in greater detail what materials researchers would find useful for this subject area, I have investigated publications in these areas and separated out those that have used the NT Archive materials and those that have not. This has the capacity to highlight the materials that are missing from the NT Archive about process and decision-making.

This section is organised by the archive materials that are mentioned most frequently in the publications about the NT. Platforms, which are the interviews conducted at the NT with cast and artistic teams of current productions, and recorded for archive purposes, were the most cited materials in the publications with 12% of publications crediting platform recordings. The review of the NT Archive showed that 14 of the 17 sample shows had platform recordings and this series of materials dates to when platforms began at the NT, in 1984. Interviews with academics, teachers and practitioners showed that these recordings were valuable in teaching and in understanding practitioners' sources of inspiration as well as aspects relating to the

rehearsal process, design, directorial choices and the crafting of a role. Requests for platform recordings make up 10% of researcher enquiries.[45]

These examples demonstrate the types of use of platform recordings and how these materials can be used alongside others to provide a broader picture of the production in question. As an example, Jocelyn Boxall, a Shakespeare scholar, explored Nicholas Hytner's *Henry V* (2003) in her PhD thesis and focused on the decisions made around the period setting of the production as well as the political undertones of this setting (Boxall, 2013). She used a platform recording with Hytner, in which he discussed the relevance of the play to contemporary politics and about the rehearsal period where the company was studying the text alongside contemporary warfare. Boxall used interviews placed in the press with the lead actor, Adrian Lester, to explore the decision made by the company to bring into rehearsals a specialist with war experience. The rehearsal diary[46] as well as published video interviews with Adrian Lester were also used to give actors' perspectives on Hytner's approach to the text and give a sense of the impact of decisions made in the rehearsal period. The rehearsal diary, as a personal account not meant for a public audience, contrasts with the accounts given by the cast and artistic teams in interviews with press and platform recordings where there is a direct public audience. The rehearsal diaries allow for a more candid account of the process but may not be fully open as the diaries are usually adapted and made available on the NT website to teachers. Boxall used Hytner's first ever Artistic Director statement in the *Royal National Theatre Annual Report and Financial Statement 2003/2004* to show both his aims and ambitions for the NT and approaches to Shakespeare plays during this period (Boxall, 2013, p.196). This material facilitates Boxall building an argument about how Shakespeare productions in this period have increased physical and intellectual access to the plays.

[45] The contact form lists materials available for researchers to tick if they would like access as well as an open text box for them to add in any specific or un-listed materials.

[46] These are diaries written by the staff director on each production during the rehearsal process. These cover the production meetings, script edits, general rehearsals and understudy rehearsals and any notable moments for the team. These are edited by the Publications department into Education Background Packs, which are made available on the NT website (https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/learn-explore/schools/teacher-resources/) for teachers and students to download.

Platform recordings have been used elsewhere to provide information about the decision-making processes behind specific aspects of productions. Pascale Aebischer, a scholar of Shakespeare and early modern performance studies, sought information about the live video elements of *Edward II* (2013) (Aebischer, 2020). In this production, actors used handheld cameras to capture what was happening on parts of the stage while this was relayed to the audience through projection. The platform recording of director Joe Hill-Gibbins gives his insights into the play's obsession with repetition and his take on this for the production as well as explaining the function of the live video feeds in certain scenes. He also talks through some of the camera angles that were used, such as a shot from below Edward II's face looking up towards him to give the audience a feeling of intimacy with the character (Aebischer, 2020, p.102). Aebischer uses the platform recording with Hill-Gibbins alongside excerpts from the prompt script and rehearsal diaries to understand what happened during the scene inside the 'centrestage building', which was fully scripted and filmed live, before the whole structure was dismantled in the manner documented in the rehearsal diary and prompt script (Aebischer, 2020, pp.98-100). Aebischer uses the archive content to gain an understanding of the production from a variety of angles and answer the questions around the live camera feed, set design choices and the positioning of actors on the stage.

These examples and the wider review show that platforms have important research value and here it is worth noting that in 2021 the NT ceased to produce platforms, or talks as they were renamed in 2018. The short-form content produced by the Marketing and Digital Media teams featuring interviews with the artistic team go some way to speak to the anecdotal accounts given in platforms, but it is unclear what the impact of this shift will be on the insights provided by these events for NT Archive researchers. One theatre practitioner interviewed recommended that the NT Archive commission events such as these talks for historic productions. They suggested that the NT Archive invite academics and student theatre practitioners to hear first-hand about how productions are developed and staged, and they felt that this format would provide relevant information for researchers. The main difference between these and the platform events is that the practitioners are speaking at the moment of making the production in platforms, whereas they would be speaking retrospectively and with hindsight in these suggested archive events. This would potentially make for a different perspective on the production than is available in platform recordings, which would need to be

borne in mind when analysing any such event. In a separate interview, one with an academic, the use of interviews carried out by the researcher as opposed to platform recordings was brought up as a means to ensure originality in their research rather than repurposing existing archival materials. This method also allows an academic to pose specific questions that might not otherwise be answered in platform recordings.

After platform recordings, production recordings are the next most credited archive materials in publications with 11% of authors consulting them. I expect, from my experience of working in the NT Archive, that many more researchers consulted the production recording but have not credited it especially if researchers saw the original production on stage and wished to remind themselves of the production using the recording. From this literature review it seems that productions themselves and their recordings are not cited or credited as, for example, published texts might be. For production recordings this is problematic due to the centrality of moving-image analysis to theatre history and the issues related to interpreting mediated performance such as space, camera placement and editing to name but a few (Bay-Cheng, 2007, p.41). If researchers are accessing production recordings as part of or their main method of viewing a production, this ought to be acknowledged as part of their research. The survey of NT Archive researchers showed that 33% of research enquiries were to watch a production recording. Most of the international theatre archivists interviewed commented that recordings were the most requested materials in their archives, which corroborates the data captured from the audience enquiries at the NT Archive and interviews with teachers, who state that recordings are the easiest way for students to find a way into studying a text.[47] Theatre practitioners also make use of production recordings in the NT Archive whether that is for staging suggestions or casting decisions. One theatre practitioner interviewed uses these recordings to explore where there could be difficulties in the staging of the text so that they can plan for how they will need to combat these challenges in rehearsal. Recordings have been used for a variety of reasons, such as to analyse the staging, costumes, or casting decisions, or to study the camera work, editing process or movement of bodies on the stage. Lynnette Porter, a communication scholar, published on the NT Live broadcasts of *Frankenstein* (2011),

[47] A number of production recordings are now available to educational institutions and the general public worldwide through the NT Collection and NT at Home platforms respectively. As self-guided research experiences, there is little information on the number of researchers using these production recordings for publication research.

where the main actors swapped roles each night and both versions of the production were broadcast (Porter, 2013). By studying the recordings in the NT Archive, along with the programme, rehearsal notes, prompt script and interview recordings, Porter considered the creative nature of the NT Live broadcast and discovered the changes that were made to the NT Live recording post-broadcast. These changes included correcting mistakes in the live feed, making the two recordings the same length and substituting the original wide shots from the live feed with close-ups of the actors (Porter, 2013, pp.8-9). All these changes make the resulting NT Live recording, which is used for encore broadcasts, more like a film than a livestream.

In one case, production recordings were used in an innovative way to create a new research methodology. Theatre scholar, Dŭska Radosavljević, explored the working practices of Katie Mitchell by interviewing one of Mitchell's frequent collaborators, Struan Leslie. In her article, Radosavljević used an innovative new methodology of 'archive-embedded interview', which combined watching archive recordings together and interviewing Leslie at intervals about what they had just watched (Radosavljević, 2020, p.238). This process provided Leslie with agency in the interview as he could select which clips to watch and comment on, resulting in immediacy and clarity in the interview that would not have been possible from a traditional interview. The 'archive-embedded interview' provided insights into Leslie's collaborative work with Mitchell in the rehearsal periods, how they worked with the actors and how central the movement work was to the final productions.

After platform and production recordings, the next most credited archive material in the literature review, with 9% of publications crediting them, were the files from the production department. These cover production areas such as costume, rehearsal periods and technical departments and provide insights into staging and backstage activities. The review of materials in the NT Archive showed that 14 of the sample 17 productions had a full production office file while three productions held a smaller set of files. Design and concepts were the areas of materials requested the most by researchers using the open text field of the contact form at 13%.

The production files can be used to gain an insight into behind-the-scenes processes such as meetings, correspondence, and scheduling. Composer David Beard has written about the collaborative nature of the work on music for *The Oresteia* (1981) by Harrison Birtwistle (Beard, 2010). Beard used memos and booking schedules from the production office files to explore the development of music during the workshops and rehearsals for this production. He focused on Peter Hall's tendency to bring in composers and music directors to a production at the earliest point to ensure that the music could evolve organically (Beard, 2010, p.369). Beard pieced together who was in the room for the variety of workshops and discovered when certain parts of the music were worked on and how this coincided with the work of the adaptor, Tony Harrison. Correspondence in these files between Peter Hall as Director and Harrison Birtwistle as the Composer demonstrate how they worked together, as do excerpts from Peter Hall's *Diaries* where he summarises informal conversations between the pair (Hall and Goodwin, 2016, pp.276, 302, 406). All these archival sources from a variety of places helped Beard to piece together the collaborative work that occurred behind the scenes between Peter Hall, Harrison Birtwistle and Tony Harrison to create *The Oresteia* (1981) and underline the importance of music to Hall in the development of his productions.

The production files can be used alongside other materials to create a more rounded picture of how a production was created and reveal more about a production than you can see from the auditorium. Emily Garside, an LGBTQIA+ history and culture expert, focused on Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* (1992) in her PhD thesis (Garside, 2015) and subsequent monograph (Garside, 2022). Garside used the NT Archive extensively during her research and acknowledged in her work that through archive materials she cannot presume to understand the creative decisions but she can gain an insight into the creative process, which in turn will give her a better understanding of the production (Garside, 2015, p.15). I interviewed Garside as a representative of the academic and theatre practitioner users of the NT Archive and she found the NT Archive integral to her understanding of the staging and context of *Angels in America* (1992). Garside's thesis and interview suggest that the archive can provide information on what happens behind closed doors. Garside used prompt scripts, costume bibles, set floorplans, recordings, photographs and production notes to analyse aspects of the production, which can give more information than might be able to be gleaned from sitting in the auditorium. Consulting these materials does not replace seeing the performance live, which

she did for the 2018 production, but it does expand that experience. Garside felt that her research was more 'rounded' for using archive materials and she used them to uncover the artistic team's intentions and inspirations, direction choices and production details, such as how an actor effected the blood spurting scene (Garside, 2015, p.14).

A smaller number (5%) of publications credited personal correspondence from the NT Archive, which can be used to show how decisions were made and how relationships were formed in the theatre. The review of materials held in the NT Archive showed that there is no current method of capturing correspondence around a production, but the NT Archive does hold papers of previous artistic and associate directors, which are organised by director rather than by production. Daniel Rosenthal, an author and journalist based in London, used the NT Archive extensively in the publication of *Dramatic Exchanges: letters of the National Theatre* (Rosenthal, 2018). This book brought together correspondence, mostly sourced from the NT Archive alongside some letters from private collections. Rosenthal used this publication to give an insight into backstage life at the NT, to illustrate the personal relationships between the artistic team, cast and NT staff and to demonstrate how they worked together on productions. 12% of open text requests on the contact form by researchers are for directors' notes or correspondence and most theatre archivists interviewed mentioned that their researchers seek correspondence, but they do not usually hold anything of relevance. In-house theatre archivists tend not to hold this content because directors (not the Artistic or Associate directors) and other artistic team members are freelance and are not required to deposit materials with them. Archivists based within third-party theatre archives do hold personal papers usually donated by the individual in question, but these are often removed from the context of the full production records, which could be held elsewhere such as within the originating theatre or by the artistic team members involved. The decision-making process related to where these materials are held will be different in the case of each theatre depending on their policies and relationships with third-party archives. For the NT, this area of collecting is a clear gap and one that can be problematic for researchers and incur further research such as contacting and interviewing the artistic team members involved.

Another 5% of publications credited the records related to the institutional history of the NT. One of these was in relation to the role of the literary manager in which Mary Luckhurst, a

theatre academic and practitioner, explored what this role encompassed at the NT and whether it was different at other theatres (Luckhurst, 2006). She used materials such as the NT's *Memorandum and Articles of Association* to understand how the NT was established and what its mission and vision statements were in order to piece together the role that the literary manager could play (Luckhurst, 2006). Luckhurst focused on the collaborative nature of this role and followed Kenneth Tynan's career. She used his papers at the British Library, his published diaries and biography to uncover that his work was downplayed with the result that more focus was given to the writers, actors and directors resulting in his relative invisibility in the historical record of his time with the NT company at the Old Vic (Luckhurst, 2006, p.152). Tynan's own diaries and those of subsequent members of staff and artistic directors go a long way to laying bare the collaborative working environment at the NT and can be used to get a fuller picture of how productions were commissioned and staged.

The institutional history of the NT has also been used to consider which shows appear on the NT stages. Abigail Rokison-Woodall, a Shakespeare scholar, used the *Memorandum and Articles of Association* to make the argument that one of the main purposes of the NT is to provide a stage for Shakespeare and that this necessarily impacts on commissioning decisions (Rokison-Woodall, 2017, p.185). Rokison-Woodall used an interview with Nicholas Hytner by Michael Billington, not sourced from the NT Archive, to gain an insight into the decision-making process behind the setting of, in this context, *Henry V* (2003), and also the set itself as this was the first production in the Travelex[48] season (Rokison-Woodall, 2017, pp.108-109). These, alongside the prompt script and materials from the NT's institutional history, accessed at the NT Archive, gave Rokison-Woodall a sense of what decisions were made and the reasons behind them.

The NT Archive holds such institutional papers in a section titled 'business archive,' which can be made available to researchers upon application to the NT's Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive and Director of Communications. Two theatre archivists from third-party institutions shared that they would like to hold more materials on the running of theatres as institutions including financial records. One archivist noted that theatres do not traditionally release this information to the public, but it can be presumed that this information can be found within in-

[48] Travelex funded a set number of £15 tickets per 'Travelex production' from 2003 to 2018. These productions had a reduced production budget, which usually resulted in pared back sets.

house theatre archives, as it can within the 'business archive' at the NT. Another third-party archivist noted that they would like to collect on the whole business of theatre from producing to marketing campaigns and the contextual process around making theatre, which the interviews with in-house theatre archivists suggest can be held within in-house theatre archives.

In addition to the publications that use the NT Archive to answer research questions, are the publications, which do not include consultation of the NT Archive but either other archives, sources of information or locations of expertise within the NT in their discussions around process and decision-making. I highlight a couple of examples from the literature and consider what gaps in the NT Archive collections these suggest. Aoife Monks, a theatre and performance studies scholar, spent a year working with the NT Costume department to publish the book and curate the exhibition *Costume at the National Theatre* (National Theatre, 2019). Monks used this first-hand experience of studying the Costume department at work to contribute to the book and to structure the exhibition. Monks' focus was on the process and craft of costume making and led to further collaboration with the Costume department during 2020 on events aimed at bringing craftspeople together with academics studying this field to discuss their process and share their knowledge. Much of this expertise is not available in the NT Archive but can be accessed elsewhere within the NT, suggesting that there are multiple sites in which historical knowledge is stored within the NT. This has ramifications for the remit and limits of the NT Archive and could shape my work within the department, which I discuss in more detail below (p.66).

There are several articles that draw primarily on the decision-making processes of specific practitioners. Lib Taylor, a theatre and performance scholar, published on the working methodology of Alecky Blythe, the director of the NT's *London Road* (2011) (Taylor, 2013). Taylor interviewed Alecky Blythe about her method of creating verbatim performance. Blythe discussed the role of voice, listening and embodiment in her methodology giving an insight into how *London Road* (2011) was developed (Taylor, 2013). Taylor used interviews with two performers, who had worked with Blythe on different projects, verbatim productions by Blythe and others and published articles to discuss Blythe's decision-making process. This places Blythe's work in a contextual framework to understand where her work sits between embodied

and text-based performance but there is no evidence in the article that the prompt script, rehearsal notes, or production recording were consulted.

In a similar vein, Enza De Francisci, a translation studies scholar, interrogated the adaptation of Elena Ferrante's four *My Brilliant Friend* novels into a two-part play at the NT in 2019. De Francisci was interested in the translation strategies when transposing the novels into the two plays staged in the Olivier Theatre. The playwright April De Angelis used Ann Goldstein's translation and De Francisci interviewed De Angelis for this article (De Francisci, 2023). This first-hand account of the playwright allowed De Francisci to draw conclusions about what decisions De Angelis' had to make in the adaptation and how these impacted on the reception of Ferrante's work in the UK. While De Francisci refers extensively to the Olivier production script, she does not use or mention any archive materials, favouring the first-hand account of the playwright.

The role of literary managers has been explored beyond the NT Archive using interviews, whether those were conducted by the author or lifted from previous publications (Beacham, 1978; Haslett, 2011; Tyler, 2019). The NT Archive does not contain any information directly related to literary managers that is catalogued and accessible to researchers, so the interview method is understandable for delving into how this role worked. These first-hand accounts provide the researchers with personal perspectives on these roles and opinions on whether there is a set model for play commissioning and if this is consciously or unconsciously applied to the theatre. Lucy Tyler, a performance practices scholar, used these interviews to comprehend the differences and similarities in literary manager roles across nine theatres in the UK and to make some general conclusions about functions of the literary manager (Tyler, 2019). These staff perspectives show some of the gaps in the national provision of information about these roles. The experience of staff is difficult to capture through materials archived at the NT as the focus of the retention schedules tends to be on productions and not on individual experiences. This also feeds into the argument that the key figure of the director tends to be prioritised in the archive over the contribution of other figures such as the literary manager, designer, translator and other members of the artistic team.

Another area where the NT Archive is lacking material, is in the work of designers. Esther Armstrong, a performance design and technology scholar, argued in her PhD thesis that the NT Archive lacks the voices of designers whether that is in the materials that are collected or the platform recordings that are made (Armstrong, 2010, p.79). Increasing the types of roles that are represented through materials in the NT Archive is important to ensure that all aspects of work at the NT is evidenced in the NT Archive. As will be discussed in Chapter 2 Section 5 (p.94), prior to this thesis, I in my role as Head of Archive experimented with active archiving, which has resulted in more staff representation in the collections through materials such as diaries, photographs, cross-stitch and oral history recordings. These first-hand accounts augment the documents that are transferred to the NT Archive from various departments and provide a personal account of the period. This allows the NT Archive to shift from being production-centric, to providing space for the day-to-day business of running the NT and developing the work that will be on the stages, resulting in a more holistic representation of the NT.

These examples show that researchers, when they do not find what they are looking for in the NT Archive or do not know how to explore it, rely on published interviews with cast and artistic team members or conduct these interviews themselves where possible. This gives them a first-hand account, however curated, of what happened during the production so that they can piece together the process and decisions that were made while developing the productions. Researchers have found these accounts in the NT Archive through the platform recordings, but some researchers have had to go elsewhere to capture this information. The desire for first-hand narratives is important to consider and will be returned to as part of the practice findings in Chapter 4.

This interest in the decision-making processes behind specific productions, by practitioners and related to theatre practice shows a shift from a focus on the end product of a production to an exploration of the process through which it is made. This literature review suggests 'the shift in interest from the reified art object to the dynamic processes involved in its production and reception' that the performance studies scholar Gay McAuley identifies in her work on rehearsal studies (McAuley, 1998, p.75). This shift in research focus could track the development of performance studies with its sociographical, ethnographical and cultural

perspective, which encourages the study of acting, directing, playwriting and design as well as historical and theatrical study of theatre (Carlson, 2001, pp.139-141). Interest in process could also be partly due to the rise in backstage documentaries and DVD extras, which provide an insight into how theatre and films are made and a means to enhance the viewer's experience. One theatre practitioner, a writer, commented that she finds information about what inspired a playwright to be of more use than understanding their process as no two practitioners use the same process. For her, understanding where inspiration can be harnessed from was more helpful in her own practice of writing. For another practitioner, hearing a director explain their choices and process for a production was not as helpful as engaging with the production recording or photographs. This practitioner did not want to engage in dialogue with the director but with the work directly. Listening to the director speak about the work could muddle their own relationship with the text. For academic researchers, however, understanding process is key to unlocking the meaning of the final production, so the background and research purpose of those using archives is important in considering the use of the archive materials. Two of the international archivists, from university settings, commented on the need for archives to develop their collection policy in line with changes in research landscape with one based in the US directly commenting that there has been a definite shift towards performance studies research areas such as devised performance and considerations of practice rather than the history of theatre. These interviews also indicated a desire to collect more content related to backstage activities, rehearsal, and development periods as well as directors' notes, all of which are materials in which the NT Archive is lacking. These areas were identified because of researcher interest, which is corroborated by the reviews of literature above and the review of researcher requests at the NT Archive.

3.2 Researcher interest in audience experience

The review of literature published on the NT indicates that there is an interest in audiences and how their experience of a production can be enhanced to improve their understanding and/or enjoyment of the production. The areas covered focus on the outputs of the Marketing department and on NT Live broadcasts. One third-party collection archivist commented that they would like to hold more material on what audiences think, how you can engage them, and

on reception studies particularly in relation to social media. Audience data is requested by researchers at the NT Archive, making up 4% of the open text requests by academics.

Similarly to above, this section is organised by publications that have used the NT Archive and then those that did not. As an example, Elizabeth Klett, an English literature scholar, was interested in how the production of *Richard II* (1995) was marketed in order to explore how Fiona Shaw's casting as the king impacted on the reception of the production (Klett, 2009). Klett used NT Archive materials including the prompt script, photographs, programme and recording to discuss how ideas of gender developed throughout the run and how the actors established relationships between their characters and press reviews to understand how the audience reacted to the cross-gender casting (Klett, 2009). Klett explores the relationships between the characters and how this was used in marketing materials.

One example is the original photograph taken for the cover of the programme, marked with the blue cross in the contact sheet in Figure 2. The uncropped version and the other photographs taken at the same time show the closeness of Richard and Bolingbroke, with the former cradling the latter in her arms — this proximity is not portrayed as forcefully in the final cropped programme cover, shown in Figure 3. The close relationship is played out in the production but only hinted at on the programme cover.



Figure 2 Excerpt of contact sheet from photo shoot for programme cover for Richard II *(1995), photographer: unknown (RNT/PP/5/302).*



Figure 3 Programme cover for Richard II *(1995) (RNT/PP/1/4/174).*

Another area of research under reception and marketing is that of crediting. Geraldine Brodie, a scholar on theatre translation, focused in her PhD thesis on the visibility of translation in theatre and of the translator themselves (Brodie, 2012). Brodie also used marketing materials

to understand how two different translated productions, *The House of Bernarda Alba* (2005) and *The UN Inspector* (2005), were discussed publicly and how the name of the literal translator did not appear on any marketing materials but the name of the indirect translators, David Hare and David Farr respectively, names which would be known to the theatre-going public, do appear (Brodie, 2012, p.38). Brodie argues that this omission contributes to the invisibility of translators and the act of translation in the theatre.

The reception of aspects of productions has also been explored using sources outside of the NT Archive. Monks explored the reception of costume in detail in her earlier book, *The Actor in Costume*, which includes the NT productions of *Richard II* (1995) and *Happy Days* (2007) both starring Fiona Shaw in the lead roles (Monks, 2009). Monks used press reviews, which possibly came from newspaper databanks rather than from the NT's press reviews, to explore how critics received Shaw's costume, particularly in the cross-gender role of Richard II. This introduces the Costume and Props Hire department at the NT, which stores the costumes and props from previous shows ready to be reused in new productions. It is entirely possible that costumes will be viewed by audience members in several different productions and Monks brings in the work of the Wooster Group and Forced Entertainment, which play with the idea of the costume wardrobe that is reused for future productions, rewarding regular audience members with a layered viewing experience (Monks, 2009, p.141). Costume, therefore, can alter audience reception of a production before an actor even speaks. Monks has also published with the costume designer Ali Maclaurin on the relationships between the actor, costume and the audience (Maclaurin and Monks, 2018). Monks and Maclaurin focus on first-hand experiences of designing, wearing and photographing costume through interviews with a variety of theatre practitioners and explore what these relationships can tell us about theatre craft and costume reception.

Audience reception is related to the marketing of the production by the NT and marketing strategies have been interrogated to explore whether they can reveal anything about the production. Megan MacDonald, a performance scholar, focused on the reception of and marketing for *Mother Courage and her Children* (2009) (Macdonald, 2011). This was produced at the NT around the same time as another production of the same play was staged at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. MacDonald was interested in the reception of these

productions on social media as well as the impact of marketing on audiences in advance of the productions. The NT Marketing department used excerpts from a rehearsal diary written by Fiona Shaw, the NT's Mother Courage, while one of the actors from the Ottawa production wrote a blog post for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa about the transfer of the production from rehearsal to the stage. MacDonald argues that these insights into the backstage life of the production were used by the marketing departments to give a different perspective to the production and allowed members of the audience extra insight to productions encouraging them to reflect on it before seeing it (Macdonald, 2011, p.61). The assessment of social media and the advertising of the productions in the press in advance are used by MacDonald to explore more fully how these productions interacted with each other and with a global audience even though the productions were only available in their home cities.

There are several researchers who ask questions around the reception of NT Live broadcasts.[49] The articles vary from economic reports on the impact NT Live has had on bookings for live theatre (Bakhshi and Throsby, 2014; Bakhshi and Whitby, 2014) to the role of the audience as 'quasi-experts' about the production on social media during or after the broadcast (Liedke, 2019). These articles tend not to use NT Archive materials beyond the recordings because other materials such as prompt scripts, camera scripts and marketing reports have not yet reached the NT Archive, highlighting a gap in the provision for researchers.[50] They are also frequently drawing on their own experiences of witnessing the broadcast live in a cinema and their research of social media channels during or immediately after the broadcast. Hasan Bakhshi and David Throsby, economists, used surveys of audiences to build their arguments around the reception of particular NT Live broadcasts (Bakhshi and Throsby, 2014). While Bakhshi and Andrew Whitby, also an economist, in their report for the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts used data sets sourced from the NT Live team directly (Bakhshi and Whitby, 2014). While these materials and social media exchanges are not in the NT Archive, their use suggests what sort of materials the NT Archive ought to consider to take in from the NT Live team to ensure that these materials are preserved in an archive. The NT Archive

[49] Most recent publications by Pietrzak-Franger, Liedke, and Radak (2023), Liedke (2023) and Zhou (2023).

[50] The turnaround time for content to reach the NT Archive following the end of a production can be anything from immediate such as with press reviews and photographs to up to a year or two for the production and technical departments.

currently stores press reviews for the original productions and the NT Live broadcast and are beginning to capture social media coverage around NT titles.[51] Articles on the reception of NT Live could directly inform the future work of the NT's Digital Media team as they develop this programme of work.[52]

Related to NT Live broadcasts, is the short-form content, which is produced and broadcast alongside the productions at the NT. This content has come under scrutiny for what it can reveal about the production or process and how it can impact on the audience. Paul Allain, with his expertise in performer training, explored what online theatre resources, specifically warm-up films on the NT's YouTube site, can teach about process (Allain, 2023). He discusses the filming decisions regarding camera positions, ethics of filming and content among other concepts to offer food for thought for those wishing to film similar content. Aebischer, Janice Wardle and Alison Stone, all Shakespeare scholars who study theatre, commented specifically on the use of short-form content during NT Live broadcasts, which can take the form of trailers, adverts or interviews with members of the cast and artistic teams and is usually placed before the broadcast starts or at the interval. Aebischer discussed how this content, commissioned by the Marketing department, plays a key role in orienting cinema viewers in the auditorium, the theatre building, the history of the NT and its relationship to the performance of Shakespeare (Aebischer, 2018, p.171). Wardle focused on *King Lear* (2014) and the effect that placing an interview with cast and artistic team members at the interval can have on the cinema audience's opinion towards what they see happening on stage (Wardle, 2014). Wardle argues that the content and placement of this material can impact on the cinema audience's interpretation of the production, and she goes further to question why a cinema audience receives this information whilst the theatre audience does not. Wardle discusses Shakespeare scholar Peter Kirwan's comments that this pre-show content could be seen as patronising, in that the NT feels the cinema audience needs 'extra' assistance in understanding the production

[51] This initiative started during the NT at Home season on YouTube from April to July 2020 and involved archiving tweets using specified hashtags such as #NTatHome or specific production titles as well as the NT X, formerly Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram accounts themselves.

[52] I have shared this literature review work with staff at the NT in order that the NT can reflect on the academic research around the NT's programmes and productions. I carry out annual reviews of literature published to identify the most recent articles and books for circulation with staff. I see this engagement with academic and practitioner discourse as part of the remit of a publicly funded institution such as the National Theatre.

(Wardle, 2014, p.141; Kirwan, 2009). Stone cites James Steichen's term 'institutional dramaturgy' in relation to how the NT stages itself for the public audience, which encompasses how NT Live is marketed and what content is shown to the public and what is not (Stone, 2016, p.630). The NT Live recordings have been referenced in these articles and Aebischer used email correspondence with Flo Buckeridge, the then Head of Programming and Production for the Digital Media department, to gain an insight into decision making within the Digital Media team at the NT. Aebischer brings this in when discussing the decisions around which productions are chosen to have an NT Live broadcast, with Buckeridge observing that Shakespeare productions always perform well at the cinema box office (Aebischer, 2018, p.170). These researchers show that there are clear creative decisions being made around what the audience views and how the production is contextualised for them. These academics are concerned with the thrill of the live and how the experience in the cinema directly relates to that in the theatre. Internally at the NT, staff working on the live broadcasts discuss NT Live as providing a different experience for audiences compared to theatre going. In this context, providing access to the artistic team through filmed interviews can be viewed as a unique experience for the cinema audience, creating the thrill of an event albeit not an in-person one.

This concern with the audience reaction to plays and how the audience can be manipulated as part of pre-show marketing reflects the increasing presence of theatre audience research as a topic of empirical research within theatre studies, which has been gaining momentum since the publication of Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences* in 1997 and Helen Freshwater's *Theatre & Audience* in 2009 (Bennett, 1997; Freshwater, 2009; Sedgman, 2019). This also mirrors the development of the Data Studio in 2017 within the NT's Marketing department, which conducted audience research in order to understand audience motivations, audience preferences and the effects of cultural activities and the shift from this in 2025 to a cross-organisational team headed by a Director of Data and Insight to lead on strategies around data, evaluation and research. The interest in audience reactions also aligns with the Arts Council England's increased focus on audiences in its ten year strategy document for 2020-2030 *Let's Create* (Arts Council England, 2020). It is this interest in audiences that is evidenced in the literature review and which I need to consider improving coverage of in the NT Archive. This cannot be achieved as part of my practice as the focus of this thesis is on archiving the development period of a production and not its audience experience, but this area is of such

interest to researchers that I suggest the archive team investigate how the NT Archive can document this aspect of theatre-going better by capturing social media engagements, audience reactions and relevant data.

3.3 Position of the archive and other locations of knowledge

As mentioned above, there are locations of knowledge outside of the NT Archive, which researchers have found fruitful for answering their questions around process, decision-making and audience experience. These provide contextual information that may not be available in the NT Archive and highlight the need for the archive staff to respect the knowledge architectures (Shilton and Srinivasan, 2007, p.89) that exist around materials and productions and the need to accept that some information cannot or will not make its way to the archive.

There are some publications which provide good source material for researchers interested in the processes of theatre practitioners related to the NT, effectively creating an archive about the NT outside of the NT Archive. Richard Eyre, a previous NT Artistic Director (1988-1997), published *Talking theatre: interviews with theatre people* for which he conducted interviews with key theatre makers on major themes such as the works of Shakespeare, Brecht and Beckett, which provide insights into how theatre makers work and there are discussions around the development and rehearsal periods providing valuable insights not available in archive material (Eyre, 2009). Similarly, Jonathan Croall, the author and journalist, published *Buzz buzz! Playwrights, actors and directors at the National Theatre* providing insights into the work of artistic team members at the NT, which offers background information on plays and characters and each interview is focused on a particular production in rehearsal at the time of interviews (Croall, 2015). These published first-hand accounts provide original material for researchers, which create an alternative archive available for public consumption, though at a cost, augmenting what is available in the NT Archive for free.

There are also publications about the building of the NT and its auditoria, which draw heavily on the NT Archive but also from the expertise of the authors. Iain Mackintosh and Richard Pilbrow, who were both key players in the original build of the NT in the 1960s and 1970s, have published on the subject of the NT using the NT Archive extensively to create their narrative

and illustrate their work (Mackintosh, 2023; Pilbrow, 2024). Pilbrow used his own collection within the NT Archive, the Theatre Projects Consultants papers, to research his publication. Patrick Dillon, chief architect of the NT Future refurbishment project in the 2010s, published on the NT building and specifically on its concrete structure, again using NT Archive materials but also his experience of refurbishing the predominantly concrete building (Dillon and Tilson, 2015). These publications provide valuable accounts of the architecture and infrastructure of the NT building, which are used by researchers and, importantly, staff members involved in the maintenance and upkeep of the NT buildings.

Further to these publications, there is a substantial set of literature published by members of staff of the NT, which do not use the NT Archive but rather supplement it. Peter Hall (Artistic Director of the NT 1973-1988), Richard Eyre and Nicholas Hytner (Artistic Director of the NT 2003-2015) have all published books focusing on their tenure as Artistic Director. Hall and Eyre used the diary format to portray the day-to-day machinations of the NT, which have been edited down to provide insights into their directing processes and conversations that were never minuted and therefore not available in the NT Archive, such as at dinners or via telephone calls (Eyre, 2004; Hall and Goodwin, 2016). These provide a much more personal account of this period portraying motivation and rationale for decision-making but have been edited so should be read as such. Reading Hall's *Diaries* alongside Associate Director (1971-1976) Michael Blakemore's *Stage Blood* (2013) gives a sense of how personal perspectives affect the historical record, as each author's accounts of the same parts of the NT's history differ or hold varying levels of importance in their books (Blakemore, 2013). Hytner's account of his period at the NT is less about his own experience than Hall, Eyre, and Blakemore's books and is thematically organised to give the reader an insight into the plays that he commissioned, directed and produced and reflects Hytner's continuing role as the artistic director of a major London theatre (Hytner, 2018). These books provide a different perspective on the history of the NT and do fill gaps within the NT Archive in relation to directors' process and how they work collaboratively. The NT Archive purchases these for use as reference material for researchers in the research room.

Similar to these publications are books commissioned by the NT about particular productions, to offer insights into their development. In the 1960s, Kenneth Tynan, as literary manager at

the NT, aspired to be an educator of the audiences and adopted the continental style of programmes with extra information about how the play had been produced (Luckhurst, 2006, p.171). He contributed rehearsal logbooks to publications around *The Recruiting Officer* (1963) and *Othello* (1964) (Tynan, 1965; 1966). The demands of his role soon meant that he could not continue this ambition but this early interest at the NT of documenting the 'hidden' development period of a production is notable. The NT Publications department continued this idea by publishing *The National Theatre at Work* series, with all but three publications written by Robert Butler, theatre critic, and Jonathan Croall from 2000 to 2007.[53] According to Lyn Haill, the Head of Publishing[54] at the time, these were in direct response to audience requests for more information about the production process, having had their appetites whetted by the production programmes (Haill, 2021). The author of each book was embedded in the rehearsal and production process gaining first-hand experience, which makes the reader feel like they were part of the production or have been given privileged backstage access. The books give a brief account of pre-rehearsal development but mainly focus on the rehearsal period and tend to conclude with the technical or dress rehearsals. The process offers indicative examples for considering how I plan my embedded practice, and I carry forward the methods used by Robert Butler and Jonathan Croall into my practice planning, such as interviews with the cast and artistic teams throughout rehearsals. These publications, along with Tynan's much earlier efforts, demonstrate a desire on the part of the NT to open up the backstage to an audience and provide them with a sense of gaining special access.[55]

All these publications provide information that is not otherwise available in the NT Archive, highlighting a distinction in the sources of knowledge about the NT:

- material that is a by-product of the production,
- material that is created for NT purposes during a production,

[53] The full set of publications is as follows: *Hamlet* (2000), *Remembrance of Things Past* (2000), *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001), *Humble Boy* (2001), *South Pacific* (2001)(later pulled by Rodgers and Hammerstein), *Anything Goes* (2002), *Bacchai* (2002), *His Dark Materials* (2003), *Henry IV* (2005), *The Alchemist* (2006) and *War Horse* (2007) (Butler, 2001a; 2001b; 2002; 2003; 2006; Croall, 2001a; 2001b; 2009; Merlin, 2005; Millar, 2007; Trevis, 2001).

[54] The Head of Publishing looks after all NT publishing projects including the production programmes.

[55] This has continued with the opening of the Backstage Walkway in 2015, which allows members of the public to view a variety of backstage spaces and departments for free during the theatre's opening hours.

- material created later for studying the production or biographical publication.

The first and second are areas that I focus on as part of my role as Head of Archive because the NT Archive should be capturing the materials that are by-products of productions such as the prompt script and costume and props bibles and those materials that are created alongside the show for various NT purposes such as those created by the Marketing and Learning teams. These are the types of materials covered in the review of materials at the NT Archive mentioned above. Those materials created separately at a point after the production has been staged, for the purposes of studying the productions or biographical publication, come from external projects, such as the Eyre and Croall publications above as well as previous staff members' publications. These provide valuable contextual information for researchers, but they are not a formal part of the NT Archive as they are published works, which have not been commissioned or published directly by the NT.[56] The distinction between by-products and materials created at a later date by non-NT parties helps staff and researchers alike to consider the value and integrity of those materials.

Related to this distinction is the idea of knowledges existing around the NT, separate from the NT Archive. In my experience over the past few years, I have referred researchers to the Digital Media, Marketing, Costume-props and Learning teams in response to a variety of questions from external researchers encompassing marketing campaign strategies, decision-making processes for NT Live productions and how the fire extinguisher trick was realised in *One Man, Two Guvnors* (2011). The concept of specialist knowledges existing across the NT suggests the porousness of the organisation with no rigid silos of information. These knowledges could exist for a couple of reasons, they could be related to specific long-standing members of staff who hold knowledge from their own job roles or teams not depositing materials with the NT Archive. I need to reflect on what role the NT Archive does and could play in this web of knowledge and how the archive team may need to be more flexible in what items are archived. With the remit that the NT Archive has to document the history and ongoing activities of the NT, the NT Archive should be aiming to document these knowledges. This could be done for

[56] Archives tend to be made up of unpublished, unique materials but can hold published secondary materials as complementary and supporting information for the archive collection. Any material published by the NT will be held in the NT Archive as evidence of business activity.

any teams who do not transfer materials to the NT Archive in a regular way. It may well be, however, that the knowledges cannot be documented in a 'traditional' way but require a more flexible approach. If the knowledges are held by members of staff, for example, then there will be limited physical or digital documentation that could be transferred to the NT Archive that captures this information. A series of oral histories may be more suitable to capture this knowledge before members of staff leave the NT. If there are unusual effects used for specific productions such as video projection or drum revolution then I could target the artistic team or staff members to capture materials related to these, which may be areas of interest for researchers in the future. Alternatively, or in addition to these measures, the NT Archive, being the largest source of information on the history of the NT, could assume a facilitation role, acting to connect researchers to the members of staff or teams that would be most relevant to their work. The NT Archive team could ask researchers for copies of any interviews undertaken with staff or artistic team members on NT productions to hold in the Archive for future researchers. The NT Archive, in this way, could expand its remit from being a store of physical and digital materials to being the department that has intellectual control over the knowledge available from the NT. Several of the internal staff interviewed, when asked how they view the NT Archive, commented on the Archive as a source of knowledge for their work with one commenting that it is a 'problem solving department' and another saying that it is 'indispensable.' All internal staff interviewed expressed that they do not have the capacity to undertake archival research and appreciate when the archive team can respond to their query quickly. This fits with the idea of the Head of Archive having a company historian role,[57] a role held by one of the international archivists interviewed, which is as much about knowing information as it is about knowing where to find information.

These ideas around the position and function of the archive were picked out by two of the international in-house theatre archivists. Both felt that their archives were not positioned visibly organisationally nor physically, which they suggested led to their work not being seen or appreciated by the organisation more widely. Both wanted to have better working relationships with other departments for the benefit of the archive collections and services. The NT Archive is in a more advantageous position than these archives as I have a direct line of report into the Executive team and a clear educational remit within the Learning department.

[57] See Introduction Section 2.2 (p.16).

During my tenure as Head of Archive at the NT, I have developed much stronger links to departments across the NT and the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 provided an opportunity for increased advocacy for the collections partly due to our accessible catalogue of material that could be shared with audiences and partly due to the active archiving we undertook to document the pandemic. Cross-department working has allowed the NT Archive greater visibility and as a result more materials are being sent or offered to the collections.

4 How the findings contribute to planning of practice

The surveys of holdings at the NT Archive, interviews with researchers and literature review of publications demonstrate what the NT Archive holds, who uses it and why. This provides a foundation to compare the NT Archive's collections and functions with similar theatre archives internationally, whether based within theatres or in other organisations. The comparative study suggests that there are similarities across these collections in terms of what is collected, gaps that arise and what researchers are interested in accessing. A key area for me to consider for my practice, which has surfaced from this comparative study, is how to represent process and decision-making in the NT Archive. Each of the four areas of the comparative study have identified this focus: scholars supplementing archival research with interviews with practitioners, directors seeking first-hand accounts of process, archivists identifying process as gaps in their collecting and my experience of minimal representation in the NT Archive. Identifying materials that represent process and decision-making is the driver for my embedded and parallel practice.

The findings around the various locations of knowledge at the NT and outside of the NT help me as Head of Archive and the NT Archive team to consider the directing of researchers to other sources of information and encourage them to view their role as facilitators of knowledge as well as its custodians. As I consider the outcomes of both my practice and my wider PhD, I include the current and potential roles of the NT Archive in my thinking and recommendations to ensure that the materials held are promoted and publicised in the most productive way while encouraging increased donations of materials from departments in future. As part of my role as Head of Archive, I have already made use of this comparative study to think about how I can ensure the NT Archive develops as the NT develops and the

concerns of the wider industry shift. The location of knowledge within the organisation leads me to consider how the NT Archive could play a key part in how the NT understands itself and its value as well as in how others interpret its activities. I will return to this in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter.

Chapter 2 – Positioning archival science within a theatre setting

1 Introduction

This chapter considers how, using my PhD practice, I might be able to create a new method of archiving performance process at the NT so that, as Head of Archive, I can better address researchers' needs. The comparative study in Chapter 1 identified the requirements of the archive researchers, suggesting a necessity for a more creative archivist, more involved in the process of documenting productions. To do this, I build a new archiving practice to meet these researcher needs and position the archive as a creative partner within the NT. This chapter considers how archival science can embrace the fluid nature of theatre to facilitate a more flexible approach to archiving within a working theatre.

As an archivist at the NT, I feel that I inhabit a liminal space between theatre and archival science, and that I am constantly trying to meet the needs of both sides. In an interview with Tiffany Nixon, until recently the in-house theatre archivist at the Roundabout Theatre, we discussed how our roles are not like other archiving jobs and that we require a different skillset. Nixon commented that she sees herself as theatre staff rather than as an archivist and that her experience with materials is direct and collaborative as opposed to the more receptive role that the archivists in third party institutions hold (Nixon, 2021). This tallies with Marini's comments in the thesis Introduction (p.27) about theatre archivists being 'in close contact with theatre practice and are often directly part of it' (Marini, 2008, p.30). Nixon had a privileged position of being able to meet practitioners and observe some rehearsals and she noted that she needed to be as charismatic as the personalities in the theatre and speak in the same way as them. She specifically commented that archival verbiage and theory were not helpful in her role and that she needed to assimilate with the practitioners so that she could be seen as one of the theatre staff and not as an outsider. This more open and flexible relationship with records creators is not conventional within archival science but could unlock a more open, creative and collaborative approach to archiving in performance contexts. To explore this new method, I carefully consider the fields from which the record creators and researchers come to ensure that I am archiving and making accessible relevant materials in the most collaborative way possible while trying to work within the confines of archival science.

In this chapter I look at the interconnected approaches of archival science, the practice of archiving at the NT, theatre and performance studies and theatre and performance practices. I begin with examples of the negotiation between the principles of archival science and the realities and practices of a working theatre, based on my own experience, before drawing on the interrelated fields of theatre and performance studies to problematise and contextualise archival science. Theatre and performance studies provide insights into the potential for archives holding theatre materials and will help me to plan my practice and suggest alternative approaches to the concept of the archive and the repertoire. I also use this chapter to look to live art where documentation tends to be artist-led and not restricted to the confines of archival science. This serves as a useful example for considering how and why practitioners may get involved in the archiving process at the NT and what challenges an active archivist may face. As part of this I look at the differences between archiving and documentation to illuminate where the work of practitioners and archivists in this area may overlap and deviate. This interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to the project positions archival science as one of the relevant fields of study when considering how to capture theatre. Working with the practitioners involved in producing work at the NT will uncover what role practitioners could have in documenting their own work to create a more representative archive of a performance.

In the final section of this chapter, I consider the feasibility of implementing this new archiving practice at the NT. I look at the opportunities for an active archivist to work with the development process as well as the potential for practitioners to be collaboratively engaged with documentation of their productions at the NT.

2 Archival science and the challenges of archiving at the National Theatre

Archival science and theatre and performance studies can come into dialogue with each other to inform a different way of thinking about and approaching knowledge that is not or cannot be captured in a document. Theatre and performance studies and archival science have traditionally been viewed as opposed to each other due to the former's focus on liveness and fluidity (Bial, 2004; Schechner, 2013) and the latter's on authority, impartiality and fixity (Ridener, 2009). Over the last forty years, archival science has expanded to consider the agency

of the archivist, how we can and do reinterpret history and the political dimension of archives related to power. This expansion provides fertile ground to study where these fields overlap, and this section considers the conversations happening within each field related to the other.

The formality of archival science can be inflexible and resist incorporating theatre and performance realities. I argue that a more flexible approach is required, and possible, when an archive is based within a working theatre. As Marini discusses, while theatre archives 'require a rigorous analysis and application of archival theory and practice […] they also require an informed and open mind' (Marini, 2024, p.585). In this section I provide some examples of tensions from my experience to demonstrate how I have found myself occupying an 'in-between' position when making collecting decisions, balancing the formality of my archival science education with the flexibility of the theatre and performance environment in which I undertake my practice.

One area of recurrent tension for the NT Archive team is the recordings of productions. According to archival science, the team should be capturing an authentic and fixed record of the production. With performance, however, every night of every production is different and there is no one authentic version to be captured. It is also difficult to capture an ephemeral performance in one fixed medium, as will be discussed later in this chapter (p.82). Alternatively, if archival science were to take theatre scholarship seriously, an ideal if impractical configuration would be to capture a recording of every performance of the production and provide access to these for researchers so that they could study the differences between each one. Located as the NT Archive is within a producing theatre, it is not possible to do this because of the contractual agreements of actors and artistic teams with the union, Equity, lack of capacity of the Digital Media team to record every production, lack of budget to finance so many filmed recordings, lack of digital storage capacity and funding to store such a large volume of audio-visual content, and there are issues around metadata tagging for meaningful searchability in the future. At the NT, the collecting decision was made to capture one performance of the production, which tends to be on a matinee day towards the end of the run, when the production will be well established and fewer staging errors likely.

There are further complexities in this area because what ends up in the NT Archive as a recording may be a compilation of more than one performance and, therefore, not an authentic representation of what happened on stage as witnessed by an audience. Matinee days are selected for archive recordings so that the Digital Media team can capture both the matinee and evening performance. The matinee serves as a camera rehearsal and as a back-up version of the recording in case there is a technical fault or issue on stage in the evening performance. An extreme version of this was with *The Life of Pi* (2021), which was broadcast as an NT Live in 2023. The Digital Media team captured multiple versions of the production over the course of a week and stitched the NT Live version together from these to create the recording that was released as the NT Live. It was this production that highlighted to the NT Archive team that multiple recordings could be spliced into one and that we were not receiving this contextual information for the catalogue. Until 2024, the NT Archive did not receive information from the Content Production Suite (CPS) in Digital Media as to whether any edits to a recording were carried out, for example where the matinee recording would be spliced with the evening one, thus creating a different version of the performance to what was witnessed in the auditorium. As of 2024, the CPS produce edit logs for all audio-visual content, which will be transferred to the NT Archive outlining where content has been sourced from, any splicing that has happened, and what rights are held within the content. This provides context for researchers in terms of what they are viewing and improves transparency of the process of creating the recordings.

There can also be occasions where more than one recording is made and archived. *Hex* (2021) was beset with Covid-19 related delays and complications, which led to the cancelling of the NT Live broadcast scheduled for 13th January 2022. A recording had been filmed on 10th December 2021 for marketing purposes, but several understudies were playing, and the technical aspects of the production were not complete. After the cancellation of the NT Live broadcast, the decision was made to film an archive recording of the production on 20th January 2022. This featured all the main actors in their roles and, as the director Rufus Norris commented in a staff meeting on 19th January 2022, this recording would provide a more useful reference for when the production was re-mounted later in 2022. The NT Archive did not receive the recording from 10th December as this was made to create the marketing trailer. The Digital Media retention schedule details that only the final trailer is retained for the NT Archive and none of

the footage used to create it. The NT Archive has received a recording from the 20th January 2022 and the NT at Home recording captured on 11th January 2023 from the revival of *Hex.* These two recordings are useful records of how the production developed throughout from the original run to the revival. It was imperative that contextual information relating to the dates of capture were entered into the archive catalogue to ensure that researchers understand which actors were on stage, and when in the process this version was recorded. It would have been even more useful for the 10th December 2021 recording to be retained to show the development of the production through preview into full 2021/22 production and then on to the 2022/23 revival. This is something for the NT Archive team to consider when they review the Digital Media retention schedules. Production recordings are used extensively by researchers, as evidenced in Chapter 1 (p.48), and so it is important that the correct contextual information is gathered about each recording. This is an area to which I return when discussing my practice findings (Chapter 4 Section 5 (p.151)) as it is likely that capturing a recording early in the run of a production as well as one later in the run could provide useful comparative material for researchers as well as serving a purpose for the more commercial-facing Marketing department.

Another example of the difficulty of imposing archival science on theatre and performance is with the treatment of transfers, tours and revivals in the archival performance database. Archival science strives for the authentic and original record but at the NT it is not always clear when different versions of a production warrant being catalogued as a new 'original' production. When productions complete their initial run at the NT and then move into the West End, Broadway or on tour, it becomes difficult for the NT Archive team to track when the productions are termed 'new' versions and, therefore, warrant a new entry in the performance database and related materials linked to this new record. Taking *War Horse* (2007) as an example, *War Horse* was initially staged in the Olivier Theatre at the NT in 2007. It then went on to be revived in the Olivier Theatre in 2009, have a West End transfer, productions in New York, Australasia, Tokyo, China, Berlin, Netherlands and Belgium and also the UK, US and South Africa tours and is still on tour at the time of writing. Many of these productions had different versions of the script and all will have had changes of cast and artistic teams. It is problematic for the NT Archive team to track when the department managing *War Horse*, National Theatre Productions (NTP), believe that a new production has begun: is this measured by a change of

venue, a change in a certain proportion of the cast or artistic team, a change in booking season, large enough edits to the script etc.? This lack of clarity around the versions of a show leads to uncertainty in how to collect around these productions and how to enter these productions into the performance database on Calm.[58] As a solution to these issues, the NT Archive team needs to embrace the theatre and performance studies' notion of knowledge being held within people rather than in documents. The NT Archive team requires NTP staff to provide context to the production materials they transfer to the NT Archive. The NTP team need to transfer physical or digital materials covering the productions in their care and their knowledge of how these productions were categorised by their team. This transfer of knowledge may not be possible using physical or digital materials but may be a verbal explanation of which version of the productions the various materials belong to. In terms of how the NT Archive collects this material, this means that staff must be on hand to have a discussion with the NTP team and then quickly catalogue these materials to ensure that this contextual information is not lost. This contrasts with other areas of the NT Archive, or indeed other archives, where materials can be transferred with a box list form and then left to be catalogued later, sometimes years later, with no adverse effects on the resulting catalogue record for researchers.

The performance database itself, as mentioned above, is an unusual database to be kept in an archive and demonstrates one of the unique ways in which the NT Archive has adapted archival science to suit being present in a working theatre. Jeannette Bastian, an archival science scholar, comments that 'Events such as performances […] while generally recognized as expressions of cultural values may require a considerable stretch of archival boundaries in order to be thought of as archival evidence or even as records themselves' (Bastian, 2009, p.114). Traditionally, archives collect materials in whatever format they come and place emphasis on the material object, so the NT Archive's performance database is pushing at the boundaries of archival science. The NT performance database collects information about events that have happened at the NT or involving the NT such as productions, talks and exhibitions, whether they have accompanying materials or not. This means that I can catalogue a production in the performance database from information given to me verbally. Material can then be linked to this performance in the database in the future if it is found. The creation and population of this performance database was a collecting decision taken by the NT Archive

[58] Axiell Calm is the archival software system used at the NT Archive.

back in the early 2000s when the cataloguing software Calm was implemented. This creates an archive of data separate to the material objects holding knowledge of the production. This database, then, facilitates the transmission of knowledge without the presence of objects, which goes against the fundamental theory within archival science and is more aligned with thinking around theatre and performance studies. This demonstrates how the NT Archive has already adapted to its location within a producing theatre where an accurate record of events is important, independent of their associated materials.

Despite this adaptation, however, there remain conflicts between the database as a record of professional practice and understandings of the practice itself. The 'Opening night' in the database is used for the night of first preview and is completed alongside fields for 'Press night' and 'Closing night.' The production programme, however, lists 'Opening night' as the press night i.e., the first night that the show is open to reviews. This inconsistency can cause errors in data entry in the performance database by new members of staff or misunderstandings by researchers. More broadly, it is unclear what is termed the first night of a production: is it the first time it is run through from start to finish, the first time the performance has an audience, the first time the performance has a paying audience, the first time critics can view the performance etc.? The British Library, when requesting the final version of scripts due to its copyright library status, requests the date of first performance on the transfer form. The British Library does not offer any definition of which date should be used and the staff in the New Work department responsible for sending these scripts have decided to send the date of first preview, which means the 'Opening night' of the performance database, but not of the programme. I do not know when the companies of productions term their first night and it is possible that more contextual information could be gathered and included in the catalogue to ensure that future researchers are aware of this.

Another example of the difficulty of applying archival science to the theatre and performance environment relates to how staff at the NT categorise theatre spaces, which would usually be fixed entities but can change name. In 2013-2015, the NT undertook a large refurbishment project, NT Future, part of which was the renovation of the Cottesloe Theatre. The resulting theatre was renamed the Dorfman Theatre after a large donation from Sir Lloyd Dorfman. The cataloguing manual of the NT Archive requires that materials are allocated to their theatre of

origin either through the catalogue record or in the hierarchical cataloguing structure. For example, *The Effect* (2012) was the last production to be staged in the Cottesloe Theatre, and this venue is detailed in the performance record. The programme for *The Effect* (2012) is catalogued under RNT/PP/1/4/307, which means that it is the 307th entry in the Cottesloe programme folder, designated by the '4.' The hierarchical structure is as follows:

RNT – Royal National Theatre Collection
RNT/PP – Print and Publications and Graphics Departments
RNT/PP/1 – Programmes
RNT/PP/1/4 – Cottesloe Programmes
RNT/PP/1/4/307 – The Effect

Once the Cottesloe Theatre was renamed, the NT Archive staff had to decide how materials from the Dorfman Theatre would be catalogued. I met with Nick Starr, the Executive Director of the NT at the time, to discuss whether he termed the Dorfman Theatre a continuation of the Cottesloe Theatre, and therefore the first production following the reopening, *Here Lies Love* (2014), would be catalogued under RNT/PP/1/4/308, or if he termed it a new theatre space. He decided on the latter and so I created a new sub-series RNT/PP/1/13 for Dorfman Programmes.[59]

In a similar vein, during NT Future, a temporary theatre was established in Theatre Square at the front of the NT. This was a wooden structure painted red and named The Shed. A total of 51 productions were staged in this space between 2013 and 2015. Due to a copyright issue, The Shed needed to be renamed mid-way through this period to 'the temporary theatre.' Again, I spoke with the Executive Director about whether he viewed this as a continuation of the same space or as a new one and he opted for the former. This resulted in RNT/PP/1/10 being named 'The Shed/Temporary Theatre Programmes' and other similar sub-series for the other related materials. In the performance database, for productions that were staged in The Shed, the venue field reads 'The Shed, latterly the temporary theatre' and for productions staged in the temporary theatre, the venue field states, 'Temporary theatre, formerly The Shed.' This

[59] The interim numbers RNT/PP/1/5-12 were taken by temporary theatre spaces in the period between the Cottesloe Programmes and Dorfman Programmes sub-series being created.

contextual information means that researchers are aware of how the spaces were thought of by the NT at the time of the production and could assist in research around how knowledge is transmitted from one space to another and experienced by the audience (see Carlson's work on 'ghosting' (2003)). Researchers may wish to consider a Dorfman production in the context of the space's Cottesloe history, but the catalogue does not currently connect the Cottesloe and Dorfman spaces. Separate knowledge about the history of the NT would be required for a researcher to uncover this connection. For The Shed and temporary theatre productions, however, this connection can be made in the catalogue, and researchers can immediately see the history of the space and come to their own conclusions about how a theatre space continues and how knowledge is held and transmitted in a space.

These examples demonstrate areas of tension between the principles of good archival science and the realities and practices of a working theatre and how the NT Archive has managed to adapt in some ways to its location within a functioning theatre. In all these examples, collaboration with other departments and practitioners within the NT has led me to adapt the archival norms to accommodate theatre and performance studies, which feels like I am occupying an 'in between' position when making collecting decisions. The above examples highlight how authenticity and provenance, fixity of materials and transmission of knowledge, three key areas within archival science, come into dialogue with theatre and performance studies.

3 Areas of overlap between archival science and theatre and performance studies

In the following section I explore in more detail the theory behind these three areas of archival science, on which theatre and performance studies provide an alternative perspective. These three areas of overlap bring the fields of archival science and theatre and performance studies into dialogue and provide insight into the potential of an interdisciplinary approach to archiving.

3.1 Area of overlap 1: authenticity and provenance

When it comes to archiving something, archival science is concerned with the authenticity of the 'original', the intrinsic value of material, which are 'those qualities and characteristics of permanently valuable records that make the records in their original physical form the only archivally acceptable form of the records' (The National Archives, 2016). The 'original' form referred to has traditionally been integral to archival science to prove a record's authenticity, a key factor in the construction of an archive. This authenticity is provided through the archivist understanding and documenting the provenance of the material. Looking to performance, the material that ends up in an archive from a production can lack the original context of its creation due to several factors including the ephemerality of the art form and the lack of information transferred with materials to the NT Archive by originating departments, as discussed in the section above. The lack of archiving of the development period itself means that materials kept in the NT Archive can be removed from their context, which makes them difficult to understand and interpret. There is also discussion around the 'original' within theatre and performance studies. Vaughan et al, focusing on the creation of the Circus Oz Living Archive, highlight the clash between archival science and these fields on the role of the 'original': 'any record of performance, due to its ephemeral nature, can never be the 'authentic' record' (Vaughan et al., 2013, p.146). There are extensive discussions within theatre and performance studies around the 'live' and the difficulty of capturing an ephemeral act.[60] Within performance, the concept of the 'original' is problematic as Richard Schechner, one of the founders of performance studies, outlines: 'performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them' (Schechner, 2010, p.50).[61] A study of this area of overlap is helpful to highlight where solutions can be found which take both fields into account.

From an archival science perspective, provenance or the context of record creation can be used to explain why certain materials have been created or how they were used in the process.

[60] See Auslander (2006), Phelan (1993), Schneider (2011).
[61] This argument can be developed using Schechner's 'twice-behaved behaviour' case, claiming that the 'original' cannot be captured in a record (Schechner, 2013, p.28).

Provenance is a long accepted concept within archival science[62] and is defined as providing information about how the records were created, who has looked after them and owned them and illustrating why records were created and how they were used (International Council on Archives, 2007). Archivists are trained to respect provenance and maintain it alongside records to ensure that these can be understood and interpreted in relation to other records and the context in which they were created. With the postmodern shift, however, there is a move away from striving for completeness and static records to embracing the flexible nature of records and their context. I want to take this postmodern archival approach and apply it to the NT Archive to address issues of provenance during the development period, when ideas and practices are in flux. For Cook, the emphasis in postmodern archives is on the context of record creation rather than the record itself and on the shift from 'the "natural" residue or passive by-product of administrative activity to the consciously constructed and actively mediated "archivalisation" of social memory' (Cook, 2001, p.3). The role of an archivist, Cook continues, is to be active in creating these records, which construct human and organisational memory.

Archive science scholar Tom Nesmith's introduction of the term 'societal provenance' (2006) was a part of the postmodern shift in archival science. This 'acknowledges that provenance is multi–layered and flexible, and that understanding the context of a record resides beyond understanding the individual creator to understanding organizational, psychological, family, cultural, and historical factors that could shape it' (Salvatore, 2013). This broadening out of provenance from the individual to other elements of causation places records within the society that produced them. Marini and Bastian discuss this concept in relation to the performing arts specifically. As discussed in the thesis Introduction (p.24), Marini believes that 'A full understanding of the context and process of creation is essential to establishing the provenance of theatre materials, and to retain original order' (Marini, 2024, p.585) while Bastian argues that it is important for an archivist to capture more inclusive context to create more meaningful records (Bastian, 2009, p.123). This speaks to Knowles' 'conditions of

[62] The principle of provenance or *respect des fonds*, was created by French archivists after the French Revolution to keep records of the same origin together rather than organised in an artificial way by an archivist. This was then given theoretical justification in various paradigm shifts within archival science (Muller et al., 2003; Jenkinson, 1922). This principle has been accepted in the archive sector and continues to be used widely today (The National Archives, no date).

production,' discussed in Section 3.3 (p.85) below, and the necessity to understand this in order to appraise and catalogue performing arts materials (Knowles, 2004, p.3).

Context is key to cataloguing, and archival science scholar Barbara Craig, in her article on memory and archives, states that 'the usefulness of the memory recalled by archives is affected by two conditions: the qualities of the documents as credible evidence and the transparency of the contextual envelope that encloses them. Together these work to transmit clear intent that provides a stable foundation on which users can begin to create their own meanings' (Craig, 2002, p.287). This 'contextual envelope' constructed by archivists is essential to the accessibility of these records in the future and speaks to the heart of appraisal, which starts with the premise that there is an act, deed, function or activity behind any record that is archived. It is this context as well as content that is key and what archivists are striving to represent in the archive (Cook, 1992, pp.182-183). Within the theatre archiving sector specifically, Sant discusses the need for context of documentation. He argues that the creation of documents is not enough to designate them as 'documentation,' but that further archival activities are required such as preservation and contextualisation before materials can be termed documentation of a performance. He states 'Context is an essential aspect for documents to be preserved for long-term keeping, along with other metadata, and for long-term accessibility plans' (Sant, 2017, p.7). This context, added by the archivists during cataloguing, is key to the access and understanding of performing arts materials.

Within theatre and performance studies, the term 'provenance' is not used, but there is interest in the context of record creation. Understanding how a record was created and used during the development period can improve understanding of the creative process, assign attribution to various elements of the work whether that be backstage crew, administrative staff of the producing house or the artistic team and demonstrate how signification is constructed on stage. Understanding the collaborative nature of record production allows a researcher to comprehend a fuller picture of the production and to appreciate how the records created during the development period influence the rehearsal and final production periods. Within theatre and performance studies, there is also interest in how documenting the context of record creation can evidence all aspects of performance. As McAuley comments, what the audience sees in the final production is 'the tip of a semiotic iceberg', revealing a culmination

of what would have been many hours of development (McAuley, 2008, p.285). She comments that the work that comes before the ephemeral presentation on stage will leave even fewer traces than the final production (McAuley, 2012b, p.3). What is traditionally archived at the NT focuses on the tip of this iceberg, the end product of the production on stage, and not on the many years of work leading up to this point, nor the wider group of people outside the artistic team who have contributed to the development, so there is a very small proportion of the process documented in the NT Archive, which is not representative of the progression of ideas. There is a multiplicity of people and departments involved in the development of a production, and this can complicate the retrospective archiving of records by an archivist if they are not privy to the experiences within the room. Records held together with their context can reveal how a production moves from development through rehearsal and on to the final production stage and what impacted on this journey. I focused on capturing provenance in the catalogue of materials for my practice to go some way to providing a connection between the archived materials and the original performance.

3.2 Area of overlap 2: fixity of materials

Another traditionally accepted foundation of archival science is the fixity of materials, which initially appears to be at odds with theatre and performance studies. As Taylor states: '"Archival" memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters […] all those items supposedly resistant to change' (Taylor, 2003, p.19). The authenticity in archival science mentioned above is asserted by fixing records in whatever state in which they enter the archive (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.167). Taylor continues: 'The dominance of language and writing has come to stand for meaning itself. Live, embodied practices not based in linguistic or literary codes, we must assume, have no claims on meaning' (Taylor, 2003, p.25). In live art, Hayley Newman takes issue with the dominance of text, which can allow an artwork to partly overcome the challenges of ephemerality in turn allowing this artwork greater publicity and exposure than other works, which do not lend themselves to documentation in this way. It also allows artworks that are able to be distilled into a single text, primacy over other works (Newman, 2001, p.39). The focus on fixity in archival science is clearly challenged in a performance environment.

Theatre and performance studies have generally moved away from focusing on fixed texts and towards a broader study of performance and performativity (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, pp.44-46). Schechner explains that 'whatever is being studied is regarded as practices, events, and behaviors, not as "objects" or "things"' (Schechner, 2013, p.2). Theatre and performance studies can focus on this intangible performance rather than the fixity of objects because these fields seek 'to understand the kinds of knowledge that are located in the body' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, p.50). This knowledge that is passed through the body and practice, and often remains outside of formal archives,[63] in part results from the body being the location of performance and a person's behaviour being the 'object of study' of theatre and performance studies (Schechner, 2013, p.1). The documentation of performance, made up of physical or digital records, sits outside of the performer themselves, who is a repository of practice.

Taylor, in *The Archive and the Repertoire*, argues that performance cannot be documented because this knowledge is embodied (Taylor, 2003, p.22). Taylor makes a distinction between the actively constructed material representations of the 'archive' and 'the memory of things, invisible imprints of minds, bodies and spaces, that she terms the *repertoire*' (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.167). This distinction, she argues, is not one of '"true" versus "false,"' that is to say that the archive and the repertoire are not entirely opposed, and material in the repertoire can survive for longer than materials in an archive. Her argument considers the types of knowledges in performance and the 'many and mixed' methods of storing and transmitting them (Taylor, 2008, p.100). This distinction between the archive and the repertoire (in relation to performance more broadly and not specifically in relation to theatre) is a useful example of where performance theory and archival science are brought into dialogue with each other.

Taylor was involved in the establishment of the UNESCO convention for safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and has published on this work, bringing a performance studies perspective to the archive and museum sector (UNESCO, 2003). The convention aimed to provide a method of safeguarding ICH such as traditions and rituals and the then-Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO argued that a threefold approach was required: '(a)

[63] There are many other types of knowledge at play within the performing arts such as the tacit knowledge a person has from their training background or previous experience, which I consider in Area of overlap 3: transmission of knowledge (p.84).

put intangible heritage in its wider context; (b) translate intangible heritage into 'materiality'; and (c) support practitioners and the transmission of knowledge and skills' (Bouchenaki, 2004, p.9). Bouchenaki clearly states that ICH should be made material in order to be preserved. While this is in line with conventional archival science, this transfer of ephemeral work to an object is highly problematic for theatre and performance studies as, not only has it been widely argued that it is impossible to do so,[64] but it would also remove the context of the original work, rendering the resulting object meaningless. Theatre and performance studies scholars view knowledge as being located within people and between people and objects rather than located in fixed objects as is more generally the case with archival science.

While archival science has traditionally depended on the singular, fixed end result such as the prompt script or video recording of one performance of the production in order to establish authenticity, the Questioning paradigm, which is a move towards the acceptance of a multitude of sources and materials and a questioning of authenticity as a benchmark of best practice, encourages a move away from this theory. It suggests a shift towards a more adaptable and flexible model with a more diverse approach encouraging 'variability' (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.169). This thawing of traditional archival science suggests an alignment with theatre and performance studies, which could result in different sorts of fragments being kept from productions and a range of options for documentation applied across productions at the NT. I carry this concept of fragments into my practice as a solution driven by both fields.

3.3 Area of overlap 3: transmission of knowledge

The UNESCO convention also assists me in considering the third challenge to archival science, which relates to the transmission of knowledge. Taylor, when discussing the UNESCO conventions, notes that ICH is passed down from one generation to the next and that it does not belong to anyone in particular (Taylor, 2008, p.94). It is only by this continuing cycle that the knowledge can be passed on from one person to another and remain knowable. In this sense, knowledge transfer from a theatre and performance studies perspective is active and requires live transmission. In conventional archival science, however, knowledge is seen to be held within objects and can be transferred to people at any point across time periods, as the

[64] See Auslander (2006), Phelan (1993), Reason (2006) and Schneider (2011).

UNESCO advice shows. These objects are seen as passive and require interpretation for their contents and contexts to be understood. In the Questioning paradigm, the power is in the hands of the archivists as those responsible for placing value on records and interpreting them for users (Ridener, 2009, p.125). If performance can live on in immaterial traces, then a Questioning paradigm would propose that archivists must consider how these traces can be captured and held in relation to an archive (Abbott, Jones, Ross, 2009, p.168; Sutherland, 2015, p.18). The dichotomy, as discussed above, is between the actively constructed material representations of the 'archive' and 'the repertoire' (Taylor, 2003).

Looking specifically at performing arts, Marini discusses the many ways of capturing the memory of a production and recognises that performance knowledge can be transmitted through several methods, thus requiring the archivist to highlight the other types of sources available to users elsewhere (Marini, 2008, p.29). As highlighted in Chapter 1 Section 3.3 (p.63), there are several locations of 'unofficial' archives around the NT such as long-standing members of staff as well as books published on NT productions and staff experiences. Similarly, archivist and archival science scholar Kimberly Anderson calls for archivists to recognise records in all their forms and not just accept traditional paper-based archive materials. Rather than encouraging translation to materiality by record creators, she advocates instead for activity in identifying live practice, referring back to the record creators for access and appreciation of the event as a source of evidence for researchers (Anderson, 2013, p.362). In line with Anderson's work, a broader consideration of archives, one encompassing both traditional archive materials and immaterial traces, is required. This would ensure that researchers are accessing all relevant data and building as complete an idea of a performance or experience of a performance as possible.

Theatre academic and practitioner Ric Knowles' influential monograph *Reading the Material Theatre* supports a broad view of areas where knowledge can be held. Knowles developed a mode of performance analysis that considers the conditions for development and reception of the production. Knowles' premise is that meaning is produced 'in the theatre as a negotiation at the intersection of three shifting and mutually constitutive poles: performance; conditions of production; and conditions of reception' (Knowles, 2004, p.3). Writing in 2004, Knowles states that most previous research in performance analysis had focused on one corner of this triangle:

performance, specifically the performance text, and neglected the important contributions that the context of production and reception make to the final production. In the 20 years since Knowles published this work, these areas have become more central within performance analysis and this perspective has become more standard.[65] For this area of overlap, I focus on how the context of production can be used to gain an understanding of what knowledges are at play during the development period.

Knowles takes 'the conditions of production' to refer to everything that impacts on the development of the production. These can be tangible issues such as the architecture of the rehearsal or theatrical space or related to how the production is supported such as the funding sources or the political leanings of the production company. Understanding this information and its impact on the development process provides context for the production. To take the Tarragon Theatre, in Toronto, Canada, as an example, this theatre is focused on new work and runs a playwright development programme. While Tarragon representatives claim that these playwrights have 'complete freedom', it seems that most of them conform to 'house style' (Knowles, 2004, p.141) demonstrating how the parent organisation can impact on the work of the artistic team. Knowledge of what influence the theatre may have on the artistic team is useful for researchers to understand how decisions are made during the development process and who contributed to them.

The context of production also includes intangible issues such as the training background of the company with whom they have worked before and whose work they have been following. I include the casting process of actors and hiring process of the artistic team in my research to understand how the NT sources these people and develops relationships with them. This knowledge, developed through years of practice by each person within the company, plays a significant role in the development of the production. It will contribute to the direction in which the production goes and impact on decisions that are made in the room. Knowles comments that it is important for everyone involved in the development of a production to appreciate, acknowledge and confront the material conditions within which they work if they

[65] For example: collaborative nature of production (McEvoy and McHugh, 2016); audiences and reception (Reason and Sedgman, 2015; Sedgman, 2019); performer training (Matthews, 2012); theatre space (McAuley, 2012a).

wish their work to be 'culturally productive rather than simply reproductive' (Knowles, 2004, p.128). An awareness of these material conditions, the knowledges at play and the societal provenance of the materials will provide a more rounded impression of the production for a researcher. I focus on capturing and evidencing these material conditions when immediately pertinent to *TTSCD* but a wider review of how the NT Archive captures organisation-wide issues such as funding, architecture and political leaning lies outside the scope of this thesis.

These contemporary conversations demonstrate the different perspectives surrounding the central concept of archiving the ephemeral and allow for experimentation with new methods of archiving the development process. An interdisciplinary approach, encompassing these discussions around the archival science fundamentals of authenticity and provenance, fixity of materials and transmission of knowledge, brings these fields into conversation with each other and is the starting point for my practice. Interdisciplinarity is a prerequisite for archivists in terms of understanding the institution in which they are situated (Shilton and Srinivasan, 2007, p.93) and, specifically in the arts, they require understanding of the disciplines and fields relevant to the creators and users of these records to catalogue them and make them accessible (Marini, 2007, p.26; 2024, p.578). This is a departure from traditional archival theory, described by Ridener as a shift from 'Jenkinson's passive keeper of records, to Schellenberg's administrative records manager, and now, in the contemporary paradigm, to the active, intellectually engaged, and challenging creator and custodian of cultural memory' (Ridener, 2009, p.130). Using this theoretical basis, I experiment with the concept of an active archivist and archiving as a creative practice by physically inserting myself, as an archivist, into the theatrical process. I need to understand practitioners' approach to archiving, their motivations, and the challenges, to support them and collaborate with them to archive their practice. To explore further how practitioners might approach archiving their own work, the next section focuses on how artists document their own work to consider where an archivist could add value to this process.

4 Practice of archiving by theatre and performance practitioners

While live artists often document their work, they are not bound by the same archival science restrictions as archivists. As a result, their documentation processes could reveal strategies

relevant to my practice and suitable to practitioners. I see the active role of artists in the documentation process connecting to the role of an active archivist, stepping outside of the confines of archival science and having a thorough knowledge of how and why records are created and by whom. The differing performance viewpoint and lack of mandate of a conventional archive means that artists as documenters would arguably create a different set of documentation to represent their work compared to an archivist. Artists would understand the artwork from the inside and place value on certain parts, unknown to or unappreciated by a conventional archivist. This section clarifies some of the differences between archiving and documentation before moving on to how documenting by live artists can provide alternative approaches for archivists. The section concludes with considerations for my practice, taking the documenting work of live artists into account.

Archiving and documenting are similar but distinct actions. 'Archiving,' as the present participle of 'archive,' is the act of storing something in an archive. According to the International Council on Archives (ICA), an archive contains 'the documentary by-product of human activity retained for their long-term value' and are contemporary records that are created as people or organisations go about their daily business (International Council on Archives, 2016a). The ICA states that archives should be seen as trusted resources and so should have the following qualities: authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability. The ICA stipulates that for an archive to be termed authentic and reliable, 'we need to preserve its context to understand how, why and who created it, its content and its format' (International Council on Archives, 2016a). Ideally, a qualified archivist will manage an archive, and they are responsible for ensuring the survival of the 'provenance' of the material. This means that the archivist maintains information about the creator of the materials to preserve the context of the materials' creation and ensure that the survival of the record is meaningful for future researchers. They are also responsible for keeping the 'original order,' which means maintaining the order used by the record creator so that links between records are kept and researchers can gain insights into how the creator carried out their activities. According to the ICA, the main aims of an archivist are to: create a coherent collection, have effective collection management, a coherent access programme and collaborate with others to make connections between collections allowing maximum opportunities for access and preservation (International Council on Archives, 2016b). The 'archiving' that I refer to in this thesis is the creation of an archive by an

archivist, who carries out appraisal, accessioning, cataloguing, preservation and providing access to the collection in line with the aims laid out by the ICA. 'Documenting,' by contrast, is the present participle of 'document,' which means to record something in writing, photograph, video or some other form. This can be carried out by anyone and is what artists and practitioners can do with their own work. An example from live art of the documentary form is Holly Revell's work with David Hoyle where she photographed his drag performance to create a record of it (Revell, 2017).

In this thesis, I use the distinction between archiving and documenting to separate the traditional activities of myself as archivist from those of practitioners while also looking for strategies that overlap. Practitioners will document their work in various formats, which provide authentic accounts of their first-hand experience. These records are then transferred to the NT Archive where the team appraise, accession, catalogue, preserve and make these records accessible. What I am exploring in this part of the research is what sort of documentation practitioners could be undertaking to transfer to an archive and whether I, as an active archivist, can assist or encourage them with documenting in a more representative way. Live art documentation allows me to study how practitioners document their work removed from the confines of archival science and consider how theatre practitioners may wish to document the development period of their productions and what motives they may have for doing so.

When I refer to 'live art', I am following Deirdre Heddon, a theatre studies scholar, in *Histories and Practices of Live Art*: 'A repeated claim for live art, ironically settled into a defining feature, is that it resists definition' (Heddon, 2012, p.1). The Live Art Development Agency, however, has attempted a narrower classification in their annual review:

> Live Art is a way of *thinking* about what art is, what it can do and where and how it can be experienced: drawing from performance art, visual art, theatre, and dance. Live art is driven by artists who are working across disciplines, contexts, and sites to open up new artistic models, new languages for the representation of ideas and identities, new ways of animating spaces and places, new approaches to engaging audiences and intervening in public life,

> and new strategies of creative resistance. (Live Art Development Agency, 2018, p.2)

This multidisciplinary artform is broad ranging in its artists and artworks with a multiplicity of interpretations and access points. Dominic Johnson, a performance and visual culture academic, provides a short history of the term 'live art' signaling it as a contested category and one that is now a self-sufficient sector of performance, multimedia and time-based arts (Johnson, 2012, pp.4-5). In this section I am looking at documentation practices around a few canonical live artists including Marina Abramović and Tehching Hsieh to think about how artists, in an artform that privileges the event and not for example, dramatic texts, control their own documentation and I use this to look for documentation inspiration.

Heddon states that the difficulty in writing about the history of live art is 'the fact that much of the earlier live work is undocumented (resisting documentation is one of live art's foundational stories). Personal reminiscences, as intangible as the work itself, become substitutes – witnessing, recounting, overhearing...' (Heddon, 2012, p.5). Documentation of performance is problematic, as feminist scholar Peggy Phelan noted with her now famous statement in 1993 that 'performance becomes itself through disappearance' thus suggesting that any attempts to document the work would be doomed to fail (Phelan, 1993, p.146). As a representation of an absence, documentation is one of the means, alongside methods such as gathering anecdotes and oral histories, through which an audience member who was not present at the artwork can understand what happened or what might have happened.

Whatever the reasons for documenting in live art there are challenges attached to the process beyond the ephemerality debate (see Section 3.2 p.82). I have found that the challenges to and reasons for documenting live art roughly correspond to the three areas of overlap between archival science and theatre and performance studies: authenticity and provenance, fixity of materials, and transmission of knowledge. I take each of these categories in turn and explore how artists within live art, who are not bound by the confines of archival science, have approached them and what I can learn for my practice.

While authenticity is of concern to archivists, the similar term 'honesty' comes up in terms of motivations for artists for documenting their work. Artists respond with practices such as Marina Abramović's recordings during *The House with the Ocean View* performance in 2003. Abramović inhabited three raised rooms for 12 days straight and called on documentation to demonstrate that she carried out the work in the way she had advertised: 'We had a camera on constantly as a witness. To me, honesty is important in a piece – that you're not cheating: I never cheat' (Abramović as cited in Heathfield and Glendinning, 2004, p.147). This 'honesty' relates directly to the authenticity of archival science and shows a desire to use documentation to evidence what has happened for those who were not present or provide proof of a hidden activity. Beyond documentation proving the authenticity of a particular piece of work, it can provide evidence of a practice more widely. The artist Holly Revell uses her work, documenting drag performance, to provide in her opinion 'good quality, honest documentation of queer culture […] ensuring its place in history' and 'helping to build the legacy of some things that are really important' (Revell, 2017, p.12; p.151). Revell's work documents the work of other artists and there is a strength in this dynamic, which enables her, as a fellow artist, to have an insider's point of view of queer performance and an intimacy with the performers of it (Revell, 2017, p.12). For these live artists, 'honesty' and 'authenticity' are drivers for documentation as proof or evidence of a practice or of the subject of that practice. This helps me to consider how I discuss documentation with theatre practitioners in terms of the benefits documentation could bring them and their practice.

Although documentation is used to prove the authenticity of a piece, the accuracy of documentation, in live art but also within the performing arts more broadly, is debated due to the ephemerality of the artform and the difficulty in fixing artworks in a way that allows documentation to be created. As discussed above with the UNESCO convention for safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (p.83), translating intangible heritage into materiality is problematic. The idea of fixing materials can change the original work or cause it to be seen from a different perspective. The artist Hayley Newman, when she was creating her work *Connotations – Performance Images 1994-1998* alongside other live art work, noticed that 'performances that were often chaotic or ad hoc events became formalised through documentary processes' (Newman, 2004, p.168). In *Connotations*, Newman played with the idea of fixity of artworks and explored the gap that she often felt between her memory of an

artwork and the photographic document of it, picking up on the ephemerality of live art and the multiplicity of the resulting records of a work (Heathfield and Glendinning, 2004, p.168). This translation of intangible heritage to materiality shows the tension between formal and informal capture of documentation.

Documentation can provide a different or alternative view of a work, as Newman shows, and this can be beneficial for the artist. This calls into question the authenticity of documentation and its evidentiary value though Newman at least can find alternative value in this documentation. For live art, as with theatre, with the transitory nature of the work itself and the multiplicity of meanings possible with each piece, documentation shows the process through which an artist developed the work, giving the audience further possibilities for interpretation as well as assisting artists with understanding how their work has become what it has. The artist Marilyn Arsem thanked her photographer, Michael Woolley, for his documentation, saying 'it is wonderful to see […] and understand what the viewers saw […]. While I know it from inside, I often don't fully understand a work until I see images' (Woolley, 2014, p.60). Arsem values the photography not only as a record of her piece but also as an alternative entry point to the work, which no longer exists due to its ephemerality. In a similar vein within the performing arts, the director, performer and teacher Nullo Facchini commented in an interview with Anna Lawaetz of the Royal Danish Library that 'At most of our shows, the audience makes written comments at the end. That, for me, is the best contribution to an understanding of the production. It is an incredibly intimate and detailed description of the audience's perceptions. Sometimes they describe things that I think 'that wasn't in the scene', but it must have transpired' (Lawaetz, 2024). The outside perspective of and documentation by the audience can provide an interpretation of the work that the artists did not see themselves, expanding their knowledge of the work and allowing alternative routes into understanding the work for others.

There can also be the issue of collecting too much material.[66] Documentation can struggle to avoid the 'boredom' of durational work (Abramović and Jones, 2012, p.564). Marina Abramović had difficulty documenting one of her long duration pieces, which resulted in 49 hours of footage showing that a comprehensive collection of materials is not necessarily accessible or

[66] I consider this in Chapter 3 Section 3.2 (p.118).

representative. In contrast to best practice within archival science and to the multiplicity argument above, this was cut down to 90 minutes which she felt was a better representation of the work (Abramović and Jones, 2012, p.564). Similarly, Tehching Hsieh's work, *Time Piece*, was a year in length but the film made as part of the documentation is only six minutes long featuring a frame per hour of his year. This sped up film demonstrates the passing of time without the associated monotony and time passing is marked only by the growth of Hsieh's hair which he shaved at the beginning of the project for this very purpose. This rather pragmatic approach demonstrates the flexibility required when documenting live art and the abandonment of materials in their authentic and fixed form. I bear this in mind when working between archival science and practitioners' practice where pragmatism and flexibility may allow me to document and archive performances in a way the NT has not tried before. Similarly to Sant in Section 3.1 of this chapter (p.79), McAuley notes that recording a whole rehearsal period, while exhaustive, creates the issue of too many hours of footage to go through and the idea of editing introduces its own problems of bias (McAuley, 1998, p.76). McAuley, from a research perspective, and Abramović and Tsieh, as artists, demonstrate some of the issues of video documentation, which I consider when planning my practice in the next chapter. The flexibility shown by Abramović and Tsieh in their documentation has not traditionally been associated with archives, where the authoritative and fixed source of the unedited video recording is given primacy.

Artist-led documentation can include reflection on the process of documentation itself, which adds information and knowledge about their work to the archive. The documentation of Tehching Hsieh is created as part of the artwork itself and tends to have a political meaning. As an immigrant residing in the USA without the legal right to remain, Hsieh's work can be read as a commentary on the political environment in which he found himself living. The extensive documentation created during his work such as the statements, timecards and film from *Time Piece* (1980-1981) could be interpreted as commenting on the excessive bureaucratic requirements for documentation that he was experiencing. This piece speaks to the restrictions he felt upon his person and those felt by those allowed to view his work. His work, as Marina Abramović states, tended to have a 'legalistic' tone (Hsieh and Heathfield, 2015, p.356) with rules and regulations that he must follow, echoing the restrictive life he was living as an immigrant without a legal right to remain. It is both the artwork and the documentation that

has an overt message here, demonstrating an added purpose of documentation. This reflection on the documentation itself by the artist could suggest a similar approach both by myself as the archivist and by the practitioners involved, which could transmit more knowledge about the practice.

The experience of live artists documenting their work provides parallels to theatre practitioners and suggests how an active archivist can approach collaborative documentation. In the rest of this thesis, I reflect on the capacity of practitioners to create, develop or capture their work. In my experience, it can be difficult for practitioners to find the time to send materials to the NT Archive when they have completed a show and perhaps the flexibility and reflection that Abramović and Tsieh have shown in their documentation could be helpful in considering what methods there may be for capturing process that are not prohibitively time-consuming for practitioners. I also consider the active process of my own reflections on my collaboration with documentation and in what way I can document these. I consider the implications of practitioner involvement as Abramović and Tsieh were both actively involved in their own documentation and closely controlled what was documented, which can be seen as a form of canonisation. At the NT, practitioners may not wish to be involved in this process or could be involved to a lesser extent than Abramović and Tsieh. I identify workflows that can be put in place for documenting the work of practitioners with differing levels of interest and involvement in the documentation process. I consider how documentation can provide an alternative entry route to a work and how researchers can access and utilise this information. By looking at the documenting led by artists, removed from the confines of archival science, I can see reasons for and challenges to documentation that may be shared with practitioners at the NT.

5 Opportunities for an active archivist at the NT

To build new practices at the NT Archive in collaboration with practitioners, I explore the potential for active archiving at the NT. In the thesis Introduction I discussed the role of an archivist within an organisation and more specifically my role at the NT (p.16) and now I consider what an active archivist role could be within the NT and to what extent I can collaborate with practitioners in archiving their process.

The materials deposited in the NT Archive[67] are mostly related to the final production on stage and come to the NT Archive through existing workflows supported by departmental retention schedules.[68] As part of my role at the NT, I have improved these retention schedules over the past few years and increased the amount of content sent to the NT Archive through communication with the record creators. Often departments around the NT do not know who the archive users of their materials are so I can use my privileged access and experience of the NT Archive to share this information with practitioners around the NT. This helps them understand what the materials they produce are used for and this may result in the fine tuning of what materials are transferred to the NT Archive. One example is the Costume department, whose staff are responsible for creating costume bibles. I had a conversation with Costume department where I outlined what happens to the costume bibles when they arrive at the NT Archive: rehousing, cataloguing and opening to researchers. Once I had explained that it is costume design students who predominantly want to access the costume bibles in their final year of their studies to understand how to construct a bible, the team were very keen to ensure that the bibles sent over were in the best condition possible and were thorough representations of the costumes for that production. The Costume department will be looking to hire these students in a few years' time and so playing a part in their education will be beneficial to the NT in the future.

I have found that having an active relationship with the records creators and articulating to them why materials should be archived and how they are then used when they are in the NT Archive, has always resulted in great enthusiasm from the record creators resulting in more thorough records being transferred to the NT Archive. Being an archivist within a producing theatre, I have found that encouraging practitioners to consider archiving can be difficult if they do not fully understand the afterlives of the productions they work on or the benefits of archiving to themselves or to researchers in doing so. The turnover of projects at the NT is so high that finding time to ensure your paperwork or files are in order and transfer them to the

[67] See Appendix A for a detailed list of materials held at the NT Archive.
[68] Discussed in the thesis Introduction (p.26). Retention schedules are created in collaboration with departments and outline the records that they create, which ones should be transferred to the NT Archive, the timeframe for transfer and the purpose of archiving the records, whether for historical or legal reasons.

NT Archive can be difficult. Another challenge is that many of the practitioners are employed on a freelance basis and therefore are not contractually obliged to deposit any of their work with the NT Archive. This means that the materials may not be transferred to the NT Archive or, if they are, copyright may prevent the NT Archive team from sharing the materials widely. A major area for improvement here is in communication with practitioners. In an interview with a theatre practitioner, they noted that the NT Archive team should play a part in the freelancer inductions to the NT. If the existence of the NT Archive and the role it can play in the creative process was discussed or even flagged at the start of the creative process, then it could be much easier to establish a dialogue between archivist and practitioner. A challenge here is the capacity to do this on the part of the NT Archive team and on the restricted time of the practitioners, who are working intensively on the production to which they are attached. I would like to explore, however, how I can advocate for the NT Archive to practitioners when they join the NT and how I can highlight our potential to facilitate research as well as discuss how a production can be archived. I use the practice to explore the form that these conversations might take and discuss my findings and subsequent recommendations in the final two chapters of the thesis.

There has been one occasion during my time at the NT prior to this thesis when I was involved in the development of a New Work project. A project around Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* was run by the director, Lyndsey Turner at the New Work Department in 2016. The idea was that actors in their 20s-40s recorded the sections 'on tape' in the play now so that they could recall this material from the NT Archive in 30-50 years when they might be cast in the play as older actors. In this way, the tapes when played back in the future production, would truly contain the voices of their younger selves. I was asked to be involved in this project from planning through to completion as the NT Archive would be the storage place for these files and could also provide advice on using and preserving reel-to-reel machines and their outputs. The project team recorded the audio both on a reel-to-reel machine and digitally in case there are any issues in the future around playback of the analogue format. It was unusual and exciting for the NT Archive to be involved in this project from the beginning and be able to collaborate on a new piece of work. One of the challenges was ensuring that the project team allowed their work to unfold naturally and that this was then archived. The team had an admirable desire to ensure that the materials they were producing were suitable for the NT

Archive and there was a thin line between me advising on how best to name and deliver the files and me altering what files they were producing. At the time, I did not want to cause the practitioners to change their way of working: the traditional aim of the archivist is to capture records created in the process of the work rather than to encourage different records to be created. If I were to be part of a similar project today, I would approach it differently and be less strict in terms of keeping the processes of the practitioners separate from the needs of the NT Archive. As this thesis explores, there are benefits for an archive when an archivist collaborates with practitioners to help them to explore their documentation and perhaps improve, alter and ultimately increase what they are keeping. This does not necessarily have to impact on the practitioners' processes or ways of working.

More recently, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (p.68), I was able to experiment with the role of an active archivist during 2020-2022 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. I wanted to ensure that the NT Archive captured the decisions and events during this period as well as experiences of staff, and I embarked on several projects to capture staff voices and responses. The existing workflows at the NT Archive ensured that materials continued to be sent that would be of relevance, such as Board minutes, strategic planning documents and press releases. What was missing from these papers was the decision-making processes, who made those decisions and what other options were available. The personal dimension was also missing, which could give a more multi-faceted account of how the NT managed its staff and budget throughout this period. During 2020 and 2021, while the theatre was closed and staff were experiencing pay cuts, furlough, and going through a redundancy process, I put out several calls to staff for materials which represented this time for them. Staff sent in materials such as photographs of their working from home set ups (Figure 4), diary entries, paintings they made of the building or photographs they had taken of the closed NT building.



Figure 4 Collage of photographs submitted by staff of their working from home set ups. Collage in the shape of the National Theatre building with concrete effect background by Cameron Slater, Artist Liaison Officer at the National Theatre. Deposited in the NT Archive in 2021.

One staff member made a cross stitch of the NT with embroidered quotes from company meetings and depicting the barrier tape that was erected around the NT building in 2020 (Figure 5). There were distinct types of materials donated, which I hope represent the mix of people who work for the NT and the wide range of experiences that our staff have had.

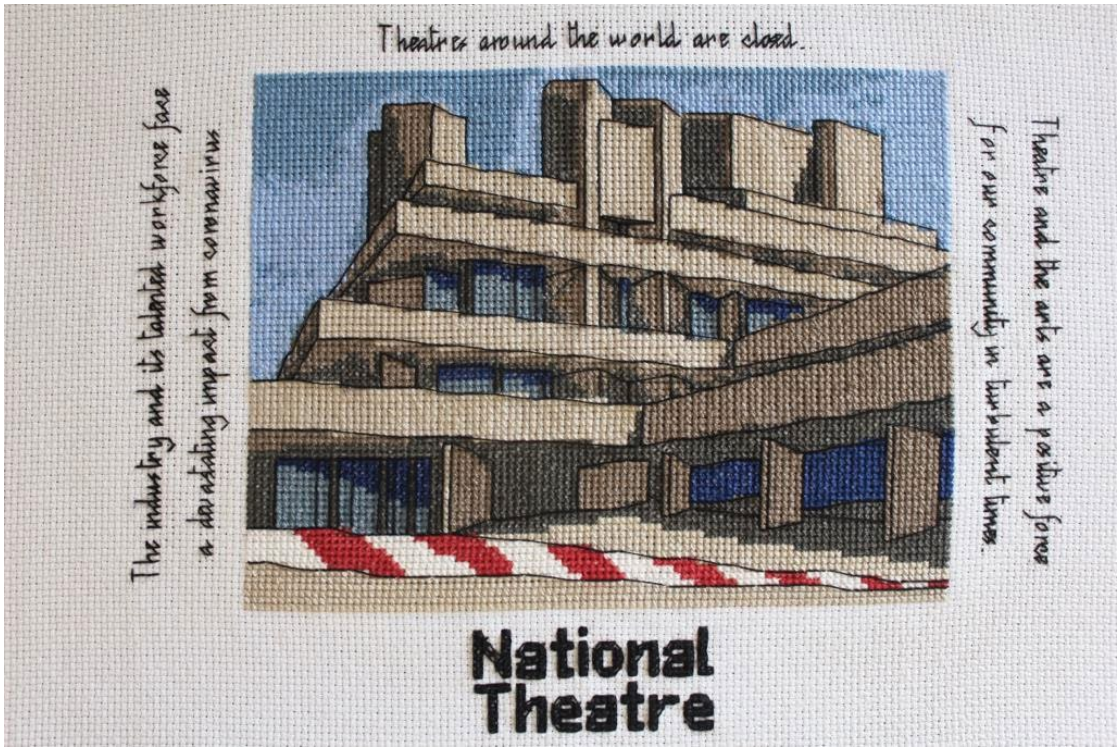


Figure 5 Cross-stitch by Frances Horner, Archive Assistant at the National Theatre. Deposited in the NT Archive in 2021.

The largest part of this project was the Covid-19 oral history project, which I began in December 2020 and ran through to Autumn 2022. This project aimed to capture the experiences of the Board, the Executive team, Senior Management team and various Heads of Department with 36 people interviewed. I organised and conducted these interviews with staff and placed a closure period of 30 years on the recordings so that participants could feel open and uninhibited in terms of what they could say in the interview. For me, this was the first time that I was able either to meet or to spend extensive time with these members of management and I really appreciated their enthusiasm to contribute to the NT Archive and the opportunity to capture their reflections, thoughts and anticipation for the future as the theatre industry began to reopen. This project, together with the gathering of staff ephemera, showed me that the active role of an archivist is not only possible within the NT, but it is welcomed. My ability to advocate internally for the NT Archive grew during this period, partly due to the new method of meeting via Microsoft Teams, rather than in person which meant that I was present

in a greater number of meetings,[69] and partly through the key role the NT Archive played in lockdown projects. For NT at Home,[70] for example, the NT Archive provided production recordings, photographs, production information and a fact-checking service; for Development, I provided several talks for donors on subjects ranging from periods of disruption to the NT in the past such as the strikes in the 1980s to the UK premiere of *Angels in America* in 1992; for the social media team, the NT Archive was the source of a lot of content while the theatres were dark such as photographs and anecdotes about historic productions to mark anniversaries, birthdays or events like International Nurses Day and Valentine's Day. This position of the NT Archive within current projects, and contributing creatively to the collections, paved the way for an experiment of active archiving in collaboration with the practitioners that create work for our stages.

As the NT emerged from the pandemic, I wanted to continue this work of active archiving and viewing this as a creative practice, to explore how I could work actively with records creators to approach documenting as part of their creative process and not an extra burden at the end of the project. This engagement with records creators is similar to the participatory archive model. This model shows how primacy can be given to the record creators to increase the materials held within an archive rather than to the archivists or the users (Huvila, 2015, p.366). Archives constructed in this way are distinct from community archives, which tend to be held outside a traditional and institutional-based archive. As Greg Rolan, an archival science scholar researching participatory recordkeeping systems design and implementation, states, 'participatory' as a term is very vague and 'participatory archiving' does not have an agreed upon definition (Rolan, 2017, p.196). Rolan suggests that there is general consensus that participatory archiving relates to community submission and annotation of content and an acknowledgement of rights of multiple groups in records regardless of where they are stored or managed (Rolan, 2017, p.196). According to the Roadmap for Participatory Archiving in the US, participatory archiving projects are a collaboration between professional archivists, historians,

[69] The NT Archive is based at the NT Studio, not on the main NT site so attending meetings in person involves travelling between sites, which is not always possible.

[70] NT at Home was a free streaming service of NT Live and archive recordings on YouTube from April to July 2020 and is now a subscription service, which launched in December 2020 (https://www.ntathome.com/). This provides access to NT Live and archive recordings for viewers internationally. The first, free, service reached over 15 million viewers in 16 weeks.

and community members, who jointly aim to create a more inclusive archival record of a particular community or event and make it accessible through an established institutional repository (Roadmap for Participatory Archiving, no date). Archival science scholar Alexandra Eveleigh sees these projects as a move 'away from a mechanistic focus on strong archival leadership and hierarchically determined goals towards a new emphasis upon facilitation, dispersed community coordination and emergent design' (Eveleigh, 2016, p.222). A practical example of this work is seen with Laila Benhaida, an archivist for the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Centre in Manchester, who is trialing 'co-cataloguing' with community groups donating materials (Benhaida, 2021). She argues that this collaborative method of collecting and cataloguing, which builds on a close relationship between archivist and donor during the collection development phase, ensures that key information is not lost, and that trust is built between the donor and the archive. This not only increases the context and transparency of collections but also the potential for capturing previously tacit or embodied knowledge in the catalogue to whatever extent is possible.

While not a participatory archiving project as defined above, the University of Bristol Theatre Collection provides an example of collaborative work with an artist within the performing arts field. The Theatre Collection holds the archive of live artist Franko B and the archive team collaborated with the artist as part of their Wellcome Trust funded cataloguing project (University of Bristol Theatre Collection, 2020). Franko B provided insights into the creation and delivery of his work, which gave the archivists more context and nuance for the cataloguing phase that has resulted in a more valuable resource for researchers (Warren and Williams, 2020). As an example, Franko B could tell Theatre Collection staff that in advance of him starting a performance in a gallery, his team had sprayed the floor of the gallery with disinfectant so that the audience would smell this when they entered the space (Warren and Williams, 2024). The then project archivist, Sian Williams, could add this information to the catalogue as otherwise it would not be known. Williams audio recorded the conversations between herself, Franko B, and Julian Warren, Head of Theatre Collection at the University of Bristol. These recordings were predominantly for reference for her cataloguing work, but they resemble oral histories in the breadth of the material covered and the anecdotal and contextual information captured. I use these collaborative elements of the participatory archive model in my practice.

Working together with practitioners was key for this research and I interrogated this relationship and its potential with the theatre director Simon Godwin. We discussed the role of the NT Archive in the induction for practitioners working at the NT and how the NT Archive team could offer a research service not only highlighting useful materials in the NT collection but also suggesting which other archives could be of use and facilitating that research (Godwin, 2021). Viewing the NT Archive as a creative partner need not be limited to how the materials are collected but could also span the use of the archive materials in creating new work. I think this mindset shift would allow practitioners to be freer with how they document their work and have more ownership of the process. As this is a mindset shift, it will take time, but my practice afforded me the opportunity to work closely with practitioners/record creators and trial the idea of active archiving with them. This active archiving allowed me not only to select materials for the NT Archive but also let the practitioners prioritise materials for archiving too, giving them some autonomy and responsibility for the capture of their experiences on a production. I would further like to explore how I can shift the focus of what is archived, the collection strategy, and timeline for transfer, from the final production on stage to the development period. I want to consider how different an archive would look if the records from the development period were given equal weighting to the successfully mounted production on stage and represented in a similar way.

The collaborative process of collecting materials ensures that all major parties involved in the creative process are represented and feed into how the materials are being collected. This should also ensure that a broader, more representative, range of materials are included in the subsequent archive. I want to ensure that I am not only applying archival science to the materials collected but also respecting the way the work has been created and the ways in which researchers will want to use it.[71] Otherwise, I risk offending records creators or risk collecting materials that misrepresent the development period, which would then provide misleading information to researchers about the process.

[71] See Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44).

6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how a study of archival science, the practice of archiving, theatre and performance studies, and theatre and performance practice can be used together to interrogate the archiving process. Archivists need to be more active and engaged with practitioners to create an archive that encompasses creative process. To explore the active archivist role and collaborative engagement with practitioners, this chapter contextualised theatre archives using ideas from theatre and performance studies and demonstrated where archival science and theatre and performance studies can work together to create a new and more collaborative method of archiving. I use theatre and performance studies as a tool to broaden out archival science and embrace archiving as a creative practice and process rather than the archive being viewed only as a destination. I looked to live art for inspiration with its artist-led documentation showing how archivists can view both collections and records creators more holistically and approach a collaborative method of documenting.

In this chapter I introduced several ideas about and challenges to collaborating with practitioners, which I develop further in Chapter 3 where I outline my approach to the practice. I expand on the collaboration with practitioners in Chapter 4 and the Conclusions and Recommendations where I lay out my experience with practitioners on *TTSCD* and consider the replicability of my practice. This in turn leads to my reflection on the possibility of sustaining an active archivist role at the NT and the establishment of the NT Archive as a creative partner within the theatre.

Chapter 3 – Building a methodology through practice

1 Introduction[72]

The last two chapters have been concerned with what is collected within theatre archives – the practical problem that not everything can be collected – and the opportunities for embracing active archiving in response. I turn now to considering how I can build a methodology to create a more representative archive of performance while honouring principles from both theatre and performance studies and archival science. The concept of 'representativeness' of an archive is tackled in the archive sector as far back as the 1970s, as outlined in the thesis Introduction (p.9). Here I narrow my focus on representation to how it intersects with archives of performance.

Archivist Michael K. Organ discusses activist archiving and representative collecting, specifically in relation to what archivists term ephemera in archives. Ephemera are of particular importance in theatre archives where materials such as programmes and tickets, traditionally viewed as ephemeral due to the temporary nature of their primary intended use by people, can provide a lot of contextual value to an archive. Organ discusses the tendency for archivists not to collect or even to destroy ephemeral materials and states that 'Too much emphasis in archival collecting policies has been placed on the collection of purely administrative records. In most organisations these records form a mere fraction of the total produced and do not therefore truly represent the organisation and its operations' (Organ, 1987, p.109). Organ encourages a broader collection of materials to represent the full range of an organisation's activities even if these materials are traditionally termed ephemeral. This is supported in the theatre archive world by archivist Braden Cannon, who is equally interested in depicting the essence of performance in an archive as capturing materials representing the administrative side of the theatre in order to show different facets of the development of a production (Cannon, 2013, pp.36-37, 39). Cannon cites the archivists Kathryn Harvey and Michael Moosberger, who discuss what can be captured if holistic collecting is not possible: 'although archives may not capture the ephemeral nature of performance, production records such as

[72] Elements of this chapter have appeared in 'Creating a representative archive of performance practice at the National Theatre of Great Britain', *Archival Science* 24, 439-454 (Lee, 2024). Thank you to the anonymous peer reviewers and *Archival Science* editorial board for their feedback and support.

scripts, costumes, playbills, and especially maquettes...are extremely important...[in] attempting to reconstruct...the artistry of theatre' (Harvey and Moosberger, 2007, p.44). Harvey followed this up in 2012 with an impassioned article campaigning for an Association of Canadian Performing Arts Archivists and Curators: 'THEATRE ARCHIVES MUST DOCUMENT A REPRESENTATIVE CROSS-SECTION OF ACTIVITY in that sector: professional and amateur; theatre for children, youth, adult, senior […] They must also DOCUMENT THE RANGE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY that goes into mounting a single production, not to mention a whole season.' (Harvey, 2012, p.62, emphasis author's own). Organ, Cannon, Harvey and Moosberger demonstrate the necessary breadth of performing arts archives, encompassing the creative and business functions of the organisations ensuring that these elements of the process of the performing arts are archived. Their focus is not so much on the content that is captured, as on the elements of activity that are evidenced and represented in the archive and the importance of the role of the theatre archive in facilitating this.

As has been discussed already in this thesis, there are specific difficulties in archiving the performing arts such as the fixity of materials sought after by archival science. The previous chapter showed that the multitude of perspectives and voices within performance studies and an embracing of the Questioning paradigm can provide archival science with a potential avenue for development. Mike Pearson, a performance artist, and Michael Shanks, an archaeologist, comment in *Theatre Archaeology* that 'performance survives as a cluster of narratives' (Pearson and Shanks, 2001, p.57) and performance documentation specialist, Acatia Finbow, comments that these narratives allow 'the viewer to engage with a collection of possible narratives. Rather than suggesting a hierarchy of ways to encounter a performance moment, in which 'being there' is preferable, these approaches remain open to alternative, equally 'authentic' means of engagement' (Finbow, 2018, p.293).[73] A researcher can, therefore, engage with various aspects of documentation to get as close to the original performance as is possible without being present. This strategy is discussed by Jessica Santone in relation to artist-produced documentation projects such as *Seven Easy Pieces* by Marina Abramović*:* 'each document touches at its root the idea of the original, and then moves out from there, diverging

[73] For an example of a project where the focus was deliberately on capturing different dimensions, consider *Transformance*, a documentation project carried out in 2018 by the DARC collective. DARC is the Documentation Action Research Collective, which is an open resource for art documentation (Revell, no date).

in various ways, connecting to other documents, and producing an accumulation that is best understood collectively' (Santone, 2008, pp.150-151). Santone highlights that a multitude of sources have a multitude of authors and understanding the authorship of each fragment helps a researcher to appreciate the connection between the documentation and the original. Professor Minako Okamuro, Director of the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University, discussed this phenomenon using a 'donut metaphor' referring to a ring-shaped doughnut. Okamuro positions the performance, being ephemeral, in the hole in the centre and the archive and remaining materials scattered around the doughnut ring, clustered around an absent centre (Okamuro, 2024). These materials from all areas of the production can hint at what the centre would have been like but will never achieve its replication. Writing about the embodied and experiential nature of dance, Oke notes that archivists should 'include information across as many formats as possible' and emphasises the importance of context in such collections (Oke, 2017, p.208). This plethora of materials suggests the idea of fragments within an archive contributing to a researcher's impression of the whole performance. In order to capture these fragments, an archivist needs to adopt an active stance and engage collaboratively with those working on the productions whether that be NT staff or the artistic team.

Performing arts archivists, including at the NT, already embrace the multiplicity of performance creation by collecting materials from a variety of perspectives on a production in place of trying to represent the whole. What does not already happen at the NT, however, is an active engagement with the records creators, encompassing NT staff and members of the artistic teams, to understand: their role in the production, why they document in the way that they do, what they do not document, and what of their work should be coming to the NT Archive. In the practice that is elaborated over the next two chapters, I engage directly with NT staff and members of the artistic team of *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) *(TTSCD)* to identify how we can build a more representative collection and, importantly, understand the theatre-making process more fully. As Marini argues, archivists require an understanding of the disciplines and fields relevant to the creators and users of these records and the value of particular narratives and records to a community to catalogue them and make them accessible (Marini, 2007, p.26; 2024, p.13). I would argue that the archivists require this understanding to help them to gather the materials even before cataloguing and access come into play. My practice has

demonstrated how active archiving can be employed to better document a production in a sustainable and replicable way.

This chapter describes the extended case study of this thesis, in which I actively archived the development period of *TTSCD* to explore how archival science and theatre and performance studies can work together to create a more representative archive. The chapter outlines the practice undertaken and the underlying methods as suggested by rehearsal ethnography. I introduce *TTSCD* and explain how my practice was constructed, planned and approved by the NT and the production's artistic team. I also touch on another production, *Nye* (2024), which helped me to nuance parallel and embedded practice. Then I provide a chronological account of my practice, focusing on methodology and theories used throughout. The chapter ends with an account of the collection of materials for the NT Archive.

2 Planning the practice and my method of involvement

In order to experiment with the active archivist role, I needed to engage with the artistic team on a production. The New Work Department attached me to *TTSCD*, a play written by Beth Steel. The synopsis provided in marketing information by the NT is as follows:

> It's Sylvia and Marek's wedding and you're all invited.
>
> Over the course of a hot summer's day, a family gathers to welcome a newcomer into their midst. But as the vodka flows and dances are shared, passions boil over and the limits of love are tested.
>
> What happens when the happiest day of your life opens the door to a new, frightening and uncertain future? (National Theatre, 2024)

This production was directed by Bijan Sheibani, designed by Samal Blak, with lighting design by Paule Constable, sound design by Gareth Fry, movement direction by Aline David, and Stepan

Mysko von Schultze was the Staff Director. [74] It was presented at the Dorfman Theatre of the National Theatre between 31 January and 16 March 2024.

I was attached to this production from 2021,[75] two years before the play went into development with the New Work Department (NWD) in 2023. During this time, I looked to rehearsal ethnography for guidance on how to plan and manage my practice. Rehearsal ethnography offers some examples of practice that are relevant to the implementation of an active archivist. Psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut's concepts of experience-near and experience-distant, as adopted for anthropology by Clifford Geertz, outline two main options (Rossmanith, 2008, p.146). I use these terms in the same manner as Geertz, and distinguish an experience-near concept as that which 'an individual […] might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on' while an experience-distant is 'one which various types of specialists […] employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims' (Geertz, 1974, p.28). The experience-near concept requires the people involved in the process to be documenting their work while with experience-distant, an observer is responsible for documenting the work. Taking Geertz's distinction between experience-near and experience-distant, I wanted to consider different levels of active archiving within my practice where I needed to rely on practitioners to document their own work or to collaborate with me to document their work. I also needed to document what I had observed from outside of the practice. This led me to trialling a mix of parallel and embedded practice across the run of the production I was following.

There are multiple methods to capture activities in the rehearsal room, which could encapsulate some of the artistic background and experience sought after by researchers. At the NT, Robert Butler and Jonathan Croall were embedded with rehearsal and production periods to write *The National Theatre at Work* series (see Chapter 1 Section 3.3 (p.65)), which provided insights into the rehearsal processes and included interviews with the company. Alternatively, rehearsal narratives can be encouraged from cast and artistic teams in some circumstances, which comprise details of day-by-day activities and describe provisional decisions, which may

[74] The NT hires a staff director for every production, which is similar to an assistant director position, and is seen as a training role for a more junior director.
[75] Practical information on setting up the practice to be given in the next section, from p.113.

well be discarded in the long run. These narratives could capture how an actor prepares for the work of the day, what they are thinking about or which productions/projects they are drawing on in creating their character giving hints at the knowledge they use in the process. The extent to which cast, or artistic teams can have free reign when writing these narratives is unclear. The playwright and academic Cary M. Mazer discusses how these materials are becoming part of audience engagement content for theatres and often take the form of a blog that is provided online for audiences (Mazer, 2017, p.187). Narratives such as these are often required by the theatre or funded by sponsors of the theatre and so there is the potential for the practitioners not to feel free to create materials, but under pressure from theatre staff to portray a particular narrative to audiences. In this way, through these materials, theatre staff may be contributing to how the production is seen and interpreted, demonstrating Steichen's 'institutional dramaturgy' as mentioned in Chapter 1 Section 3.2 (p.17) (Steichen, 2011, p.446), rather than purely being written by a cast or artistic team member for their own purposes of documenting their experience. They can form part of the wider marketing campaign for a production which also consists of interviews, videos of rehearsals, photographs, programmes and posters and are 'a means of establishing and, to a certain extent, controlling the discourses through which they wish the theatre itself to be perceived' (Mazer, 2017, p.185). The context of the creation of these types of documents matters because they help researchers assess their meaning and interpret them in an informed manner.[76]

Another option is the retrospective account, which is written by cast or artistic team members after the production has ended with the benefit of hindsight. These can be written for a variety of reasons although this sort of account has not been solicited at the NT either in written or verbal format up to this point. Some theatre practitioners are very open to the idea of documenting their work after the fact and have published rehearsal books, diaries or notes or allowed others to do so. Practitioners have published rehearsal diaries written alongside the rehearsal period. For example, Max Stafford Clark and Katie Mitchell have published on directing techniques and process (Stafford Clark, 1990; Mitchell, 2008). There are also memoirs and autobiographies, such as those of Peter Brook, John Dexter and Judi Dench which are personal accounts of experiences involving productions written for public consumption (Dexter,

[76] These materials speak to the second area of research interest identified in Chapter 1 Section 3.2 (p.56): the role of marketing in audience reaction and reception of a production.

1992; Brook, 1999; Dench and O'Hea, 2023). Actors' accounts, such as Eileen Atkins', Adrian Lester's and Giles Terera's publications (Atkins, 2021; Lester, 2021; Terera, 2021), also provide an account of rehearsal and productions with Terera's journal being unusual in its deep focus on a specific production. All these retrospective accounts are written at different periods of time following a production by people holding different roles within the production and for a different purpose and audience resulting in a variety of uses for researchers.[77] Each of these should be studied within the context in which it was written and interpreted accordingly.

McAuley claims actors' accounts have a different sort of 'truth value' and a different role to play in the development of theoretical appreciation of the creative process involved (McAuley, 1998, p.81). Part of McAuley's argument here is that it is impossible for someone with a large artistic involvement in a production also to be the person responsible for observing and analysing it. She believes that observation is a full-time role in the room so the accounts of cast and artistic teams, whilst they provide valuable insights into the rehearsal process, cannot capture the whole process (McAuley, 1998, p.81). They can, though, in a similar way to the reflection in Hsieh's documentation discussed in Chapter 2 Section 4 (p.87), capture individual contributions and experiences and can elicit more detailed information from others in the process alongside them, than an observer would be able to do in a follow-up interview (McAuley, 2012, p.7). First-hand accounts from practitioners, written after the production has been completed, can offer insights into how characters were built from the perspective of the fully-fledged production but most probably only highlight how insights turned into final decisions and not explain the whole process of trial and error to arrive at that point. What I was keen to explore, however, was what an archivist might capture from the development and rehearsal period, with researcher requirements at the forefront of my mind throughout.

The manner of my engagement with *TTSCD* had to be carefully planned and negotiated with the artistic team and members of the NT staff such as the Director of New Work and Head of Producing.[78] This was to ensure that the people working on this production were aware of what I was researching and were comfortable with my level of involvement. The Director,

[77] For more discussion of such publications in relation to the NT, see Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44).
[78] The Head of Producing is responsible for managing the logistical and operational elements of a production such as budget and scheduling.

Sheibani, was ultimately the one who decided my level of access to the development period and rehearsals, allowing me to attend a sharing[79] and from technical rehearsals onwards. He also advised that I work with von Schultze (Staff Director) to capture information about what was happening in the development and rehearsal periods. NT staff were very supportive of my research and provided me with access and information when it was within their power. I worked with Steel and von Schultze throughout 2023 and 2024 to document their processes and gain insights into what was happening during the workshops and in rehearsals, which is detailed in Section 3 below (p.113). In this way, I was carrying out a parallel rather than embedded practice working alongside but not as part of the artistic process of developing the production. This approach speaks to both the experience-near concept outlined above as Steel and von Schultze were sharing their own documentation with me such as notes from workshops, script drafts and rehearsal diaries as well as experience-distant since I collected materials as observed from outside of the process.

As I was not able to observe workshops for *TTSCD*, I took the opportunity to shadow workshops of another production, *Nye* (2024), which were running concurrently, and I attended a few days of each of the June 2023 and October 2023 workshops. This embedded approach gave me the opportunity to nuance the differences between an embedded and a parallel practice. The director, Rufus Norris, explained to me how he runs workshops and what he was hoping to explore with the activities in the room on any given day. The writer, Tim Price, was open about his writing process and I could observe how he worked closely with Norris on redrafts. Steven Hoggett and Jess Williams of Frantic Assembly co-choreographed the production and were heavily involved in leading the workshops, which were based on movement development. These days allowed me to view Norris' process, look through his notebooks and storyboarding, interact with the artistic team including set and costume designers, music director and choreographers as well as get to know the actors/dancers cast for the workshops. This was more reminiscent of a fully embedded practice. Had I followed the development process of *Nye* instead of *TTSCD* I believe that an embedded practice would have been possible with much greater interaction with the cast and artistic team than was possible with *TTSCD*. The *Nye*

[79] A sharing is an opportunity for a workshop group to share what they have been working on during the workshop period with an invited audience usually of NT staff such as the Artistic Director and members of the Casting, Producing and New Work Departments and it usually comprises a readthrough of the script or short performance.

script, however, was commissioned in 2016 so it was in development three years before my PhD started and I would not have been able to follow the full development period of this play. My involvement with this production, however, did provide a very useful comparator point of contact for my practice.

This workshop experience highlighted the difference between an embedded and parallel practice. With *Nye*, I was able to ask the artistic team directly what certain things meant, why they were focusing on a particular area in the workshop, how the workshop would contribute to the larger development of the piece, and the role that collaboration played in script development etc. Not only could I ask these questions, but I could see the implementation and effects of the work throughout each day and week. This embedded practice was a chance for me to be educated on the work of each member of the artistic team. As an archivist, who is not a theatre practitioner, this was an invaluable opportunity for me to understand how each of the artistic team work together and get a sense of how a workshop could be run and the sorts of information and knowledges gained in the room. This learning informed the interview questions I posed to von Schultze and Steel throughout the *TTSCD* development and production periods. This experience also highlighted the different types of practice that may be possible for active archivists on other productions or in different circumstances where an embedded approach might be welcomed by the artistic team, as it was with the ReTAGS project discussed in Chapter 1 Section 2.4 (p.43). Alongside this is the concern for how an archivist can function within this setting and to what extent they are viewed as an outsider. Despite Batzofin's role being integral to the ReTAGS research project,[80] there are still challenges for an archivist without a theatrical background, suggesting that an archivist will face issues in a rehearsal space no matter how welcoming an artistic team might be.

In comparison to an embedded practice, my parallel practice on *TTSCD* afforded me more time to develop deeper relationships with NT staff across all departments working on the production and to gather materials from a broader range of activities than would have been possible on *Nye* due to capacity restraints. The parallel practice, due to this breadth of access, also proved to be less hierarchical in terms of the people whose materials were represented, and voices were heard. This parallel practice was also a more replicable and sustainable model compared

[80] As discussed in Batzofin (2024).

to an embedded one, but I valued this involvement with *Nye* and the perspective it gave me of the differences between parallel and embedded experience.

3 Stages of practice

As mentioned, I worked in both parallel and embedded ways with the *TTSCD* artistic team and NT staff from 2021 to 2024 and the following sections chronologically outline my methods and activities during that period, the theories and fields I was drawing on throughout, and the types of records I was capturing.

Even before commencing my thesis, I had been communicating with the NWD, which is based in the same building as the NT Archive. This was to ensure that they were aware of the project and could support my following of a production. I stayed in close contact with the NWD throughout my research and they monitored their slate of productions for a suitable project for my practice. The Covid-19 pandemic caused disruption to their scheduling and the matching of my practice with a suitable project. In conversation with Rachel Twigg, Head of Studio, we decided that it would be most beneficial for me to follow a new piece of writing as my PhD focus was on the development period of a production and a piece of new writing would be most likely to have a full development period. It was felt by the NWD that an adaptation or a revival of a historical piece such as a Shakespeare production might not receive the full workshop and sharing opportunities as a new piece of writing and so would not supply the best potential for my research. In Autumn 2021, Twigg, and Nina Steiger, Director of New Work,[81] suggested that I be attached to the writer in residence's (Steel's) project. Twigg and Steiger met with Steel to discuss this with her, and she was keen to be involved.

3.1 Development period (2020-2023)

Steel, as the writer in residence at the Studio from 2020, worked in the same building as me from September 2021, when we returned to working in the office after an easing of the Covid-19 restrictions, to January 2022, when she completed her residency. During that time, I had a

[81] The Director of New Work oversees all new work projects, managing the development and commission of new work and adaptations.

mix of formal and informal conversations with her. I captured photographs of Steel's writing desk and walls during her residency, which show some of the images that she was using as inspiration and also her plotting of the acts and scenes as she created the structure of the play. At this point I began a working spreadsheet that contained the same fields as the NT Archive cataloguing software to list the materials I was capturing. I collected the materials, all of which were digital, in a SharePoint folder.

I continued to stay in touch with Steel after the completion of the residency and before the workshop phase. Steel had not completed her script by the time she finished her residency and submitted a variety of drafts throughout 2023. My strong relationship with NWD was important for me to be forwarded on these scripts if Steel had forgotten to include me in the email chain. This production did not receive a reading[82] but went straight into the workshop phase as the play was green lit in April 2023. This meant that the play would be produced on a main NT stage and the Planning and Producing departments added it to a slot on the repertory chart. This is also the point at which the third and final payment was delivered to the writer.[83] This green-lit decision can happen at any stage and workshops can be held before or after this decision. Once a production is green-lit, other practitioners will begin to be attached to the project, which is a joint decision between the Director and the NT. Sheibani was appointed as Director before the script went into the workshop phase. Von Schultze (Staff Director) was attached for the workshop phase, which is unusual but resulted from Sheibani explicitly requesting this.

During the planning stage of my parallel practice in Spring 2023 I received feedback from the NWD on my practice plans. The team was concerned that I was expecting too much contact time with the artistic team and cast, who would be too busy with the creative process to work with me and advised that I adjust to a lower contact plan. I approached the Director to discuss my possible involvement with the development and rehearsal phases of *TTSCD* and Sheibani granted me access to a sharing and to technical rehearsals onwards. The lack of access to the workshopping and rehearsal phases shifted my practice planning from being an embedded to a

[82] This is unusual but probably because Rufus Norris (Artistic Director) had read the script and green lit the play before a reading was scheduled.
[83] The first payment is paid when the writer signs that they agree to the commission. The second is paid on receipt of the first draft of the script.

mostly parallel practice. While lighter touch involvement with the artistic team of the production was not my original intention, it resulted in a more sustainable and replicable scenario for future productions, which do not have a dedicated archivist working on documentation.

In the interests of a sustainable model for archiving I focused on capturing each draft of the script that Steel produced rather than tracking all edits to the script in a separate document. Steel delivered clearly defined drafts throughout 2023 but for writers who perhaps write in a more fluid way, such as the playwright Tim Price with whom I spoke about archiving scripts while in the *Nye* workshops, I would suggest capturing a version of the script at the start of a workshop and then the draft that resulted from the workshop. Price suggested that this shows the real impact that the workshops have on a play and even if it is not possible to archive many materials from the workshops themselves the edits to the script can help a researcher unpick what must have happened during the workshop.

Some members of the artistic team undertook a research trip to Mansfield the weekend before the first workshop. Sheibani, von Schultze, Steel and Samal Blak (Designer) spent the weekend visiting relevant shops, pubs and houses in the area where Steel grew up and that feature in the play. *TTSCD* then generated three workshops (June, July and October 2023) the first of which was focused on design and the other two on script development. I was invited to a sharing at the end of the July workshop where I watched a readthrough of the whole script by actors for the first time. Von Schultze shared his written notes from the artistic team's research trip to Mansfield in June 2023 as well as for the series of three workshops from July to October 2023. These notes act as summaries of the group's activities and major shifts during this development phase as well as demonstrate the collaborative and communal nature of the decision-making process. In an interview, von Schultze states that he usually writes these notes for the productions he is involved in both for his own use but also for sharing with the Director if requested. These notes fall into the experience-near category discussed above (p.108), as they included what von Schultze saw, felt, thought and contributed to the workshops (Geertz, 1974, p.28). Von Schultze did not agree for these workshop notes to be included in the NT Archive, and I discuss his reasoning in Chapter 4 Section 6 (p.158).

During this development period I also wanted to work with Steel and von Schultze to trial capturing their accounts of the process using the experience-near concept focusing on the path of interpretation and why certain decisions were taken. During the workshop phase, therefore, I interviewed von Schultze and Steel to get a sense of what they were focusing on, how the development was progressing, and what the next stages were for the script. These interviews were audio and video recorded via the Zoom platform and subsequently transcribed. The interviews covered questions relating to challenges, each person's specific areas of focus, what most excited them about the next stage, and what shifts in direction there may have been. This representative sample of two individuals from the artistic team was seen as manageable by the NWD.

I was keen to ensure that the NT Archive represented the breadth of people involved in the development period. The materials usually deposited at the NT Archive will contain the director's voice (in platform recordings, programme essays, etc.) and the company and stage management team's (through the annotated prompt script and rehearsal notes) but not always the experiences and voices of others in the team. As an example of a current shortcoming in the NT Archive, the cast involved in the workshops for productions at the NT are most commonly not subsequently cast in the production but they have contributed to the development of the production through their own backgrounds and experience and their activities in the workshop spaces. These collaborators are rarely, if ever, credited in the production programme nor do they appear in the archive materials around the production unless the development period is well documented. These people and their contributions should be captured so that their contributions are recognised and acknowledged in the NT Archive. The knowledge that each person brings with them into workshops has been developed through years of practice and plays a significant role in the development of the production.[84] It will contribute to the direction in which the production goes and impact on decisions that are made in the room. In 2018 there was a call by Equity, the performing arts and entertainment trade union, for actors and stage managers to be 'justly acknowledged and financially rewarded for the creative content and collective genius that [they] bring to a production' (Masso, 2018). By using the term 'genius,' Equity is demonstrating how they value the skills and knowledge that actors and stage managers bring to productions. This article cites the approach of Sally

[84] See Chapter 2 Section 3.3 (p.84) for discussion of transmission of knowledge in performance.

Cookson, who pays members of her companies royalties to mark their creative input throughout the development of her productions. This demonstrates the value that practitioners feel should be placed on contributions during the development phase and the importance of them being justly acknowledged for their work. In order to evidence who was involved and contributed to this period, I received all of the NWD files relating to the *TTSCD* workshop phase, which included scheduling and casting information. Casting information is usually only captured in the NT Archive for the final cast and artistic teams via the published programme, but for anyone involved in the development stages who do not feature in the final production, the materials held by the NWD are the only source of this information. These records also included lists of the props and costume that were requested for the workshop space as well as a recording of the sharing. The NWD record most sharings but will only edit and provide access when requested by the artistic team, which happened on this production.

During this development period, the records I tried to capture from the artistic team were focused on individual experiences and stories and how these are brought together to create a production. Through learning who was involved at different points of development, understanding the role their background plays in the development of a production, and hearing from some of the artistic team about their motivations and experiences in workshops, researchers can gain a fuller appreciation of the process. On a broader scale and taking the work of Knowles discussed in Chapter 2 Section 3.3 (p.85), these individual experiences should be considered alongside and in relation to the material conditions, which affect the decision making in the room and can benefit from knowledge about them such as funding, architecture of the theatre space, sponsorship of the production or political leanings of the producing organisation. This thesis focuses on documenting the development period of a specific production, and so documenting the material conditions of the National Theatre as an organisation falls outside the scope of this thesis. But these are areas for consideration as I move forward with the NT Archive, particularly as the NT transitions from Rufus Norris' artistic directorship to that of Indhu Rubasingham in 2025, which will inevitably bring with it a shift in outlook and ethos in the producing of new work. Other areas to explore could be around how the NT is funded as business models shift post-pandemic,[85] and as the new Labour government

[85] The NT published an industry-wide research report, *Scene Change*, focusing on performing arts business models in 2025 (Erskine Analysis and Intelligence Agency, 2025).

progress from their 2024 election. All these social, cultural and political factors will affect, whether directly or not, how work is produced at the NT and the NT Archive should be thinking about how to document the broad environment in which work is produced.

In parallel to the workshops at the NWD many of the NT teams were beginning to work on *TTSCD*. It was during this development phase, on 26 September 2023, that the *TTSCD* Microsoft Teams channel went live and began to be populated in earnest by teams across the NT. The first team to make use of their Teams channel was the Marketing department as it was during this development period before tickets go on sale that their teams begin focusing on the marketing of the production. The Marketing and Digital Media teams film promotional content including videos per production for use on social media and with this production, the short-form audio-visual content took the form of a concept trailer,[86] a model box film and a film more generally about the NWD[87] as well as still images taken for the poster and visual branding. The photography and trailer were captured before the production went into rehearsal which allowed the actors to meet before their first day of rehearsal. I have captured the feedback received from Rufus Norris (Artistic Director) and Alex Bayley (Chief Marketing Officer) to the proposed marketing campaign imagery. This is usually delivered verbally or by email, but the staff members involved forwarded me the correspondence to give context and insight into the final campaign images. For the NWD film, the Producer in Digital Media used my production timeline and photographs of Steel's office walls in her preparation for the NWD film which instantly shows the value and use of these collected fragments. These marketing assets were released at different times across the development and rehearsal periods and while the show was on stage, with the NWD film teaser and model box film only being released in March 2024 during the final week of the production.

3.2 Rehearsals (4 December 2023 – 23 January 2024)

I took a moment of reflection at the start of rehearsal to consider the materials that I intended to capture and that I already had from the Microsoft Teams channel. Prior to rehearsal, I had

[86] *Till The Stars Come Down*, Official Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJVbWefJ3Xs.
[87] *Till The Stars Come Down*, New Writing for the Stage: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmPM7Wj9fPc.

begun to capture all the materials relating to Marketing and Press as they were the teams that started populating the Teams channel first. This was administratively complicated as Teams does not have a simple export function and it became clear very quickly that this would not be a sustainable way to proceed neither for the practice nor for NT Archive staff moving forward, due to the volume of assets and communication. I continued to do this for the Marketing and Press teams alone and took the decision to leave the rest of the Teams content until I could discuss the materials with the relevant departments post-Press night and capture what should come to the NT Archive rather than all assets and discussion board activity.

As part of my parallel practice of accessing material from outside the rehearsal room, von Schultze provided rehearsal diaries for each week of rehearsals which the NT Archive usually receives. Staff directors are contractually required to write weekly diaries, and these form the basis for the education resource packs available on the NT website. These rehearsal diaries gave a detailed account of what was happening in the rehearsal room, which areas of the play were being developed and decisions that were made. In future I would like to explore how this could be introduced to the cast and artistic team of a production without making their workload unmanageable. It is not common to ask the company to contribute creatively to the documentation but does have precedent. During filming of *Romeo and Juliet* in the Lyttelton Studios[88] in 2021, for example, the Learning department tasked the actor Fisayo Akinade with producing a short video diary of the process. He interviewed many of his fellow cast and documented this period in great detail. The depth of his work resulted in him being paid a fee on top of his contracted fee as an actor. Subsequent attempts by the Learning department to task a member of a cast with keeping a video diary have not been successful as either they did not get take up from the cast or the cast did not have capacity to undertake the filming. This, together with my experience of the NWD not encouraging extensive engagement with the cast as part of this practice, suggest that it is unlikely that archives can rely on this sort of creative input. Von Schultze's rehearsal diaries, alongside the rehearsal calls and notes from the Company and Stage Management team and Production meeting notes, give an overview of how the play was developing over the five-and-a-half-week period. I also carried out interviews with Steel and von Schultze concerning the rehearsal period.

[88] The Lyttelton Theatre was temporarily turned into the Lyttelton Studios during the Covid-19 pandemic for the filming of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Death of England: Face to Face*.

Meanwhile, the shift from embedded to parallel practice freed up my time to learn more about the work of the backstage teams in pulling the production together so that I could develop their record retention schedules. I observed how the NT departments worked on *TTSCD* and I was embedded with their meetings and fit-up and tech periods spanning July 2023 to January 2024. In particular I attended Construction, Technical and Production meetings speaking with each department involved, to study what they document of their involvement with *TTSCD* and where there may be gaps in documentation, such as the Scenic Construction activity tracker, videos of the flaming lantern demonstrations[89] and photographs of the materials displayed on the rehearsal room walls. For the latter, I asked the Company and Stage Manager, Ian Farmery, to photograph the walls of each of the two rehearsal rooms to show the materials that the company were referring to such as a timeline of life events for each character, floor plan of the Dorfman and set, and design mock-ups of the costumes and set. These give a sense of the types of materials that were important to the company for reference when working during rehearsal. In von Schultze's recorded interviews he describes the work behind constructing the timeline of each character and these photographs evidence their practical use. Von Schultze deposited the character fact file along with timelines of the action in the play and wider world events in the NT Archive.

I also, importantly, identified where decisions were made, or integral discussions had, that were purely verbal and not documented in any way, such as between workshop teams or the Designer and the Armoury team regarding the flaming lantern design. I worked closely with the Production Manager, Chris Hay, and Deputy Production Manager, Kate Jones, to understand these processes better and gain their insights into where the *TTSCD* process may differ from other productions they have worked on. I added the materials produced by these departments to the spreadsheet and shared my learnings with the members of the NT Archive team responsible for the records management retention schedules across the organisation. In several circumstances there were extra materials to be sent to the NT Archive such as the audio description scripts from Access and production recordings made by the Sound and Video teams with the deputy stage manager audio track. There were also different methods for receiving materials such as the stage management reports which the NT Archive currently receive in a

[89] At the end of Act 3, a lantern is lit and released on stage, which floats up and explodes.

cumbersome Excel format but production and technical staff receive in a well-formatted email. The latter was a discovery made by chance while I was shadowing the stage management team on the production and Farmery showed me how he writes, sends and receives the stage management reports after each show.

I was able to discuss their work with staff members one to one so that I fully understood their documentation, its context and, therefore, consider its value to the NT Archive as part of the *TTSCD* materials. This required working with materials that represent different people, formats, or periods of the production. Prior to this practice I had limited experience of working with these teams even though every department had a form of retention schedule. These schedules were often developed through one or two meetings with the head of the department and did not involve meeting and working with team members individually. As I have only visited some workspaces as part of creating retention schedules this practice provided a much greater depth of understanding of the working practices and materials produced. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this resulted in collecting material more representative of every period of the production, relating to a broader range of people and of materials created.

I attended parts of the fit up, technical and dress rehearsal periods (16-23 January 2024). This was very useful in bringing the discussions from Construction, Technical and Production meetings to life and in identifying how the crew work together and with the artistic team. It was agreed in advance that I would not ask anything of the artistic team at this stage as this is such a pressured point in the process. I observed this period only and asked clarifying questions of Hay and Jones, as the production managers, particularly around why certain decisions were made, such as the priorities in each technical rehearsal or which documents they were using to keep track of tasks still to be undertaken by the crew.

During this period, it became very clear to me that I would be collecting a vast array of documents from a range of people and departments. This variety of materials demonstrates the need to move away from the common idea in archival science of there being one authoritative item as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 2 (p.71). For performance, the recording can be considered the authoritative item that is held in an archive and is often thought of as the only evidence an archive will hold of a production. This is problematic as, not only does this

devalue the other materials archived but also because the recording shows one particular view of a performance and none of the development process. I was motivated by the variety and richness of the materials I was gathering during the development and rehearsal process and encouraged that an active archivist can focus on creating a collection of materials even in fragmentary form.

3.3 Production run (24 January-16 March 2024)

While the different stages of the production were underway, I populated the spreadsheet listing materials and completed all the fields resulting in an interim catalogue with temporary reference numbers for all materials. I reflected on where the evidence of decision making came from my notes taken during meetings or from materials produced by different departments. I kept note of the potential workload for the NT Archive, if these methods become part of an integrated workflow and business-as-usual transfers and deposits in the NT Archive. This allows me to speak to the sustainability of each type of documentation in Chapter 4 Section 6 (p.154).

I captured all the press coverage of the production. Backstage photography has recently been commissioned by Marketing for productions such as *The Grapes of Wrath* (2024), *The Hot Wing King* (2024) and *Alterations* (2025) for use on social media platforms and in the press to promote the productions. I would like to extend this to every production to demonstrate the life and environment backstage to allow researchers an insight into this part of a production and, specifically, to provide useful backstage information for young people interested in the theatre sector for a future career while also being of use to the Marketing team during the run of the show. This is an active area for the Learning department who have used backstage video diaries and photographs in packs that have been sent out to schools to be used alongside watching and studying a production. For this production the Senior Marketing Manager, Ella Nettleton, explained that backstage photography was not possible as the cast were almost always on stage and did not have periods of waiting backstage or in their dressing rooms where these photographs are normally taken. The Social Media team tried to capture some content for the NT's social media channels by giving the cast a disposable camera to photograph the backstage life of the production on one evening. Unfortunately, the cast did not use the flash on the camera and so the resulting photographs were too dark to use on social media channels.

I have still received these photographs, which go some way to show the cast backstage even though the photographs are difficult to make out without a flash.

During previews the NT Archive normally receives the programme for the production directly from the printing company, from which the production information is entered into the performance database. I used the list of artistic team members and NT staff to ensure that I had not missed anyone in my documentation meetings. Those who were involved in the readings or workshop(s) who did not appear in the final production were not mentioned in the programme and so it is important to ensure that their names and workshop involvement are captured elsewhere in the archival record, namely in the NWD materials that have been transferred to me.

During the run, I kept in touch with the production in a variety of ways:

- reading the daily stage management reports,
- being looped into any production-related communications with von Schultze,
- being a member of the *TTSCD* Microsoft Teams channel,
- shadowing the running wardrobe team for an evening performance,
- shadowing the company and stage management team for an evening performance
- attending a touch tour,
- interviewing von Schultze to understand his work in more detail to gauge how the production was running post-Press night and adaptations made to the show for the NT at Home recording,[90]
- meeting with the NT staff who created materials around the production such as the Head of Publishing, the Head of Running Wardrobe,[91] and the Props Supervisor[92] to populate the materials spreadsheet and identify where there were extra materials that could be sent to the NT Archive or even created for this purpose.

[90] NT at Home is the NT's streaming service for the general public. Every production at the NT is recorded in some way, whether solely for the NT Archive, for NT Live or for the NT at Home service.
[91] The Head of Running Wardrobe manages the team of staff who dress the companies and maintain the costumes throughout the production run.
[92] The Props Supervisor is responsible for managing the construction, sourcing and maintenance of the props for a production.

I spoke with the Head of Running Wardrobe about the costume photographs that are now taken during a performance backstage and asked when this would be happening for *TTSCD.* My hope was to be able to augment these photographs with a commentary about when they were taken and at which scenes in the production. But due to the fast pace of this production these photographs could not be taken as usual but were taken in a more candid manner than the team would typically capture and added to the costume description documents. There is an opportunity to work with the Running Wardrobe team again on a different production to understand what context can be added to these photographs when they are taken during a performance.

Shortly after closing night, I contacted Sheibani, Blak, Aline David (Movement Director), Paule Constable (Lighting Designer) and Gareth Fry (Sound Designer) to ask if they would be willing to be interviewed by me and to discuss what documentation they have of their process. I had a phone call with David and an email exchange with Fry regarding their process and in response to my question around what documentation they created or kept from the productions they stated that they do not produce documentation as part of their work. I recorded an interview with Constable that provided insight into her work as a lighting designer and how she collaborates with NT Lighting team members. She suggested that I speak with the Lighting Programmer, Will Frost, who was then able to provide me with more information and documentation from an NT perspective. I did not have the opportunity to speak with Sheibani or Blak but a lot of the information from von Schultze, Steel, David and Constable as well as NT staff provide information on the process and roles of the Director and Designer on this production.

4 Collecting and cataloguing the materials

Towards the end of the run and post-closure I met with the various departments who worked on *TTSCD* to go through the records that they had created, clarify where they are stored, and what they are for in order that I would know which ones to transfer to the NT Archive.[93] Some

[93] I met with staff from these departments: Access; Casting; Company and Stage Management; Costume; Digital Media (covering NT at Home and short-form content); Lighting; Marketing (including Social Media and Graphic Design Studio); New Work; Press; Producing; Production Management; Production

departments did not use the *TTSCD* Microsoft Teams channel, so this was an invaluable process for locating all relevant records.

I briefed the NT Archive team to alert me when any materials relating to this production entered the NT Archive from any departments. I added these materials to my spreadsheet of materials with a tag to show that they were materials the NT Archive would have received anyway.

It was during this process that I also sorted the digital materials into 'NT Archive' and 'Private' folders on my SharePoint so that I could delineate between the materials that would be transferred to the NT Archive (in some cases pending permission from the creator) and what should be held in my own PhD project archive for personal research. The 'Private' materials include my own notes from meetings and correspondence about my practice. The 'NT Archive' materials are what I have collected such as photographs, social media post screenshots and minutes or have created, such as interviews and transcripts. My PhD-associated publications and talks form part of the public archive alongside the materials I have gathered for *TTSCD*.

I created folders for Steel and von Schultze containing the 'NT Archive' materials for which I believed their sign-off was required. This was due to their creative input such as the interviews and transcripts, script drafts and workshop notes. I created personalised spreadsheets listing the content with catalogue information such as date, extent and description with a column for them to comment on whether they give permission for the content to be added to the NT Archive. I gave Steel and von Schultze several weeks to feed back on the materials. Von Schultze asked for the workshop notes, an interview focusing on the readthrough and his notes from the readthrough not to be included in the NT Archive. I discuss his rationale for this in Chapter 4 Section 6 (p.158). He has given permission for the other interviews (with a few lines redacted), notes and rehearsal diaries to be included and open to researchers. Steel has given permission for all her materials to be included in the NT Archive and has redacted some lines from her interviews where she had spoken about sensitive issues such as casting decisions and the potential production transfer to the West End.

Sustainability; Props; Publishing; Running Wardrobe; Scenic Art; Scenic Construction; Sound and Video; Wigs, Hair and Make-Up; Workshops.

Once I had confirmed which materials I had permission to take into the NT Archive I began arranging the materials into a catalogue structure. I decided to create a separate collection in the NT Archive (Erin Lee PhD Archive (ELPA)) for the project encompassing my thesis documentation and the *TTSCD* materials. The main reason I did this was because I have collected far more materials for *TTSCD* than the NT Archive usually receives and cataloguing these in the main Royal National Theatre (RNT) collection would involve creating many new sub-series, which may not be populated with any further content from other productions. This separate collection allowed for a detailed description of the project at the top level to provide context for the materials. There would not be adequate opportunity within the RNT collection to explain the context for *TTSCD* having so many more records and so this could lead to a fragmented catalogue and a confusing experience for researchers.

I engaged creative archiving, as discussed in the thesis Introduction Section 3.1 (p.27), by experimenting with Craig's 'contextual envelope' (Craig, 2002, p.287). This involved adding information to the materials that came to the NT Archive, and I focused on those materials that were already created and archived as part of the standard archiving process such as rehearsal photographs and marketing videos. I used the experience-distant concept and my observer role as a frame through which to provide context to the materials captured and amplify them for researchers. The Marketing teams were very open about their processes and provided me with access to the photo and film shoots as well as meetings around planning the marketing and social media campaign that really helped me to identify which materials from this process can be contextualised and archived for the first time. I provided context such as for the rehearsal photographs where I connected the catalogue record for the photographs to the rehearsal call sheet which outlines the date and time of the photo shoot. The call sheet also details which part of the play the cast and artistic team were working on when the rehearsal photographs were taken. The rehearsal and production photograph records have also been linked to the photographer's name authority file, which is not something we have previously done at the NT Archive. This allows all the photographer's records to be connected and researched more holistically. The treatment of these records provides context for the researcher around the scenes portrayed in the photographs and what the cast and artistic team were working through in the room.

There are materials held in the collection for which I could give context which was not captured in the material itself and was a result of my involvement with the production. The Calm database does not have any specific fields for this information, but I felt that it could naturally sit within the description field if it was clearly highlighted as a staff member's addition. For contextual information I included a note in the description field of catalogue entries: 'Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: […].' This allowed me to add information from my personal experience of the production that would not otherwise be captured in the documentation. As an example, for the photo and film shoots for campaign imagery, I took notes from my observations of the process and used these for reference when cataloguing materials. For the second photoshoot I added the note: 'Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: this photoshoot was the first time all the cast had met, ahead of rehearsals starting on Monday 4 December 2023' (EL/4/4/4). By providing my name I am allowing accountability and traceability for anyone querying the note in the future. This contextual information allows an insight into the mindsets of those featured in the materials.

I finalised my interim catalogue and replaced the temporary reference numbers with the appropriate Calm reference numbers. I then uploaded the spreadsheet to Calm and linked every record to the production of *TTSCD* on the performance database, which had been created when the programme was received into the NT Archive. Despite the ELPA sitting separately to the main NT Archive catalogue the materials in the ELPA are linked to the *TTSCD* performance in the performance database aiding their findability. I have mentioned in the top-level description that researchers can contact me personally to ask more information about the project. Appendix B contains the catalogue for the Erin Lee PhD Archive.

5 Conclusion

The fields of theatre and performance studies, archival science and rehearsal ethnography have all provided structures, ideas and methods throughout this practice. These have afforded an opportunity to innovate within the confines of the NT, its Archive and artistic teams, for me to create a collaborative methodology with record creators from within the NT and the wider freelance community. My practice, both embedded and parallel, trialed active archiving in a

working environment. The shifting of my practice from embedded to parallel during the development phase afforded me greater opportunities to work with the backstage teams and understand their processes and documentation in a detailed way. This ensured that I was appraising and cataloguing materials in a much more informed manner than before. I am hopeful that there may still be opportunities for an archivist to explore further the opportunities and limitations of being embedded with a development period, as hinted at by my involvement with *Nye*. This is a yet unexplored area of research.

The next chapter looks at the materials collected in detail, draws on findings from user interviews and considers how these materials speak to representativeness. It also expands on references in this chapter to practitioner caution around archiving and how personal relationships with materials can impact on the efficacy of an active archivist. The next chapter also considers the sustainability and replicability of the approach to archiving described here and looks ahead to how this methodology can be developed and adopted at the NT and further afield.

Chapter 4 – Practice findings

1 Introduction

The active archiving practice with *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) *(TTSCD)* has led to over 1,500 assets being added to the NT Archive. Appendix B is the catalogue of materials downloaded from the Calm database. This covers all the materials I have collected and that have been transferred to the NT Archive up to and including March 2025. I refer to materials in this catalogue throughout this chapter by references to Appendix B.

As discussed in chapter 3, the concept of representation was a recurring theme throughout my research and four clear areas of representation are addressed through the practice. Firstly, all phases of a production should be represented in archive collections spanning development through rehearsal to when the production appears on stage. The development period is the least represented in the NT Archive and yet it is the area that researchers find most interesting as this is when a lot of the staging decisions are made and different ideas are trialed with varying degrees of success (see Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44) for key areas of interest for researchers). The second area of representation concerns the breadth of people working on a production. The materials usually deposited at the NT Archive will contain the director's voice and the company and stage management but not always the experiences and voices of others involved in the production. Thirdly, archive collections should be representative of the breadth of materials that are created during the course of a production. There are particular materials that are typically archived from a production, such as production recordings and photographs that only evidence specific members of the artistic team's inputs but others are not as represented e.g., the lighting and sound designers' work or that of the movement director. Their contributions can be evidenced through the production recording and photographs to an extent but their process and logistical information of how their designs are implemented are missing from the archive. Fourthly, the term 'archival representation' relates to the contextualisation of records and their accessibility for researchers (Yakel, 2003, p.2). The concept of 'representativeness' as related to how the materials are organised and described in the catalogue to represent their meaning and allow researchers to discover them is important to consider alongside the three areas above. Contextual information is crucial to maintaining

meaning alongside the materials whether this is provided by the archivist or record creator (see Chapter 2 Section 3.1 (p.79)).

In this chapter, I consider how the materials I have collected speak to each of the four areas of representation and create a broadly more representative archive. This is complemented by interviews I undertook with users of the NT Archive who identified the materials most useful to their research. I carried out these user interviews in a similar way to those at the beginning of my research: with people from the academic, practitioner and staff segments of the NT Archive audience (see Chapter 1 Section 2.2 (p.37)). I interviewed ten people, of whom four were people I interviewed in 2021 about their research interests. Two were archivists from organisations I spoke to as part of my international survey of theatre archives (discussed in Chapter 1 Section 2.4 (p.40)). The remaining four were researchers and staff I have more recently become acquainted with who are frequent users of archive content. I then reflect on my practice considering what is missing from the materials, which have been collected, issues around privacy and access to the process and resulting materials and the relationships between practitioners, the NT, and myself. I conclude by looking at how sustainable and replicable my proposed method of active archiving is as I will not be able to sustain my level of involvement with *TTSCD* across other productions.

2 Representing all periods of the production

All phases of a production should ideally be represented in archive collections, spanning development through rehearsal to when the production appears on stage. When discussing the focus of documentation of the production on stage McAuley commented that what the audience sees in the final production is 'the tip of a semiotic iceberg', only showing a small fraction of what was worked on and tried out during the development period (McAuley, 2008, p.285). In the film about the role the New Work Department (NWD) played in *TTSCD*, Nina Steiger (Director of New Work) used the same metaphor to describe the press night of the show: 'the tiny visible point on an iceberg that went back five years in the National Theatre and the New Work Department's relationship with this amazing playwright' (National Theatre, 2024g). This demonstrates the longevity and depth of the development period in comparison to what the audience witnesses on stage. The NWD is obviously aware that a final production

on stage illustrates a fraction of the work that goes into that production and this is promising for their understanding and willingness to document this development period in more detail for the NT Archive.

By actively collecting from all periods of the production it is possible to use the materials to look at the arc of an idea from the start of development and see how that grows and changes throughout the rehearsal phase and manifests in the production on stage. This aids an archivist in understanding the provenance of ideas and materials. To take an example: throughout the play there is the recurring theme of circles and cycles. In the interviews I carried out with Beth Steel (Writer) and Stepan Mysko von Schultze (Staff Director) they discussed the importance of circles and cycles at the beginning of the workshop phase in June 2023, with Steel describing the decision to make the wedding table round instead of the more traditional rectangle:

> And really early on Bijan [Sheibani, Director] and myself were talking about like he just text me one day and said about the table, you know the wedding table in Act 2. Does it have to be rectangle, or can it be circle? […] I'd never thought of it as circle. But when somebody says something like that, and he says because there's so many circles in the play. There's the circling of the wine glass that Pete does. There's the dance that happens in the play, the sort of planetary dance that they do. […] you kind of put it in your brain, and then you start to go…oh, my God, that's perfect. (National Theatre Archive, 2023d)

At this time, the artistic team were also considering whether the show should be staged in the round. The research trip notes detail a trip to Titchfield Park, which is an amphitheatre with the audience surrounding the stage in a semi-circle, and von Schultze notes that this was 'interesting to think of in relation to our interest in performing in the round / thrust' (National Theatre Archive, 2023j). A few months later, Samal Blak (Designer) had created a model where the stage was in the round with a revolve at the centre. Figure 6 below is a photograph of the set model showing the revolve (National Theatre Archive, 2023a).



Figure 6 EL/4/8/4 Set model, designer: Samal Blak.

In November 2023, in an interview I held with von Schultze, he discussed how the company was thinking about the revolve in the stage floor being lit up from below, as shown in Figure 6:

> […]having the ring of light as well in terms of, like, transitions when we explored the idea that maybe that in Act One when someone walks into the ring, that's when they walk into the living room. And like again, think about how they might move prior to them, having moved into that ring. (National Theatre Archive, 2023e)

And then, a few weeks later during the first week of rehearsal, in his rehearsal diaries that are transferred to the NT Archive as standard, von Schultze notes a further development of how actors can work with the ring of light:

> After playing with the scene for a while, we start to more consciously think about how we can use the ring in the centre of the space to physicalise the subtleties of the argument. Can Marek move outside of the circle when their argument begins to create some barrier between them? When they're arguing, what does it mean to leave that ring empty? Is there danger in that beacon of containment being briefly abandoned? (National Theatre Archive, 2023i)

During the rehearsal phase, the Marketing teams were developing the visual campaign for the production and the concept development document created by our graphic design studio in Figure 7 also shows the motif of circles (National Theatre Archive, 2023f).



Figure 7 EL/4/4/1 Excerpt from the concept development deck by Graphics Design Studio.

The Deputy Production Manager's notes discuss elements of the set build, which included a circular rain bar, rostra and lighting bar (National Theatre Archive, 2023h) to mirror the circular stage revolve.

Blak talked about the revolve at the centre of the set in one of the pieces of short-form content shared on social media where he discussed the round wedding table and how the artistic team decided on a 'Revolve for a practical reason but also a thematic reason [...] notion of being a wedding ring, a bull ring, a fighting space where you can have associations to a solar system

and a very cosmic feeling' (National Theatre Archive, 2024d). This 'In Scale' film is part of a new series of short-form content focusing on design and all short-form and long-form audio-visual materials are transferred to the NT Archive. You can see the circular wedding table in the production photographs (Figure 8), which are always archived alongside rehearsal photographs (National Theatre Archive, 2024j).



Figure 8 EL/4/4/8 Production photograph, photographer: Manuel Harlan.

The circular constructions by the back of house teams for the rain bar, lighting rig and LED strip lighting for the channel on the revolve (Figure 9) are shown in files from the Drawings department (National Theatre Archive, 2023b), which are transferred to the NT Archive via the Production Office. The audio description introductory notes for the audience also describe the circular performance space (National Theatre Archive, 2024b).

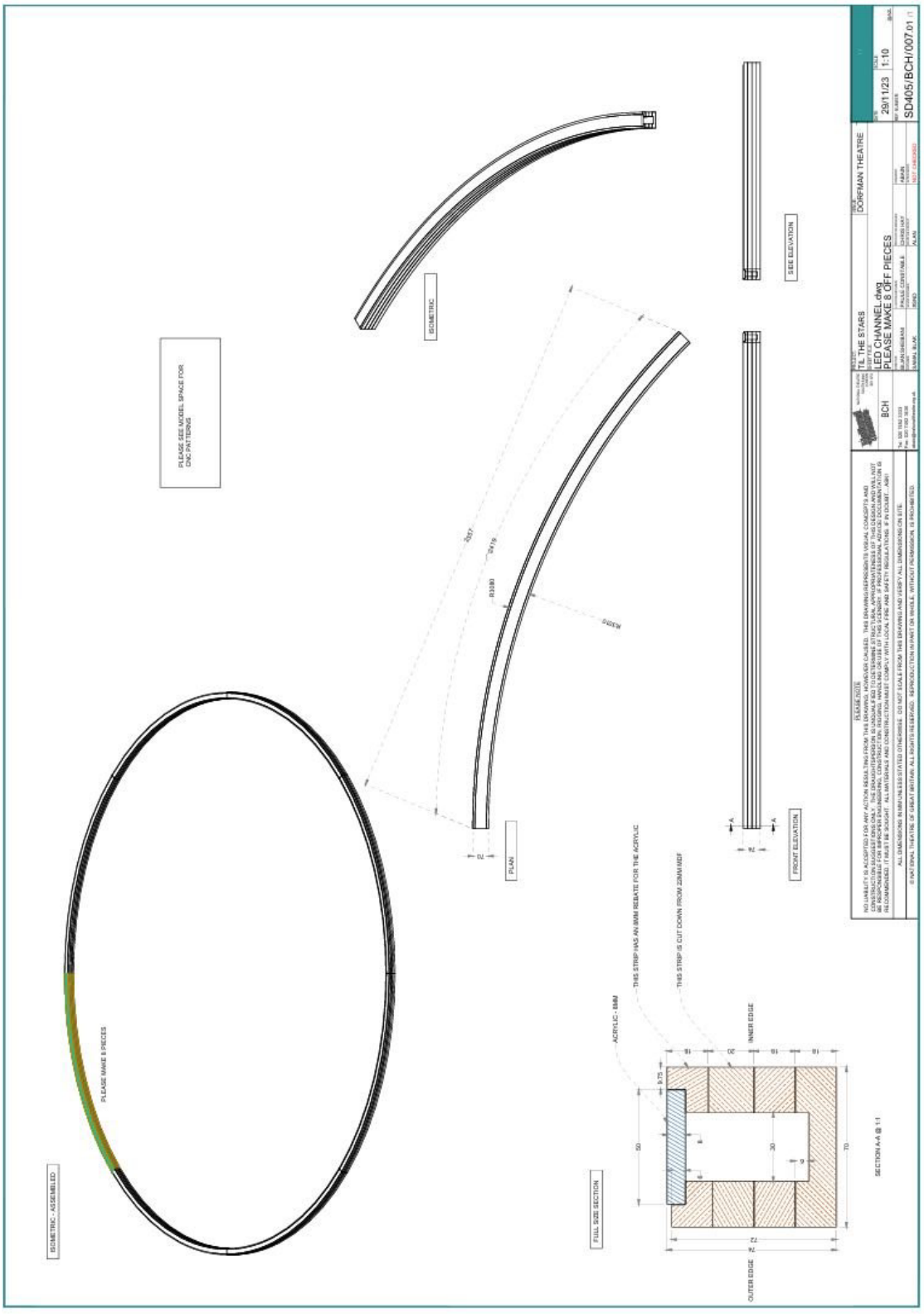


Figure 9 EL/4/8/5 LED channel drawing.

Figures 6 to 9 are visual examples of how a researcher can follow one thread through all phases of the production and understand better where a concept originated and how it has been developed throughout these periods. While some of the materials above are usually transferred to the NT Archive, others are not. The set photographs, concept decks from the Graphic Design Studio, production meeting notes and audio description introductory notes are usually created for productions but not transferred to the NT Archive. These are all listed in Appendix C for future collecting by the NT Archive.

This example of materials relating to the recurring theme of circles and cycles demonstrates the breadth of materials captured for *TTSCD* which is discussed in more detail in Section 4 below (p.145). These materials show how fragments can be used to piece together the performance, or to refer back to Okamuro's 'donut metaphor' from Chapter 3 Introduction (p.106), to give a sense of the absent doughnut centre. In the user interviews, Emily Garside, an LGBTQIA+ history and culture expert, discussed the value of not only being able to see the pre-production materials, which she stated were unusual to find in an archive, but also being able to get a sense of the process of a show progressing to stage. She referred specifically to the multiple script drafts and interviews with the Writer where she discusses her writing process (Garside, 2024). Abigail Rokison-Woodall, a Shakespeare scholar, has commented on the value of the script drafts and suggested that there would be value in collecting the first draft of a script sent to a theatre, the script that goes into workshops following some initial conversations with dramaturgs, the script that results from workshops, the rehearsal script and the prompt script version from press night (Rokison-Woodall, 2024). This ties with the discussion I had with Tim Price, the writer of *Nye*, about how many and which drafts of scripts would be good candidates for archiving. Consequently, specific script drafts have been included in Appendix C for future collecting (see Chapter 3 Section 3.1 (p.115)).

Another set of materials captured from the development period that users singled out were the photographs of Steel's office walls (Figures 10 and 11). I captured these images while Steel was a writer in residence and they detail images that she was inspired by as well as her mapping of the acts (National Theatre Archive, 2021).

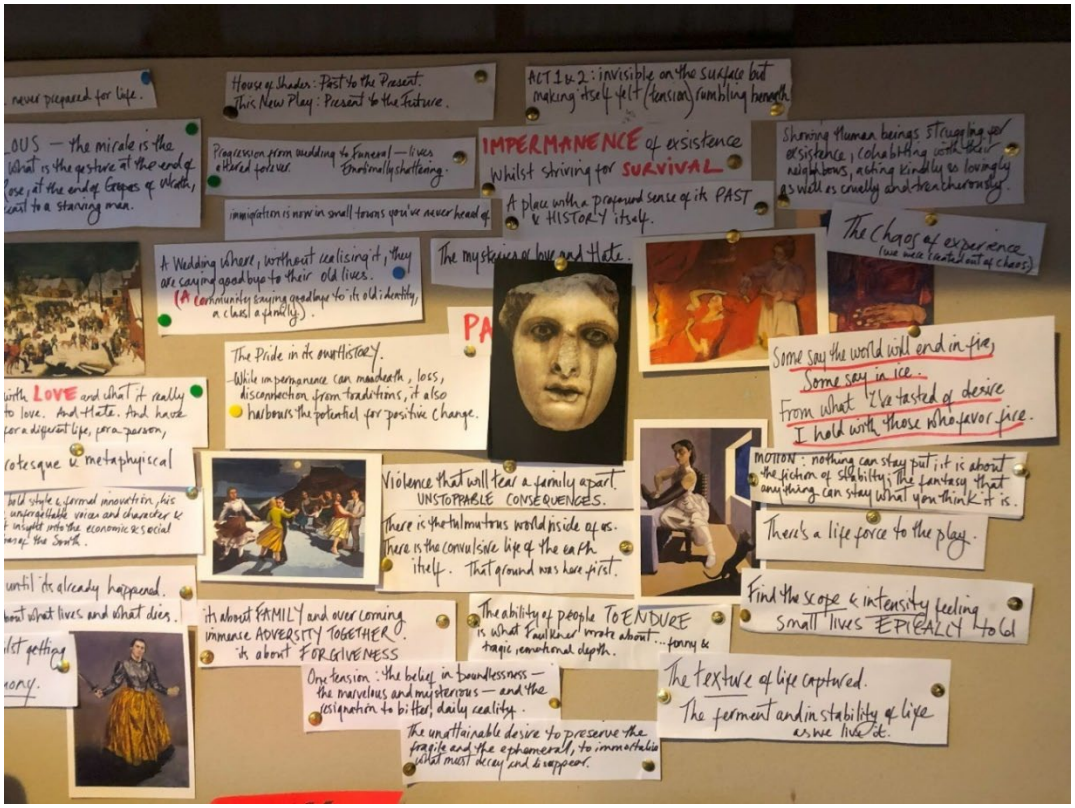


Figure 10 EL/4/2/1/4 Photographs of Beth Steel's office walls, photographer: Erin Lee.

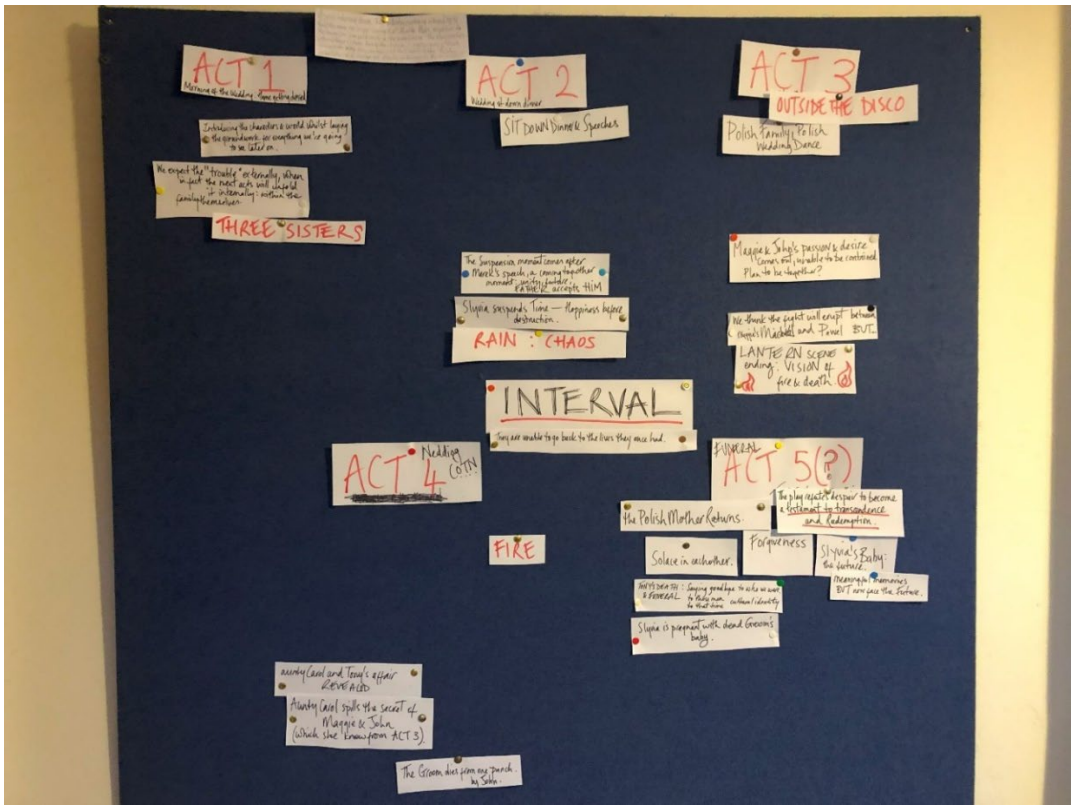


Figure 11 EL/4/2/1/4 Photographs of Beth Steel's office walls, photographer: Erin Lee.

Séimí Campbell, an Irish theatre director based in London, pointed out a quote from the Robert Frost poem *Fire and Ice* that he had seen in the photographs of Steel's office walls (Figure 10) and felt had stayed a key reference for Steel as she had continued to write (Campbell, 2024). As a director looking to work with new writers, he enjoyed the opportunity with these materials to understand how a writer constructs their pieces. These photographs were also used by the Digital Media department in the NWD film that was produced to highlight Steel's role as a writer in residence (National Theatre Archive, 2024g). The photographs provided some insight into her process while she was working at the NT Studio. As she was the writer in residence based at the NT Studio building it was straightforward for me to ask for access to her room and discuss her displays with her but if she had been working elsewhere, as the vast majority of writers do, this would not have been as possible.

An overarching comment from the interviews was about how holistic this collection of materials was in terms of periods of production and types of materials. Garside commented that the materials, as they were from various elements and fragments of the production, showed how pragmatic theatre sometimes has to be, which supports academic research where sometimes conclusions cannot be drawn from materials or conclusions have to be extrapolated (Garside, 2024). Jane Ball (formerly Deputy Head of Schools Engagement at the NT), Susie Ferguson (teacher and creative learning practitioner), Rianna Simons (Black Plays Archive Coordinator at the NT and playwright), Warren, and Garside all stated how important it was to understand the production in the context in which it was developed and performed (Ball, 2024; Ferguson, 2024; Simons, 2024; Warren, 2024). This was for various reasons: from helping school students to understand the variety of career paths available in a theatre and showing a writer what to expect from a large theatre institution when they are producing their work, to increasing the entry points to the materials and understanding theatre in the context of a corporate business. Several interviewees commented that they had not seen such a wide range of materials for a production in other archives and were excited by the potential of these materials for research (Garside, 2024; Jackson, 2024; Jump, 2024; Warren, 2024).

Further materials from the development period were captured from the NWD, whose staff look after the development of productions. The NWD staff transferred their records over to the NT

Archive for *TTSCD* (National Theatre Archive, 2023g). These materials include script drafts, though not all the drafts that I had received from Steel, workshop planning documents and a recording of the sharing. The planning documents included casting information, props requested in advance and information on the research trip to Mansfield. The recording of the sharing was added to these files because the recording was requested by the artistic team. In conversation with the New Work Technical Assistants I learned that recordings are usually made of sharings but they will only be edited and shared if requested by the artistic team. As these are the materials created by the NWD staff in the administration of the development period there are no materials from the artistic team.

The active archiving practice of this production has managed to capture some materials from the development period and the user interviews have shown how valuable these materials are deemed to be for future research. Being able to follow the growth of ideas through the development, rehearsal and production phases allows for an expanded understanding of the ideas at the core of the production revealing more of the relationship between process and product and how the artistic team functioned collaboratively. The number of people involved speaks to section 3 below (p.139) and the breadth of the materials gathered speaks to Section 4 below (p.145).

3 Representing the people involved

As many people as possible working on different elements of the production should ideally be represented in the NT Archive. A simple example of this is collecting information on the people involved in the workshop weeks, and materials with this information can be transferred from the NWD. These people may or may not be involved in the final production but only those who are involved in the final production will typically receive a credit in the programme. For *TTSCD*, the archived casting information and photo sheets from the NWD track who was involved at which stage (National Theatre Archive, 2023g).

Elsewhere in the collection of materials around *TTSCD*, I have captured work from a broader range of contributors. I interviewed Paule Constable (Lighting Designer) and Gareth Fry (Sound Designer) who would not usually have any contact with or contribution to the NT Archive. Both

practitioners are named practitioners on the AQA A-level Drama and Theatre syllabus and information on their process is valuable to, and often difficult to source, for students. Content about their process and work is therefore valuable to teachers, students and the NT Learning department. In Constable's interview she suggested that I speak with the Lighting Programmer, Will Frost, a member of the NT's Lighting team to understand more fully how he translates Constable's designs into the lighting programme (National Theatre Archive, 2024i). Frost was able to share detailed notes of the lighting for the production which the NT Archive would not otherwise have stored, such as the operator's guide, focus plots and the lighting show file (National Theatre Archive, 2024e). The archive of this production much better represents both the artistic team member Constable and the NT staff member Frost, highlighting the collaborative nature of this element of the production. Sophie Jump, a theatre designer, scenographer and senior lecturer, noted in my interview with her that the Constable interview was so useful because she discussed what her idea had been and the process of producing it on stage. Jump also noted how rare and valuable it was to find an account of a production from the lighting designer's perspective, a point which was also mentioned by half of the interviewees (Ball, 2024; Garside, 2024; Jackson, 2024; Jump, 2024; Nixon, 2024). They all felt that both this interview and the written notes from Fry helped to acknowledge more components of the artistic team and to give these roles a similar weighting to other roles in that team, such as the Writer and Director.

Simons commented on the breadth of people represented by the materials and how this portrays a temporary community that is established and embedded during the production process (Simons, 2024). She could understand more of the core ideas of the play from the perspectives of those involved and felt that the events of the play were better contextualised with this broad and encompassing perspective. She and Ball specifically discussed the value of understanding the writer's process whether that is through Steel's script drafts, interviews with her or her reflections on the research trip (Ball, 2024). These insights are valuable because they not only illustrate how the process of writing for the NT works but also because they provide a step-by-step guide to how the script was developed in response to workshops and dramaturgical inputs. Simons found this useful as she starts out on her writing career and Ball

could see how these materials could be used by the NT's New Views[94] candidates to understand more about a writer's process.

The work of Staff Director von Schultze was well documented (as shown under EL/4/2/4 in Appendix B (p.209)) and far more material than usual was transferred to the NT Archive. Typically, I would not have any contact with the staff director and their rehearsal diaries would be the only materials to be transferred. From the start of my practice, von Schultze was open to the idea of sharing his documentation with the NT Archive. In my first meeting with him, in June 2023, he was clear that he normally documents his process thoroughly and that he had done this on a previous production with the Director, Sheibani.[95] For *TTCSD*, von Schultze documented the development period by keeping written notes from the various workshops daily. He decided not to transfer his workshop notes to the NT Archive. When asked for his reasoning he provided this text:

> With regard to the notes from the workshops, it was my feeling that, without context, there was too much capacity for them to be misunderstood by readers. Since these notes were recorded by me, on the fly, in a space where innumerable ideas were being thrown out, the documents contain a fair degree of information which is not particularly reflective of our creative process: ideas which may have been intended as passing comments, or partially formed thoughts. On the page, these ideas take up as much space (and thereby might seem to hold as much weight) as more informative ideas. It is easy for us, as a creative team, to sift through these notes and identify which held (and continue to hold) weight — but an external reader cannot do the same without having been in the room. In other words, the notes were intended to jog the memories of the creative team, rather than to communicate new information to secondary readers. (von Schultze, 2024)

This gives an insight into how von Schultze views his materials and the detailed thought he has given to how researchers might experience these materials in the future. He picks up on the

[94] New Views is a playwriting competition for students aged 14-19 run by the National Theatre Learning department.
[95] Von Schultze was Sheibani's Assistant on *Sons of the Prophet* (2022), Hampstead Theatre.

importance of context and understanding how materials were created and used to appreciate their content fully and not misinterpret them. I would argue alongside this that there is a question of different perspectives and voices when reading materials from a staff director. Von Schultze is documenting what is happening in the workshop and rehearsal spaces, as directed by Sheibani, and so von Schultze's position in that hierarchical framework should be taken into consideration when interpreting the materials. Campbell has previously worked as a staff and associate director at the NT and commented that as a staff director you have to be the director's greatest ally and that there might be a concern around oversharing information in case the director might not want this. When discussing rehearsal diaries specifically, he commented that it is his voice narrating the events but that it is always in support of the director and, therefore, through the director's lens. He commented how interesting it was for him as someone who has held the staff director role to see how the rehearsal diaries sit within the NT Archive and in the context of the other production materials (Campbell, 2024). It would be useful to consider how to provide this high-level context to rehearsal diaries when agreeing with staff directors early in their contract what their rehearsal diaries should contain and what purpose they serve.

Having conversations with members of the artistic team early in their contract is important for establishing how to deposit materials and assign access conditions. Within the NT Archive, materials can be open or closed to the public. Closed materials tend to be too sensitive for release to the public, are usually restricted for 30 years and can only be accessed by researchers in accordance with a robust closed archive access policy (National Theatre Archive, 2024a).[96] This closure option can reassure depositors that their materials will only be accessible long after the relevant production is finished or in circumstances carefully considered by the Director of Communications and Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive of the NT. In relation to the materials not deposited by von Schultze in the paragraph above, I also need to consider that there could be materials that a director may deem confidential or not suitable for sharing with the public. A staff director may or may not know a director's view on materials such as these and so archivists need to have open and frank discussions about permissions to

[96] This policy outlines the protocol for providing access to closed materials, which involves a risk assessment compiled by the Head of Archive and passed to the Director of Communications and Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive of the NT for a decision.

deposit and available closure periods for content. For example, in conversations with von Schultze we discussed the need for Sheibani to be comfortable with the deposits that von Schultze was making in the NT Archive. In my role as Head of Archive, I have come across reticence among artistic team members who have questions about how staff at the NT Archive make materials available and how they credit the intellectual property owners. Usually, after a conversation about how the NT Archive makes materials accessible in the research room under full invigilation, they are willing to deposit their materials. Communication is key here to ensuring that the artistic team members are comfortable in depositing their work.

Although von Schultze did not share his workshop notes with the NT Archive he did deposit notes from the research trip to Mansfield, character fact files, timeline for the play and characters and a list of places included in the play, all listed in Appendix B under EL/4/2/4 (p.209). The materials I could transfer to the NT Archive, such as the rehearsal diaries, character fact files and timeline of events in the play give an insight into the Staff Director's process and the activities within the rehearsal room (National Theatre Archive, 2023i; 2023k). The insight and process driven content of these materials were overall deemed hugely valuable by the users interviewed.

One way I managed to bring in more voices and the sought-after first-hand accounts[97] to the NT Archive was through the interviews I undertook with members of the artistic team which were discussed extensively in the interviews with users. These were conducted over Zoom and the audio and video captured and transcribed. These interviews, as first-hand accounts of the creative process, lend authenticity to the collection, an important element in an archive as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 3.1 (p.79). I undertook one interview with Constable, five with Steel, and six with von Schultze (though he asked for one not be included in the NT Archive due to casting information being discussed). I developed a good relationship with these members of the artistic team over the course of the production and the resulting interviews were conversational and candid. I had previously carried out oral history interviews with Constable, in her role as an NT Associate, as part of the Covid-19 pandemic oral history project and so I had a strong existing relationship with her. I acknowledge the impact that I have had on the resulting archive of these interviews through my selection of the interviewees and the

[97] See Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44) for materials requested by researchers.

questions asked. Ferguson stated that she has not seen the level of openness in these interviews before in her archival research (Ferguson, 2024). She also commented on the informal nature of the interviews, which had a human element with Constable and Steel independently discussing their friendship. Ferguson can see this being used with school students where it is important that they understand the influences and connections between practitioners during the production process. There was value for her in hearing directly from the practitioners as this gives a depth of engagement and insight that prevent students from making sweeping statements or deducing something incorrect from limited materials.

Lucy Jackson, an academic who frequently uses the NT Archive, noted that the interviews felt off-the-cuff rather than the more formal marketing content that the NT is currently making with members of the artistic team (typically, the director and writer) in the talking head format (Jackson, 2024). Ball and Campbell also commented on the shortfalls of the current marketing content and how unfortunate it is that the NT is no longer staging platforms/talks (Ball, 2024; Campbell, 2024).[98] This marketing content is shorter in format than the interviews I captured (usually under five minutes compared to around 45 minutes to an hour) with short excerpts of cast and artistic team discussing the production.[99] The main focus of these videos is to promote the production and whet the appetite of potential audiences rather than to provide a detailed account of practitioners' practice. Ferguson felt that the marketing content created by the NT, generally and not specifically related to *TTSCD*, restricted her personal response to a production and that the interviews with Steel allow audience members to bring their own ideas to the production and interpret the themes in their own way (Ferguson, 2024). These interviews with their first-hand accounts speak to the finding in Chapter 1 Section 3 (p.44) that researchers are interested in first-hand narratives and the decision-making process. These interviews, however, will be difficult to replicate due to the time they took to capture and the need to foster a relationship with the artistic team. I also note here that these members of the artistic team were the only members who agreed to be interviewed, the others were asked but

[98] I have provided a write-up of feedback on short-form content and platforms from these user interviews at the request of the Director of Digital. The Digital Media team have quantitative analysis of this content but no qualitative information, which my research can provide.
[99] See recent marketing content for *Ballet Shoes* (2024) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AQjRdtQD9w, *Coriolanus* (2024) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzaEBX3GvRo, and *Alterations* (2025) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ie499aQLlFI.

did not opt in (Bijan Sheibani (Director), and Samal Blak (Designer)). I had two phone calls with Aline David (Movement Director), which were not recorded at her request, where I asked about her process and documentation and David confirmed that she does not create any documentation that could be transferred to the NT Archive (David, 2024).

A much broader range of people and their roles have been captured in the *TTSCD* materials covering development, rehearsal and production period. These materials help to demonstrate how knowledge is brought into and transmitted between the people involved in the production, the third area of overlap between archival science and theatre and performance studies discussed in Chapter 2 Section 3.3 (p.84). There will, however, be definite challenges moving forward as to how replicable this collecting will be which I discuss below (p.154) and in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter.

4 Representing the materials created

Archive collections should be representative of the breadth of materials that are created during the course of a production. I gathered over 1,500 assets for *TTSCD* which had been created by the artistic team and over 20 NT departments in more than 20 formats. A full catalogue of materials can be accessed in Appendix B. The breadth of types and sources of these materials speak to the necessity of collecting fragments relating to performance, as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 3.2 (p.82).

Together with these, there are several locations of 'unofficial' archives around the NT such as long-standing members of staff as well as books published on NT productions and staff experiences (see Chapter 1 Section 3.3 (p.63)). When a researcher request relates to the work of a freelance practitioner,[100] rather than a member of NT staff, it may not be as simple as just contacting the record creators. Members of the cast and artistic teams are freelance and not legally obliged to donate anything to the NT Archive or stay in contact. Alongside the lack of some of the work of freelancers, from my audit of the collections in the NT Archive, I know that there is also a lack of material that captures the work of the backstage teams and crews in

[100] According to a survey carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, 71% of the theatre workforce are freelance (Freelancers make theatre work, 2020).

developing the sets, props, costumes, wigs, staging effects etc. Again, their final work is shown in a production recording or in photographs but there is rarely a detailed account of the development of these items or processes. When discussing how to represent the development period (see Section 2 above (p.130)), a broader selection of materials is required than typically transferred to the NT Archive and many of these examples are mentioned above. Here I discuss how NT staff know which materials to send to the NT Archive and what extra materials I believe can be sent to the NT Archive as a result of my practice. These are detailed in Appendix C.

Materials are usually transferred to the NT Archive using a retention schedule as part of the NT's records management processes. These schedules are created by the NT Archive team in discussion with the heads of department and enacted by team administrators. In reality, few teams transfer all of the materials listed in the retention schedules in a timely manner or at all due to a variety of reasons such as staff turnover, lack of capacity and the speed at which ways of working shift within departments. During my active archiving practice with *TTSCD* I kept track of what materials were being created, to my knowledge, by each department related to *TTSCD* and noted where I felt that those materials should be transferred to the NT Archive. In order to convey this information to the NT Archive team who are constantly working on records management across the organisation I created Appendix C.[101] This spreadsheet outlines the materials that departments were meant to send from previously established retention schedules, what materials they were typically sending, the materials I captured during this practice and the materials that we can hope to capture moving forward. The spreadsheet is split into three sections: Administrative Teams such as Marketing, Music and New Work; Production and Technical Teams such as Costume, Scenic Art and Stage Management; and the Artistic Team covering individual roles. The NT Archive strives to hold retention schedules for all administrative, production and technical teams, but have not traditionally had any requirements or aims for collecting around the artistic team apart from the rehearsal diary from the staff director.

From the two columns labelled 'Existing retention schedule' and 'What departments send' we can see how the retention schedules were performing. Some teams such as Access, Armoury and Production Sustainability, did not have retention schedules and were not sending anything

[101] The contents of Appendix C will feed into the recommendations in the following chapter.

to the NT Archive. Other teams, such as Casting, Lighting and Sound and Video, had retention schedules but did not use them and transferred no materials to the NT Archive. Some departments were using their retention schedules well and materials flowed smoothly to the NT Archive, such as with Press, Stage Management and Digital Media.

The next two columns detail what I collected from the administrative, production and technical teams for *TTSCD*[102] and the materials that should be included in redrafted retention schedules. For the new retention schedules I have used colour-coding to denote whether the materials will be collected as they have always been (green), which account for 45% of the materials in the retention schedule, or will be additions to the NT Archive (yellow) for materials previously identified as for the NT Archive but not transferred, accounting for 14% of the materials in the retention schedule, and pink for entirely new materials, accounting for 41% of the materials in the retention schedule. This means that over half (55%) of the materials identified as required to be sent to the NT Archive in Appendix C will be new materials for the NT Archive.

For the materials in green, such as the production recordings from Digital Media, there may be some changes to how these are captured or to the number that are captured due to my practice and any subsequent feedback from users. Rokison-Woodall discussed the value of the different production recordings that I have captured (Rokison-Woodall, 2024). Typically, the NT Archive holds recordings from one night of a performance, usually captured towards the end of the run and these are popular with researchers, as discussed in Chapter 1 Section 3.1 (p.48). This can be an NT Live recording, NT at Home recording or archive recording. NT Archive recordings tend to have two versions: one is a wide-angle capture and the other is a three-camera edit. Jackson commented on the value of the wide-angle capture as this allows her to see what is happening on all areas of the stage and to decide where she wants to cast her gaze rather than a camera operator or director of photography making that decision for her (Jackson, 2024). It also shows how set pieces and props are moved on and off stage as well as what the costumes looked like. Recordings from different positions used together with prompt scripts can show how characters move across the stage and how staging and props are manoeuvered. Recordings from different performances during the run are also useful for

[102] The Appendix C spreadsheet refers to all materials that the NT Archive wishes to collect from each production-related department, which is a broader collecting aim than just for *TTSCD*.

viewing together to show how the production developed or changed from press night over several weeks or months. This could demonstrate what are habitual activities by the actors and what only happened on the night of the recording. For *TTSCD*, I have collected: the press night recording, a recording from the final performance taken from the temporary seating bank at the request of the director, a recording with an audio track of the Deputy Stage Manager (DSM) cueing the show and NT at Home recording (National Theatre Archive, 2024h; 2024k). The latter was captured by the Digital Media department and the others were recorded by the Sound and Video department.

The cells highlighted in yellow, making up 14% of materials in Appendix C, show materials that were already being made by departments but not transferred, such as the lighting show file containing the Vor recording. The Lighting department captured a Vor recording which is a recording of the production with an overlay of information onto the video feed in real time to show the lighting, sound and automation cues (National Theatre Archive, 2024e).[103] Several users commented on how useful this recording would be for those learning about elements of backstage work such as stage managers and technicians (Ball, 2024; Garside, 2024; Jackson, 2024; Rokison-Woodall, 2024). I spoke with a member of the Sound and Video team and Head of Company Management about the DSM audio recording mentioned above and have requested that this is added to the Vor recordings for future productions so that one recording will hold visual references for the cues as well as the audio track of the DSM calling the show. The Learning team have already shown interest in using that version of a recording for their Young Technicians course, which helps young people aged between 14 and 18 develop technical skills and discover routes into the industry.

The cells with pink colour highlight materials that the NT Archive was not aware were being made and were not listed in a previous retention schedule but will now be collected. These make up 41% of materials to be sent to the NT Archive with 80% of the materials expected from the artistic team falling into this category. As an example of materials in this category, the marketing campaign has been well documented including the concept meeting notes, proposal decks of visual branding and campaign wrap-up reports (National Theatre Archive, 2023f; 2024f). Jackson noted that these materials gave a strong sense of the theatre industry

[103] For more information on this software, visit the website: https://getvor.app/vor-desktop.

landscape and the story that the NT wanted to tell with this production while Ferguson noted that the key messages document was helpful for observing how NT staff apply the NT manifesto to their daily work (Ferguson, 2024; Jackson, 2024). Ball commented that the marketing materials would be useful for students of the BTEC Marketing for the Performing Arts and suggested that we look at developing some resources around this for students (Ball, 2024). Related to the marketing materials is an email exchange between Steel and Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, which covers their discussion of the title of the play (National Theatre Archive, 2023c). Several users commented on how unusual it was to read this and useful for understanding why Steel selected this title and what its connotations were for her (Campbell, 2024; Ferguson, 2024; Jackson, 2024; Simons, 2024). It also demonstrates the NT perspective on the role of the title in marketing a production. In a conversation with Ella Nettleton, Senior Marketing Manager with responsibility for the marketing of this production, she commented that the Marketing team can sometimes be consulted on title selection which she had not experienced at other theatres where she had worked. I was forwarded this title email exchange by Steel and so would not usually be privy to these conversations or to individuals' email exchanges. This is an element of collecting, therefore, that will not be replicable. This information could only be captured if it was discussed in a minuted meeting, very few of which I came across in my practice, or if a writer forwarded on their email exchanges to the NT Archive.

In general, the spreadsheet in Appendix C shows a broader range of materials being collected now across the administrative, production and technical teams than the NT Archive collected before. Over half (55%) of the materials will be new to the NT Archive and there is a mix of green, yellow and pink materials across the administrative, production and technical teams. Materials such as costings trackers, environmental impact report, lighting focus plots, props bible and food preparation notes and photographs help to represent the breadth of work backstage and are created by backstage staff as opposed to the artistic team. It is this breadth of materials that users picked up in interviews and that will support the work of the NT with its strategic focus on skills development and highlighting routes into the theatre sector for young people. Relatively low numbers of materials are typically transferred to the NT Archive from these teams but roughly in line with comparative archives, such as for example the University of Bristol Theatre Collection when taking in accruals to the Bristol Old Vic Archive, according to

Warren (Warren, 2024). The challenge I found with the production and technical teams was that a large proportion of their work is done informally, outside of meetings, and decisions are made verbally rather than written down. Chris Hay (Production Manager for *TTSCD*) often had informal face-to-face meetings or popped in on various departments during the working week to see how progress was going rather than having formal meetings. This not only meant that I missed out on a lot of these interactions but it also meant that there is no documentation of these discussions and decisions due to their dialogic nature which I reflect on in Section 6 below (p.154).

In the section for the artistic team in Appendix C I have listed the materials that I have collected for *TTSCD* which is extensive in comparison to the materials that I believe will come through to the NT Archive in a future retention schedule informed by this research. This is because some of these materials were captured in email chains, through informal conversations or from me being in the room with the artistic team. The interviews with members of the artistic team will not be replicable due to the level of involvement required from me and from the artistic team. There are some materials, however, that the NT Archive will hope to receive such as script drafts from the writer as discussed above (p.136) and in Chapter 3 Section 3.1 (p.115). Several users commented on the value of having all script drafts to evidence the different phases of development. The NT Archive usually holds the press night version of the script and sometimes the first submitted draft. For *TTSCD* there are all script drafts as well as notes from Steel about her progress. These drafts along with Steel's interviews will allow researchers to piece together where cuts had been made and gain an insight into the rationale that governed decision-making. Versions of the script created by various departments have been or will be archived such as the prompt script with the Deputy Stage Manager's annotations[104] and the Sound department's marked up copy of the script used on the sound desk (National Theatre Archive, 2024k).

A broader range of materials has been kept, as evidenced by Appendix C, speaking to Okamuro's 'donut metaphor' discussed in Chapter 3 Introduction (p.106) and the fragments of a production hinting at the absent doughnut centre. These materials relate to all periods of

[104] The *TTSCD* prompt script has not yet been deposited with the NT Archive as the show is transferring to the Theatre Royal Haymarket in Summer 2025.

production and areas of the NT and go much further than normal in evidencing all the people involved in a production.

5 Archival representation of materials

The term 'archival representation' relates to the contextualisation of records and their accessibility for researchers (Yakel, 2003, p.2). It involves providing contextual information within records and signposting other related records allowing the archivist to connect related records while providing context for their creation and use. This is only possible if the archivist is active and collaborating with the practitioners and artistic teams involved to understand the context of the record creation. This context is crucial for ensuring the authenticity of materials and for facilitating the knowledge within the materials being transmitted to researchers. There are challenges to this contextual cataloguing in the performing arts as discussed elsewhere in the thesis (see Chapter 2 Section 5 (p.94) and Chapter 3 Section 4 (p.124)). Materials can too easily arrive at the NT Archive devoid of context or sit uncatalogued for many years, reducing the possibility of staff members or appropriate freelancers being available to assist an archivist with contextual information at the point of cataloguing.

As discussed in Chapter 2 Section 3.1 (p.79), respecting provenance and the context of record creation in the cataloguing process is key to ensuring that authentic records are kept from a production and that they can be located by researchers. Contextual information is crucial to maintaining meaning alongside the materials whether this is provided by the archivist or record creator. Harvey considers the 'human-artefact interaction' and how key the capture of this relationship is to archives moving forward, particularly in performing arts archives where there is a wide array of people involved in the process and formats being created, from the programming of lighting designs to the drafting of scripts and beyond (Harvey, 2012, p.63). From the perspective of archival practice, there is a challenge to maintaining these contextual links in a cataloguing system between materials that flow through all stages in the production and are created by different people and departments. Marini comments that archival description in the performing arts requires greater interrogation due to the specific needs of these archives, such as the depth of cataloguing which sometimes require item level description due to their collaborative creation, usually discouraged in archival description

(Marini, 2024, p.586). The international archive cataloguing standards do not support the cataloguing of a performance and its related materials. According to FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) and LRM (IFLA Library Reference Model), 'the performance itself is a shadow, only captured by what that performance leaves behind through objects, recordings, or similar' (Lee, 2018a, p.1).[105] These contextual links, therefore, are forgotten due to the limitations of the international standards and the mainstream cataloguing software available. They can also be lost due to the capacity of the archive to process new materials. At the NT Archive it is possible that years can elapse between materials being transferred and them being catalogued, meaning that any contextual information the archive team need to gain through correspondence with staff members or anecdotal accounts can be jeopardised.

Capturing and documenting this provenance was a challenge during the practice, but there were opportunities within the existing cataloguing process and structure to document provenance and ensure that context was held together with records from *TTSCD*. On two separate occasions, I had to return to the staff involved to ask for clarification on their records either due to unclear file naming or unusual formats. This helped me to decide what should come to the NT Archive and highlighted digital preservation issues where proprietary software has been used.

At the NT Archive specifically, the limitations of the existing archival database of Calm required problem solving to provide links between records, the related productions, roles, cast, and artistic team. A record is catalogued in one position within the hierarchical tree which is related to one particular department e.g., a prompt script created by the stage management department is catalogued under RNT/SM – Stage Management Department. If a record is created by someone working across two departments, however, there is no way of attaching a record to two locations within the hierarchical tree. This software limitation meant that I needed to select which series in the tree would be most suitable to catalogue the record and

[105] By 'performance,' Lee is referring to music, theatre and dance performances and looking at performance ephemera such as programmes, the relationship between performance and recordings and the interaction between performance document and performance-as-document. For further research on how library and archive databases can include performing arts documentation see Miller and Le Boeuf (2005), Skaug and Aalberg (2024).

then add a narrative description about the provenance. There are also limited fields in which to add contextual information but I can add generic fields to a record and allocate a purpose to those fields, such as for original file names or closure information. On the public version of the catalogue, named CalmView,[106] these generic fields can be renamed to something meaningful for researchers. These workarounds allowed me to add contextual information to records thus ensuring that a researcher is aware of related records throughout the catalogue. A possible way forward is to find a method for linking people and materials more clearly to each other as well as to the production in the Calm software, such as linking the photographer's name authority file to the catalogue entry for the rehearsal photographs. If we can connect people across the catalogue, then this would allow cross-searching and a greater understanding of how the artistic team and NT staff interacted with each other during the production phases. Developing the Calm software or cataloguing standards is out of scope for this thesis but is something that the NT Archive team will consider when drafting a request for proposals for a new cataloguing software in 2026 and I recommend this as an area of interrogation to the wider performing arts sector.

The large variety of materials collected during this practice posed a challenge to the strict cataloguing structure currently in operation at the NT as there is no consistency of materials created across the cast and artistic team or across productions. It will also be an ongoing struggle for staff members to send these materials to the NT Archive or to do so in a consistent manner particularly if they are fragmentary materials such as the video of the flaming lantern demonstration. For new materials such as the Sound and Video department recording of the show, with deputy stage manager's audio, I am hopeful that this can become a recurring record for every production. Alongside the materials, I captured adequate metadata such as staff involved, their job titles and dates of correspondence or capture, to ensure that there is clear provenance for each item to show its authorship and how and when it was created and used. This required contextual links to be made within the catalogue, as mentioned above, as these fragments may not fit within the existing structure and management processes in a straightforward way.

[106] https://catalogue.nationaltheatre.org.uk/CalmView/.

A catalogue must provide suitable context so that researchers can understand how the materials were created and used while being structured in such a way as to facilitate navigation and findability of the records. Due to the high volume of assets I have collected for *TTSCD*, catalogued as the ELPA, I have written a finding aid for researchers to provide a less overwhelming route into the materials. Finding aids are organisational tools that provide researchers with details of a specific collection, or elements of a collection, to help them navigate an archive more effectively. At the NT Archive we have not historically written finding aids but it is part of the NT Archive strategy plan for 2024-2027 to write finding aids for some of the external collections. In the performing arts archive context, finding aids can be written for a variety of users from school students to practitioners and these focus on different aspects of the collection such as writing process, backstage roles or elements of design. A finding aid for this collection is available in Appendix D.

6 Reflection on embedded and parallel practice

My practice has demonstrated how each of these four areas of representation can be actively developed by an archivist working closely with the artistic and production teams to add value to the archive collections and provide researchers with useful materials for their work. In this section I reflect on a variety of elements of my practice that have become apparent either during the practice or in the user interviews following the collection of materials and influence how this practice can be further implemented and developed at the NT and beyond. This section also reflects on the replicability and sustainability of this practice. These findings feed into the Conclusion and Recommendations chapter.

The materials collected and catalogued in Appendix B can be compared against the list of materials usually collected, Appendix A, to show the scale of the increase in materials held for *TTSCD*. It is as important to consider what is missing from the collection and why, as it is to look at the materials collected. One of the questions I asked during the user interviews was what people felt was missing from the collected materials. All users commented on the lack of materials from the Director, but it was surprising to me that there was not an expectation that the NT Archive would hold directors' materials, only that his voice was conspicuous by its absence because I had captured so much material from the Writer and Staff Director. Campbell

would have been interested to have seen a rehearsal diary from the Director alongside those of the Staff Director (Campbell, 2024). Rokison-Woodall commented that it is quite common in her experience of the NT and Royal Shakespeare Company that publicly accessible interviews tend to be with the assistant or associate director rather than the director themselves (Rokison-Woodall, 2024). With *TTSCD,* not only are there no materials produced by the NT featuring Sheibani's voice, but there is also nothing in press coverage from Sheibani directly. Warren noted that the University of Bristol Theatre Collection rarely receives directors' notes (Warren, 2024). So, while it is unfortunate that Sheibani's voice is not directly present in the materials, the users I interviewed regarded this as a 'nice to have' rather than a required element as they understood how difficult it would be to capture directors' materials. In relation to this aspect of the artistic process being missing, Ball and Warren queried how archivists explain these absences in the archive and what story these absences tell (Ball, 2024; Warren, 2024). I have not addressed the absence of an account from Sheibani in the catalogue but this thesis forms part of the ELPA, which may provide context to interested researchers about why there are no materials from Sheibani directly. I felt that the cataloguing structure and record descriptions should reflect the material that I had collected and that the silence could and should speak for itself. This absence does allow for the voices of others in the artistic team to be more obvious than they may usually be such as the Staff Director, Lighting Designer and Sound Designer, showing the potentiality of the rest of the artistic team when access to the Director is not possible.

Another area where materials are scant is related to the casting decisions. Steel and von Schultze were careful not to include sensitive casting information in the materials that were transferred to the NT Archive and discussed this with me. As noted above, von Schultze did not give permission for one of his interviews to be archived as he discussed the casting process in it. The casting materials that have been archived are from the Casting department and are mostly held in the closed archive due to sensitivities such as pay rates and audition lists. The only material from the Casting department that is available to the public without a closure period is the production cast list.

Despite me taking an active approach, there were elements of the artistic process and the backstage staff's work that I was not able to capture because it was too ephemeral. I was

aware of this work and the resulting materials because of the embedded nature of my practice. For example, the work of the Movement Director and Sound Designer was not written down but developed in the room in response to the company and at speed, perhaps too quickly for any form of documentation (David, 2024; National Theatre Archive, 2024c). In a similar vein, the development of the flaming lantern relied on the relevant team members gathering for a demonstration of the lantern, verbally feeding back what changes they thought were necessary and discussing who would undertake the next stage of the work. None of this was written down and the meetings were not minuted in any way. This informality was visible elsewhere in the process, as I learned from Steel, where conversations between members of the artistic team happened via the messaging app, WhatsApp, to which I was not privy. I was fortunate that Steel and Chris Hay (Production Manager) shared so much of their email correspondence around the production with me, to give me a more detailed view of what was being discussed and with whom, but this is not something that an archivist would usually be looped into.

These examples are where I was involved in the meetings or discussions and was aware that no documentation was being created. There were other occasions where I was not aware of communication or conversation and only caught glimpses of what I missed out on. In April 2023, I realised that I must be missing the correspondence around the appointing of the Director. I was anecdotally kept in the loop by Steel and Steiger about who was being considered for the role but was not privy to any of the communications including around Sheibani being sent the script or agreeing terms for the role. I was also not included in a notes session that happened early in 2023 with Steel, Steiger, Stuart Pringle (formerly Senior Dramaturg) and Sasha Milavic Davies (Associate Dramaturg),[107] which I heard about later from Steel. Around this time, Steel told me that there had been a back channel of communication between her and a member of staff about which theatre the production could be staged in and I do not know if that was verbal or via email. I also feel that I may have missed out on meetings and discussions between the artistic team and the production and technical teams. I am missing materials related to the design process as I have collected the feedback to the Designer from the Production Manager after the production and technical teams held a feasibility meeting about the production design (National Theatre Archive, 2023a). I did not collect, or

[107] The Dramaturgs are part of the NWD and play a crucial role in supporting writers and developing scripts.

have access to, the proposal that Designer Samal Blak had provided, and on which the feasibility meeting was based, nor is Blak's response to this email archived. If I had been able to interview Blak presumably I could have filled these gaps but this was not possible. The Production Manager was a key contact for me in understanding what was happening between the artistic and production and technical teams. He was freelance and brought in for *TTSCD* specifically so he was not on the project until close to the time of rehearsals starting. Although I had a meeting with him in summer 2023, I sometimes fell off his list of people to which he circulated information demonstrating that archiving was not a key area for him and that patterns of communication need to change to ensure materials are considered for the NT Archive. This resulted in me occasionally missing meetings or email discussions.

As I progressed with the practice and identified these areas of little documentation, either through me witnessing them or being informed by staff or members of the artistic team that something had happened, I noted them down so that I could make the NT Archive team aware of where records were and were not being created. It is valuable for the NT Archive team to know when they are following up on transfers, which departments are yet to transfer records and which do not have any records to transfer, because their knowledge exchange and decision making is verbal. Understanding the materials that can be captured, that are difficult to capture and which aren't created at all is an incredibly useful piece of learning for the NT Archive team moving forward. Having a better overview of the document landscape allows them to construct retention schedules more realistically and organise transfers to the NT Archive (for which the NT Archive staff can use Appendix C as a basis).

Throughout this research I have been discussing how I and the NT Archive team make decisions around what is archived from a production and what we deem to be representative of a production. The practitioners themselves, however, will have an opinion on what is representative of their work and what materials they wish to have included in the NT Archive. To this end, I asked Steel and von Schultze to review the materials they had shared with me throughout 2023 and 2024 and to decide what they were comfortable transferring to the NT Archive and whether they wanted to add a closure period to any materials. I was hoping that by offering a closure period (this can be up to 30 years from the date of production) the practitioners would feel more comfortable transferring some of the more sensitive materials,

for example, around casting. Steel and von Schultze, however, did not take this option, preferring to have materials open to the public or not to transfer the materials to the NT Archive at all. They did take the opportunity to redact some lines of their interviews. Steel also flagged her discomfort with the email exchange about the play's title with Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, coming into the NT Archive without his permission. As an NT staff member, the NT Archive staff do not technically need to ask for Norris' permission to hold his emails, but I approached him for clearance regardless and he provided this so the exchange is in the open archive (National Theatre Archive, 2023c). This email exchange, highlighted as very useful by users as discussed above (p.158), shows the creative tensions at work as the play developed and it is worth noting that in this case neither party wished to erase the differences involved. This relates to the wider issue of transparency and opacity in decision-making and process. As a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England and being in receipt of public funds, the NT is accountable to the public for its actions to some extent. Access to the workshop and rehearsal spaces is in the purview of the director and the company and not the NT. There are no formal rehearsal room policies beyond the Working with Dignity and Respect Policy, which is read out during a company induction and during the meet and greet with NT staff, where the Artistic Director also emphasises the safe environment that the NT strives to create for each company. The Head of Company Management,[108] Shane Thom, commented that the way the NT manages its rehearsal rooms is no different from other similar organisations and that respecting the work and the companies is paramount (Thom, 2024). The decision by Sheibani not to allow me access to these spaces is something that could, therefore, be repeated in future productions and the extent to which an active archiving methodology can be implemented will be decided on a production-by-production basis depending on the director and company in question.

Von Schultze and I discussed how practitioners view their process as personal and that they may not wish to share everything with an archive. Upon not transferring the workshop notes to the NT Archive, von Schultze explained that the attempt to archive these notes for future productions could hamper creativity and freedom in the workshop space:

[108] The Head of Company Management is responsible for managing the stage management teams and ensuring the welfare of the companies working at the NT.

> […] insofar as this PhD might serve as a precedent or model for future archival practices, I am aware that if creatives are aware that any throwaway comment will be recorded for posterity, individuals may be more reluctant to share ideas, and I believe that this could foster less productive, creative, open, and inclusive spaces. (von Schultze, 2024)

Von Schultze is here demonstrating how the future archiving of materials could impact on how practitioners work and develop their productions. As an archivist, I do not want the documentation of the process to impact on the process itself and so I have taken von Schultze's comments very seriously. The personal relationship with the process and materials produced means that practitioners will possibly have strong opinions about what an archive takes in for a production. Von Schultze's considerate notes were helpful to me in setting expectations about what will be possible in documenting the development period moving forward.

The NT Archive team do not usually consult artistic teams about what is archived from a production. There is a model for involving the artistic team in the final decision on what is archived (see discussion of Akademie der Künst (ADK) in Chapter 1 Section 2.4 (p.42)). The ADK shares all materials back with the director or dramaturg for approval before archiving them (Örtel, 2022a; 2022b). This allows the practitioners to have an active input in how the archive of their production is constructed and how its memory will be construed. That very personal connection to the archive allows for the active archiving and collaboration that I propose, but it may also open the archive up to idiosyncratic collecting, heavily dependent on how practitioners feel about their production. Their attitudes to their work may vary depending on when in the process they are consulted. If consulted during a production, practitioners could prioritise some materials over others as they are still in the process of constructing the show. If consulted after a production has been staged, practitioners could approach material selection in a post-rationalised manner, biasing the documentation of the development process and imposing personal judgements and feelings on the selection leaving some materials in the archive and some excluded. This could prove confusing for archivists and researchers alike as they respectively catalogue and access the materials and would ultimately not create a consistent archive. From my experience with this practice, I am aware that it can be difficult to engage members of the artistic team during the production due to their workload. In addition,

after the production has closed it is just as difficult to engage them as they have often moved onto the next project, an issue Sara Örtel, ADK Archivist, acknowledged in her correspondence with me. A reliance on practitioners' approval of materials, therefore, would not be a sustainable way forward. I am proposing a model of active archiving and collaboration where practitioners are introduced to the concept of an archive when they join the NT, are encouraged to document their work in more detail, and then transfer it to the NT Archive rather than an archivist documenting the production for them and then seeking permission for the materials to be archived.

Practitioners' relationships with their materials is an area for reflection as is their relationship with me as the Head of Archive. These relationships play a fundamental role in the success of an active archiving approach. The selection of *TTSCD* for my practice was carefully handled by the NWD team to ensure I was able to carry out my research successfully and the artistic team working on the production could produce the show unhindered. Steel had already used the NT Archive extensively and valued the work of the team highly. We got on well from the outset and Steel has been supportive of me as a researcher and as the Head of Archive during the whole process. That strong relationship led to in-depth interviews, the sharing of email threads, invites to meetings and ad hoc updates on her progress. This level of openness was incredibly valuable and shows how productive an archivist/practitioner relationship can be.

I was introduced to von Schultze when he was brought onto the project in mid-2023. He was very supportive of the work and, having used archives for his own academic work and research for productions, he understood the role of an archive and what I was trying to achieve with my research. Von Schultze always gave considered and thoughtful responses to interview questions and was open with sharing his documentation throughout. When he asked not to transfer all his documentation to the NT Archive, he did so with clear and logical reasoning.

These close relationships with Steel and von Schultze resulted in a high level of openness in their interviews and was testament to the rapport that I built up with them over a period of months and years as noted by Ferguson in the user interviews (Ferguson, 2024). My role as a head of department within the NT as well as being associated with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama may have been helpful in establishing this connection but I sense that my

personality also played a role. As there are a variety of factors affecting these relationships, I cannot be sure how effective someone else carrying out these interviews may be. And while I built strong relationships with some of the artistic team, I did not have success in engaging Sheibani or Blak in any interviews or conversations. I could perhaps have been more forthright with Sheibani and Blak, with whom I had some correspondence, but was not successful in securing any interviews or meetings. There were two possible reasons for this. Firstly, they were in the process of creating the production and may have wished to keep their focus on making rather than on discussing their work. Secondly, I was always aware of the advice of the NWD who did not want me asking too much of the artistic team and so I tended to take the lead from the artistic team in terms of my engagement with them.

This leaves me wondering the degree to which what I have archived could be collected by the NT Archive team without my involvement and how much would require my personal relationships, level of seniority, or the time commitment I made with *TTSCD.* This is a potential area for future practice. For artistic teams, it is unlikely that I would have existing relationships with them as they are usually freelance but my level of seniority as a head of department may help me rather than others in the NT Archive team to establish a relationship with them during their time on an NT production. For NT staff, my relationships with administrative staff are well developed and my relationships with backstage teams have grown strongly because of this research. I am already aware that teams around the NT often respond better to communications from me than others in my team since I have been a staff member for over a decade and they are likely to have met me at some point. I am concerned, therefore, about how sustainable active archiving at the NT will be if not carried out by me. This speaks to the thesis Introduction (p.16) where I considered my position at the NT as the keeper of organisational memory and, at times, identify as the archive myself. I discuss possible methods for tackling this issue in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter. I would not be able to invest the same level of time to archiving productions as I did for *TTSCD* as my role does not afford this. A challenge during my practice was not just the time commitment but also that the pattern of working in the workshops, technical rehearsals and previews, did not align well with my working schedule or those of staff in the more 'administrative' roles at the NT. If the development of these relationships is dependent on me or someone in the NT Archive team

dedicating the amount of time that I did for *TTSCD,* then that is not sustainable within our current staffing structure and workload.

I also reflect on the potential impact I and my practice had on the production. As I was not part of the workshop or rehearsal phases I did not have as much of an impact as I could have had if the practice had unfolded as I had initially planned. I am aware, however, that my involvement with the documentation of the production could have altered how some of the artistic team worked (see Chapter 2 Section 5 for role of archivist in *Krapp's Last Tape* project (p.96)). Taking von Schultze as an example, he was attentive to the requirements of my PhD and keen to help me. From my earliest conversation with him he was clear that he documents a lot of his work and what happens throughout workshops and rehearsals as part of his own process, which suited my purposes well, but I was clear that I did not want him altering his process in any way to suit my practice. I worked the closest with Steel and von Schultze and I do not know if they may now view their artistic process in a different way. As a result of this project, I hope that they may think more about what an archive of their work might look like, how they might use archives in their future projects and be keen to deposit with archives when they can in future, and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with them in a few years, post-*TTSCD*. The potential impact of active archiving and collaborative relationships with practitioners is unavoidable. The fonds level description in the catalogue and context provided by this thesis will help researchers using the *TTSCD* materials to understand the relationships between myself and the artistic team and deduce what they wish about how the materials were constructed and transferred to the NT Archive. It is important for researchers to identify the relationship between interviewer and interviewees, in this case practitioners, to understand the trust that has been established between them and for the researcher to set the recording in context.

In terms of the impact of this research on the production, *TTSCD*, having been the production for my practice, is now the most documented production in the NT Archive providing more insights and access points to its process than any other production in the NT's history. This will encourage the NT Learning team to build resources using the production, such as guides for marketing students around the building and evaluation of a marketing campaign, information for budding lighting designers and technicians using Paule Constable's interview and tips and

tricks for New Views writing students from Steel's interviews and script drafts. It is possible that I have changed the way that this production will be used, interpreted and, fundamentally, remembered by students, teachers and academics, by dint of archiving it in this depth.

Creating a method of archiving that is sustainable and replicable has been at the heart of my practice. The level of involvement that I had with *TTSCD* is not something that I will be able to replicate with future productions due to the time commitment of attending meetings and sharings and communicating with all members of the artistic team and backstage staff involved. This practice ended up being more parallel than embedded but, nevertheless, the time I committed to *TTSCD* during 2023 and 2024 is not sustainable in my current role. What, therefore, is sustainable and replicable from this practice?

Appendix C outlines the materials that I have collected and that I believe can continue to be collected in a sustainable manner by the NT Archive team working closely with teams across the NT and the artistic teams. I have been mindful of workloads when writing this appendix, aware that NT teams are functioning at full capacity and do not have much time to tidy up their records for transferring to the NT Archive and that artistic teams move on quickly to their next projects. I have mostly listed materials that are already created as part of everyday work, which I have identified as having value to the NT Archive, many of which were not captured before, such as audio description files, NT at Home camera plan, style guide from Graphics Design Studio for rollout of branding, and video recordings of sharings. One area where I have asked for a new record to be created is with the Vor recording mentioned in Section 4 above (p.148), which involves discussions between Company Management, Sound and Video, and the Lighting teams to establish whether this is possible to achieve. I believe that, once this has been discussed and tested, the capture of this recording will not be any different to how the Lighting team are working already and so will not add any strain to the workload.

A process that the NT Archive team developed because of my work on retention schedules, which will now be implemented going forward, is the transfer of materials by individual teams to a dedicated Microsoft Teams file location. This means that staff can deposit their digital materials from their own computers without needing to contact the NT Archive at all. This has removed the barrier of a digital transfer portal and in organising this the NT Archive team have

contacted all NT departments to refresh their retention schedules and remind existing, and introduce new, staff to the transfer workflows. This should encourage departments to transfer more digital files to the NT Archive. This new process is currently being implemented and aims to make archive transfer more appealing to staff.

Taking these reflections and learnings from my practice as well as the proposed new retention schedules, the next chapter explores what a sustainable and replicable method of archiving could look like at the NT and in other in-house theatre archives.

7 Conclusion

As I progressed through my practice and considered how to represent the development period, I realised that while the development period was an under-represented area in the NT Archive, there were other elements of representation and representativeness that needed to and could be addressed by my research. The four areas of representation that have emerged from this research fit together to demonstrate an archive of deeper and broader materials relating to the development period as well as rehearsal and production. The resulting materials are better catalogued and more accessible to researchers.

The user interviews clearly show how valuable many of these materials will be for future research. Many conversations centered around the range and volume of materials collected. The fact that *TTSCD* is now the most documented in the NT's history was picked up during interviews where Jackson commented that this was the most thorough set of records she has ever seen not just for this particular production but across productions at the NT and more generally at other theatres (Jackson, 2024). For archivists Nixon and Warren the extent of materials caused them to consider how they could leverage the collection to show the value of documenting to their own institutions (Nixon, 2024; Warren, 2024). Nixon was particularly interested in how these materials could be generative and used to engage existing and new theatre audiences with the development process of a production (Nixon, 2024). These are just some of the useful takeaways from the user interviews and they feed into my recommendations in the next chapter.

The materials I have collected from *TTSCD* display not only how active archivists can address the different areas of representation but also how they will come up against challenges along the way. While collecting these materials there were several issues which came to the fore covering: my access to the creative process, what I was not collecting, how personal relationships with the materials and with me were impacting on collecting, how I was personally impacting on the practice, and how sustainable and replicable any of my practice would be in the longer term. These areas are challenging but also provide rich opportunities for collecting. The following chapter takes these findings and considers what recommendations can be made for the NT and for the wider sector in terms of a sustainable and replicable model of archiving.

Conclusion and recommendations

1 Introduction

This thesis has demonstrated how an archivist working actively with the artistic and backstage teams of *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024) *(TTSCD)* can create a more representative archive of the performance. In this chapter, I suggest a new methodology for archiving performance and consider how this methodology can be implemented at the NT and further afield in the wider performing arts archive world, in a sustainable way.

This research pulled together the fields of archival science and theatre and performance studies to grapple with how an archivist can collaborate with record creators in a working theatre to create a more representative archive of performance. Despite the differences between these fields, I found areas of overlap, which encouraged dialogue around the idea of authenticity and provenance, fixity of materials, and how knowledge is transmitted from person to person across time. The majority of literature in these fields is not in dialogue and so in this thesis I focus on three areas of overlap to bring the fields constructively into conversation with each other. This encouraged me to view archiving as a creative practice, one where the parameters can be challenged and the theory questioned. A more flexible approach to archiving feels more comfortable in my role within a working theatre than I have previously experienced trying to shoehorn traditional archival science into a theatre environment. The Questioning paradigm, together with provocations from theatre and performance studies around flexibility and liveness, paved the way for building a new active archiving methodology.

These areas of overlap informed my embedded and parallel practice and what I tried to collect throughout the practice. My collecting spanned three different areas: collecting context for the materials already sent to the NT Archive, collecting materials that were already created but not transferred to the NT Archive, and finally, collecting new materials sustainably without asking too much of the practitioners involved. The resulting materials created a more representative archive for *TTSCD*, covering the four areas of representation discussed in detail in Chapter 4. All of this contributed to the building of a new methodology (with resulting materials outlined in Appendix C) but was not without its challenges as my lack of access to the workshop and

rehearsal spaces demonstrates. There was clearly, however, capacity for and willingness from the NT to embrace a new way of archiving. This interdisciplinary work has shown that these fields *can* work together to produce a more representative archive of performance and process. This chapter explores how I have implemented changes at the NT to date as a result of this research, and what the next steps could be to embed this way of working, not only at the NT, but also in the wider performing arts archive sector.

2 Progress to date at the National Theatre

As my active archiving practice progressed from the start of my research in 2019 up to completion in 2025, I implemented changes to the NT Archive service and here I highlight some of these modifications and how they have advanced the service. These fall into changes that have benefitted staff and systems within the NT, and researchers outside the NT.

There have been several efficiencies made to the NT Archive service and improvements in professional methods. The audience segmentation I carried out in 2021 (see Chapter 1 Section 2.2 (p.37)) resulted in a change in the way the NT Archive segments its audience.[109] I found the existing structure too generalised and not targeted to the audiences that we would like to reach. I split the 'academic' segment into 'academics,' 'school teachers', and 'school students' to help us to understand more about who is using the collections beyond the blanket term 'academics.' The NT Archive and Learning teams can use the data around teachers and school students to market better to our audiences and track take-up of our service alongside that of the NT Collection, the NT's educational streaming platform, and the wider NT Learning programmes.

Another efficiency resulting from the interviews with people from a variety of audience segments, was the booking system for our research room. I received feedback that the existing

[109] I have continued with audience segmentation annually since 2021 and there have been no major changes in the make-up of the segments but there has been a reduction in the number of physical visits by external researchers (59% reduction) since the Covid-19 pandemic, to 1,713 people in 2023-2024. This is compensated by an increase in the number of researchers accessing archive production recordings remotely through the NT Collection (introduced in 2019) and NT at Home (introduced in 2020) platforms, to which there were nearly 59,000 subscribers in 2023-2024 (in 2019-2020 around 4,400 researchers accessed production recordings in the NT Archive research room).

method was difficult and could disincentivise people from booking. I asked the NT Archive team to implement an online booking system in 2021 to reduce this obstacle to access, which has streamlined the workflows in the NT Archive and freed up time for the Archive Assistant. It has also allowed researchers a level of autonomy as they can book in and move or cancel their booking as they wish.

Context was clearly important not only to the NT Archive team when cataloguing but also to researchers when using materials. An example of how I have improved contextual information is through enhanced knowledge of how the Digital Media team works. During my practice with *TTSCD* I had several conversations with the Digital Media team about the production recordings they make. From this I now know that the Digital Media team record a matinee and an evening of a production, which allows for a camera rehearsal. This also ensures that they have suitable footage in case they need to edit any of the matinee footage into the evening capture due to, for example, a technical glitch or an issue on stage. There is now an agreement in place whereby the Digital Media team will let the NT Archive team know if they need to splice footage together so that we can add this contextual information to the catalogue entry. In connection with this is a new initiative by the Digital Media team to create edit logs in the Content Production Suite that will be delivered to the NT Archive in due course, outlining the use of footage and rights clearance. This will not only help NT Archive staff with context when cataloguing but also allows licensing of footage more readily in the future.

From my experience with the Sessions recording for *TTSCD*, in which the Writer and Director were interviewed about the play by the Director of New Work, I have established a new protocol for ensuring that these are archived. At the time of the *TTSCD* Session I had a conversation with the staff member responsible for facilitating it. I have agreed a new protocol with him, that he will tell practitioners that the Sessions recording will be held in the open NT Archive unless they explicitly ask otherwise. Up to this point he had been emailing practitioners after the Session was complete to ask for permission to archive the recording and very few practitioners ever responded to these emails, which could be because they did not wish to grant permission or, more likely, because they were too busy to reply. The more proactive approach of adding to the NT Archive unless otherwise stated has already resulted in *Dear Octopus* (2024), *Mnemonic* (2024), *Connections* (2024), *Coriolanus* (2024) and *The Tupperware*

of Ashes (2024) Sessions recordings being transferred to the NT Archive and made available to researchers. As is discussed below, an improved relationship between practitioners and the NT Archive may help in this situation as a closer relationship would mean that practitioners will know more about why the NT Archive exists, and what we are trying to achieve by capturing these materials and hopefully be supportive in contributing to our collections.

As can be seen from the conversations I had with the Digital Media team and Sessions staff, improvements in collecting have been made across the organisation, which is expanded on in Section 3 below (p.172). Internal advocacy for the NT Archive has also increased with the NT Archive team having a permanent slot in the all-staff Big Welcome induction that happens every two months for all new starters to the organisation. This is an opportunity for NT Archive team to introduce new staff to the heritage of the NT and to advocate for archival work and put out a plea for support with the records management agenda. Advocacy for the NT Archive internally has increased during my PhD with a 74% increase in internal enquiries from 2020 to 2024 and awareness of the team is at an all-time high with 35 staff events[110] being hosted in 2024 compared to three in 2019. This is as a result not only of some of the findings of my practice but also through the NT Archive team's work during the Covid-19 pandemic and our general strategic and enthusiastic campaign to increase awareness with other staff of our work.

The changes implemented by my thesis include a spreadsheet of the publications about the NT split by subject area and including abstracts and information on how to access them. I created this following my literature review of publications relating to the NT (see Chapter 1 Section 2.3 (p.40)) that led to several conversations with colleagues across the organisation who were keen to read publications and enhance their knowledge about reception of their own area of work. I keep this spreadsheet up to date with recent research through an annual review of publications featuring the NT. I have also added a section to the access form asking researchers to let us know if they are researching for a particular publication so that we can include this in our spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is shared with NT staff and feeds into the increasing research

[110] Staff events usually involve a handling session of materials related to a particular anniversary, production or national or international event such as Pride Month or International Women's Day. These events also include those run by the Learning department for teachers and by the Development team for donors and members.

agenda across the NT thus encouraging staff to engage with the academic discussion around the NT and its work.

More generally, this research has caused me to consider where the NT Archive is positioned within the organisation in terms of its directorate and has encouraged me to reflect on what we do, why and how. My practice and methodology challenge the role of the NT Archive as a place where materials end up and suggest that the NT Archive team can actively support current shows and, crucially, shape what is archived and why. We can structure what is archived for every show and how shows live on in the writing of academics and future work of practitioners. In this way, the NT Archive can be involved in the past, the present and the future of the NT. The Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive, Kate Varah, who joined the NT in 2022, is keen to see the NT Archive as a generative partner and as part of the life cycle of productions, not just where materials go at the end of a show. This is an ongoing conversation and one that requires a mindset shift to embrace the NT Archive as a creative partner, with archivists who have a creative practice themselves. I am keen to develop this thinking with the incoming Artistic Director, Indhu Rubasingham, and Deputy Artistic Director, Rob Hastie.

For external researchers, several changes have been instigated by my practice. Alongside setting up a clearer and more streamlined online booking system for researchers, an early action I took following the interviews with researchers was to implement a termly NT Archive newsletter. This was in response to researchers wanting to feel more involved with the NT Archive and I was keen to ensure that there was more of a conversation happening with our research community. These newsletters are sent to anyone who has contacted the NT Archive and include an open invite for researchers to contribute their own research to a future issue. The newsletters feature an article on an element of the NT Archive such as a collection or item and a section on work that someone is undertaking with the NT Archive such as a student placement. These articles are then repurposed for the blog on the NT website, on which the NT Archive did not previously feature, and shared via the NT's social media channels therefore greatly increasing the online visibility of the NT Archive service. I also include general updates that may be of interest to our researchers and a section on research published on or by the NT to give a higher profile to this work.

From interviews with practitioners in 2021, it was clear that a lot more could be done by the NT and its Archive to promote our services to this audience segment specifically. Theatre practitioners make up roughly a quarter of NT Archive users and we are uniquely placed within a working theatre to serve their needs. Over the past six years I have worked on a variety of ways of improving practitioner awareness of the NT Archive as I outline here. The newsletter mentioned above is sent to practitioners who already use the NT Archive to encourage them to engage with us in new ways and spread the word about our services. I sit on a cross-organisational working group concerning freelancers looking at how to improve their time at the NT and make their experiences more consistent. This has allowed me to feed into plans for induction packs and exit interviews in which the NT Archive will now feature. I have designed posters for the Studio building, in which the New Work Department and NT Archive are located, encouraging practitioners to take up an offer of research support while they are in the building. I email all staff directors when they are attached to a project outlining what the NT Archive is and why we are keen to collect any materials they create alongside their rehearsal diaries. This gives context to the rehearsal diaries they are producing as well as opening a dialogue, which I return to after opening night of the production, to ask for any other relevant materials. This has already resulted in detailed materials coming to the NT Archive from the staff directors of *A Tupperware of Ashes* (2024), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2024), *Ballet Shoes* (2024) and *Alterations* (2025). The Staff Director of *A Tupperware of Ashes*, Layla Madanat, for example, has sent over her resource pack for the company, a timeline for the action of the play, photographs of the documents on the walls of the rehearsal room and a detailed biography of the main character, Queenie, written by the actress Meera Syal. This is in addition to the detailed rehearsal diaries that we had already received. I have catalogued these materials from the Staff Directors under a new series RNT/AR – Artistic Team.

And finally, I have reached out to the major unions practitioners work with: Bectu, Equity and the Stage Management Association (SMA). To date, I have been interviewed by and provided tours for representatives from Bectu and SMA and both have featured the NT Archive in magazine issues for their members. This has greatly increased our advocacy and visibility in these sectors and hopefully will feed into open conversations with practitioners about how archiving should be viewed as part of the process of making work.

The implementation of these changes has been driven by my practice and been straightforward to do with support from across the organisation. These are the first steps in actively archiving the NT and in building a collaborative method of working with practitioners. The recommendations below outline how I can build on this strong foundation to create a more representative archive of performance.

3 Recommendations for the National Theatre

Arising from this research, my recommendations for the NT fall into two main areas: redrafted retention schedules and improved relationships with practitioners. These two areas will allow the NT Archive to continue to collect the materials that I have identified as valuable to the collections as well as develop the active archiving approach of collaborating with the records creators to better document their work.

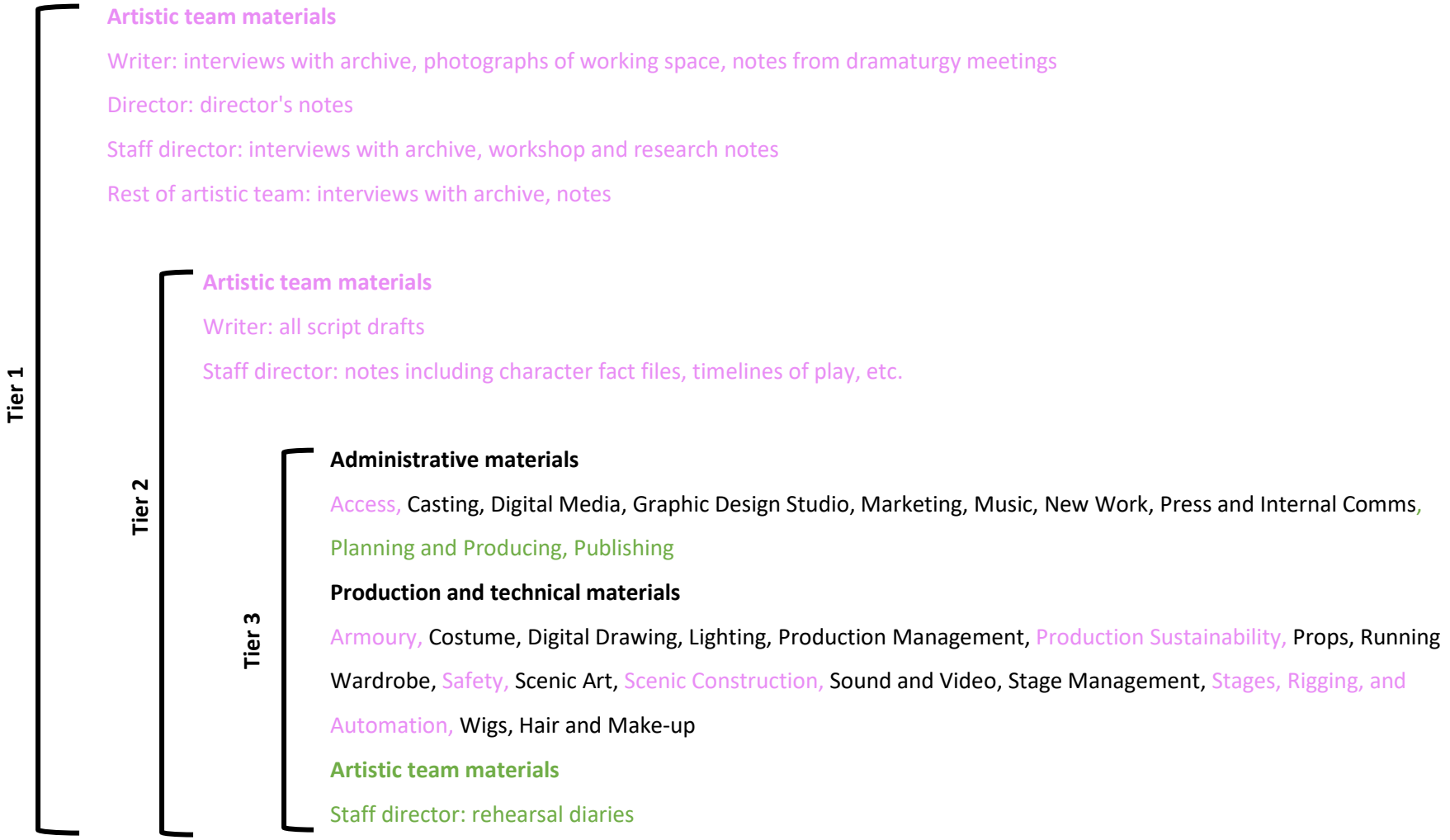
Appendix C outlines the current situation as regards existing retention schedules, their take-up by NT teams and what I propose for inclusion in the retention schedules moving forward. I recommend that the NT Archive team develop detailed retention schedules based on this spreadsheet with each of the administrative, production and technical departments, including storage locations, file formats and volumes of materials as well as developing a retention schedule for artistic teams. They will then need to ensure that there are clear and achievable workflows for teams to transfer materials to the NT Archive in a timely manner. There are capacity issues within the NT Archive and across NT teams for this records management work and I am aware that collecting some of the materials I have highlighted as relevant from the administrative, production and technical teams will be challenging. Establishing protocols for artistic teams to transfer materials will also be a challenge due to the current lack of relationships and communication. As mentioned in Chapter 4 Section 4 (p.146), the NT Archive already had retention schedules in place for the majority of administrative, production and technical teams before I began my thesis but we have never previously had a schedule or plan for collecting from artistic teams.

In order to find a workable and sustainable solution for implementing this records management work, I propose tiers of archiving (see Figure 12). This proposal would see Tier 3

of archiving corresponding to what the NT Archive typically archived for a production before I began my practice. Tier 1 would be a 'gold standard' of archiving similar to that undertaken for *TTSCD*. There can be a sliding scale of collecting in between these two parameters with a possible Tier 2 as detailed in the figure below. It will be the responsibility of the NT Senior Leadership Group to decide which productions fall into which tier so that some productions are archived to a greater depth than others. Figure 12 demonstrates these tiers with a colour code matched to Appendix C. This shows which departments were already sending materials to the NT Archive pre-practice (green), which departments will be sending new materials to the NT Archive (pink), and which departments were already sending materials and now have new materials identified to send (black). The prominence of pink departments, particularly in Tiers 2 and 3, demonstrates the ambition and potential for collecting from a greater variety of departments, including the artistic team.

Key to Figure 12:
Black – departments with mix of correct materials already sent to the NT Archive, new materials identified from this research, and materials identified previously for transfer but not sent
Green – departments already sending the correct materials to the NT Archive
Pink – departments sending new materials to the NT Archive

Figure 12 Tiers of archiving



A key element for this proposal is how the productions are allocated to each tier and who would be involved in this process. There is currently a 'Potentials Meeting' held each fortnight between the Executive Committee and some members of the Senior Leadership Group to discuss, among other things, the educational and commercial value of scheduled productions. The Director of Learning and National Partnerships, in whose directorate the NT Archive sits and who attends the Potentials Meeting, has suggested that levels of archiving could be added to the agenda of these meetings. A similar method is already used to determine whether a production receives an NT Live, NT at Home or an archive recording. There is also a system for categorising the relevance of productions to the Learning department's audiences covering 'curriculum bullseye' such as *Othello* (2022), 'special interest' such as *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024), and 'blockbuster' such as *The Witches* (2023) among other categories. These categories are used by the Learning team to plan activity for schools and young people alongside productions and may help in identifying which productions should receive Tier 1 archiving. The decision around which tier a production may sit in would be taken with a view to: the educational relevance of the production i.e. how the Learning team may use resulting materials, or commercial relevance i.e. whether the production might transfer or tour and the National Theatre Productions, Marketing and Press teams may use the resulting materials for promotion.

I have reservations about this approach related to its selective and subjective nature. The NT Archive should represent the work of the NT and in restricting the Tier 1 archiving to specific productions, the collections could easily become skewed and some productions' collections out of proportion with others. I am aware, however, that Tier 1 archiving is not possible for all productions and that some productions receiving the more detailed and deep archiving of Tier 1 is better than none. It is also possible that Tier 1 archiving will offer insight into how the institution works, the roles of the backstage staff and the development of a play with the New Work Department that will support the understanding of the more limited materials collected under Tier 2 and Tier 3. Contextual information about how the productions are selected for each tier will be key to ensure that NT staff and researchers, in the future, understand why specific collecting decisions were made and the collections constructed in this manner. This pragmatic approach speaks to the need for an archive within a working theatre to adapt to the requirements and practicalities of the business. With this tiered approach I believe that there is

an opportunity for an active archivist approach to succeed in a sustainable manner for some productions.

It would also be vital that retention schedules include a shift towards capturing the material conditions of performance as discussed by Knowles (see Chapter 2 Section 3.3 (p.85)) (Knowles, 2004). I focused on capturing and evidencing these material conditions when immediately pertinent to *TTSCD* but a wider review of how the NT Archive captures organisation-wide issues such as funding, architecture and political leaning lay outside the scope of this thesis. Knowles highlights the importance of understanding the material conditions of producing work to acknowledge that theatre does not exist in a material vacuum where productions of the same text are directly comparable to each other (Knowles, 2004, p.128). These material conditions include knowledge of funding, architecture of the theatre space, sponsorship and political leanings of the producing organisation. I would therefore suggest exploring how these can be documented and evidenced. Some of these are already archived, for example the work of the NT Development department around fundraising and sponsorship, and available for research, but the NT Archive has not before considered how these materials may be cross-referenced or accessed alongside productions to demonstrate to researchers a much wider picture of the performance they are researching. I recommend that the NT Archive team explore these material conditions to see if they can capture what influences and impacts productions beyond the input of the cast and artistic team. This information can then be used to contextualise the resulting materials appropriately for researchers.

The second recommendation is that the NT Archive team improve their relationships with practitioners. This connects to the first recommendation as the NT Archive team will not be able to collect materials from the artistic team, as listed in Appendix C, without developing a relationship with the practitioners first.

The materials listed for the artistic team in Appendix C suggest a formalised archiving process where there is a retention schedule or list of materials that the NT Archive are hoping to capture that can be shared with the artistic team in advance of their work. This does not need to be wholly prescriptive and could contain areas for expansion and development if practitioners were willing to engage actively with archiving. But, having a suggested list to work

from is a useful starting point for a conversation with practitioners who, in my experience from *TTSCD*, are not familiar with what sort of materials an archive might want from their practice. This suggested list could be a more sustainable way forward and encourage more uniform results. Appendix C outlines what these materials may be for the artistic team based on what I was able to archive from *TTSCD*. I believe a possible next step is to add an archive clause into practitioner contracts to require them to deposit some of their process materials, in line with the recommended list, with the NT Archive. I do not underestimate the complexities of altering practitioner contracts, but I would like to explore this topic within the NT. From discussions with Anabel de la Paz, the archivist at Teatre Lliure in Barcelona, I learned that all practitioners' contracts for that theatre have an archiving clause, which has allowed her to build up an impressive collection displaying production processes (de la Paz, 2023).[111] De la Paz did not indicate that adding this clause to practitioners' contracts had been problematic but from conversations I have had around intellectual property rights and practitioner contracts previously at the NT, I am aware that any changes to practitioners' contracts can be a lengthy and challenging process.

Archiving practitioners' work will require a strong relationship between the NT Archive team and the practitioner community. I have begun to develop a relationship with practitioners as mentioned in Section 2 above (p.171) with my work with staff directors and I am confident that I will be able to collect some of the materials listed in Appendix C. I do not believe, unfortunately, that it will be possible to collect, as standard, the materials of the most value to the users I interviewed, namely, the interviews with the artistic team. Conducting more of these interviews would depend not only on developing a personal relationship with the artistic team to convey the value of this work, but also the artistic team members being willing to be involved, them having capacity to be interviewed and indeed for members of the NT Archive team to have the time to facilitate and host these interviews. This is not sustainable for all productions at the NT, partly due to staff capacity and partly due to an expectation that not all artistic teams will want to or have the capacity to be involved. I will strongly advocate for the

[111] Teatre Lliure was established in 1976 as a 'private theatre with a public will' (Insitut del Teatre, no date) and was constructed and run differently from other theatres. For example, it was founded as a cooperative and held the first multipurpose auditorium in Spain and 'offered what is now seen as a model for Spanish independent theatre' (Delgado, 1998, p.84). As such, they may not have faced the same challenges as the NT would regarding contractual updates.

NT to reassess the importance and value of the platforms/talks programme, which, as discussed in Chapter 1 Section 3.1 (p.47), was terminated in 2023, and encourage them to consider restarting long-form interviews with artistic team members. If this appeal does not succeed, a more sustainable way forward would be to ask the Digital Media and Marketing teams to make their short-form content with the artistic teams more process-focused and candid, to better meet the requirements of the archive audiences. It is also possible that I put forward some standardised questions to be added to the recorded interviews with artistic team members that the Digital Media and Marketing teams carry out, in order to capture the artistic team's processes and reflections on their work. I have already begun recording Learning events where artistic team members are discussing their process with an audience of young people or school students, which provides valuable insights for researchers.

It will also be challenging to collect the other materials listed under the artistic team, such as scripts and staff director notes. Strong relationships with the artistic teams would support this collecting but the sheer volume of productions staged at the NT, around 15-20 per year, will be difficult for the small NT Archive team in terms of communicating with all the artistic teams. I know from my experience with *TTSCD* that it is demanding to maintain these relationships from outside the process when I was not involved daily and was not privy to what was happening during the development and production process. Taking learnings from the study of the practice of Marina Abramović and Tehching Hsieh in live art in Chapter 2 Section 4 (p.87), it is important that I find methods of engaging with the artistic team that are flexible and not too time-consuming. The tiered approach to archiving above could help alleviate these capacity issues by only requiring these relationships to be developed for a proportion of the productions each year.

As discussed in Section 2 above (p.171), I have begun to communicate better with practitioners when they join the NT, through the NT Archive being included in the freelancer induction pack and advertising our services in the Studio building. I propose that the NT Archive is also involved in the freelancer exit interviews that are being established as part of an organisation-wide refresh of how the NT works with freelancers and confirming what their experience is like when working with the NT. If the NT Archive is part of the exit interview, we can then remind practitioners of who we are, of the archive clause in contracts (if this can be implemented) and

ask them what materials they would like to deposit with us. Asking these questions at this point means that the pressure of the opening of the production is over and they may have more capacity to respond positively.

These recommendations feel achievable and exhibit sustainability and capacity at their core. I will write up these recommendations for discussion with senior NT staff including my line manager, the Director of Learning and National Partnerships, to formalise the NT's commitment to active archiving and create an agreed workflow moving forward.

4 Recommendations for the performing arts archive sector

Although the NT Archive is in an unusual position with its secure funding and staffing levels, this research can have wider-reaching implications than just the NT and I intend to share my findings and recommendations with the Association of Performing Arts Collections (APAC), the professional body for performing arts archiving, to promote conversation and progress towards best practice in active archiving across the performing arts archiving sector in the UK and Ireland.[112] These recommendations fall into two categories: adoption of the tiered system of archiving in line with an archive's type e.g., in-house or third party, structure and capacity; and development of performing arts-specific cataloguing standards.

The variety of types of archives within the performing arts means that any recommendations from this research need to be scalable and applicable to in-house theatre archives as well as third-party archives. There is the potential for more work to be done on the definition of an in-house theatre archive as opposed to a third-party collection and the option to create case studies of such collections. I have a working definition of these terms (see Chapter 1 Section 2.4 (p.40)), and I am keen to bring these into dialogue with the formality of an archive set-up, different cultures of collecting and the available resource to help create a model for theatres to make decisions related to the development of their own archives. This could support theatre staff based in organisations that have not established an archive, to identify what they want to do with their collections, whether that is to keep it in-house with associated funding, staffing

[112] I have already shared my PhD progress with this group through their symposia and student showcase events in 2019, 2023 and 2024.

and autonomy or whether they wish to outsource their archive with the associated lower costs and potentially greater advocacy. Clearer and documented case studies of in-house and third-party archives would allow theatres to make an informed decision about the future of their archive and what sort of value they can expect in return. From my experience with the NT, I know that there are many theatres in the UK, which seek support with establishing or relocating their archives. I have spoken with representatives from several organisations over the years, often referred to me by The National Archives, to give my experience of maintaining an archive in-house, together with the benefits and challenges of doing so, and know that there would be an appetite for more information in this area.

Together with this work on defining in-house and third-party archives, is the recommendation that the tiered system mentioned above, could be adopted more widely. In-house theatre archives, whatever their size, could use the tiered system to explore the appetite for active archiving in their organisation and to what extent they are able to document the work happening. Organisations could select where on the scale they wish to aim, with their resources and capacity, and consider what the different registers of engagement might be in their specific situations. Smaller organisations may have less digital infrastructure to work with, which could cause issues around digital collecting and preservation. Being smaller, however, the staff of these organisations may be more able to build positive and meaningful relationships with practitioners and collect material from the artistic team more successfully. Larger organisations, while they may have greater investment in their digital infrastructure and be able to collect in a similar manner to the NT, with long-term digital access plans, may face similar issues to me around the scale of work being staged.

Third-party archives can also use this tiered approach in conversations with the theatres on whose behalf they collect. The archive staff within third-party archives will not be as close to the productions and processes as the archivists based within theatres and so my findings related to what could be archived from the development process, how to construct more productive relationships with practitioners and how to position an archive as a creative partner within a theatre, provide the basis for conversations with theatres about how to archive their work. Being at least one step removed from the organisations that they are documenting can make archiving this work more challenging than being an integral part of that organisation. This

could be due to multiple factors such as the opacity of the rehearsal and production processes, poor communication between staff and the third-party archive, distance from the artistic team, and potential commercial sensitivities. In this situation, the tiers of archiving can provide a useful reference point and model of archiving to build a collaborative collecting workflow with theatres. The NT, as a leading theatre in the UK and worldwide, may lend weight to a third-party archive's suggestion to a theatre of adopting this new active archiving methodology.

A final recommendation is the development of a cataloguing software and process specifically to suit the requirements of the performing arts. From my work at the NT, I know of shortfalls in the cataloguing software and standards when it comes to cataloguing performance. When I catalogued the materials gathered for *TTSCD*, there were challenges to providing contextual information, demonstrating the collaborative nature of records creation, and linking the names of cast, staff and artistic teams to materials. The existing hierarchical and rigid structure of Axiell Calm, together with the international standards for archiving, prevent performing arts archivists from cataloguing in a manner they would wish in order to provide context for researchers (see Chapter 3 Section 4 (p.124) and Chapter 4 Section 5 (p.151)). I am, therefore, suggesting that the performing arts archiving sector explore the potential for linking people and materials more realistically within a catalogue to evidence the collaborative nature of theatre-making. Taking as an example the creative archiving of the John Latham materials discussed in the thesis Introduction Section 3.1 (p.27) with the unique classification system utilising an interpretation layer on top of the catalogue, there could be productive work done to create a more malleable cataloguing software which allows more cross-referencing and cross-searching. This would provide a research experience that is more representative of the people and processes involved in creating a production.

5 Conclusion

These recommendations demonstrate scalable options in terms of capacity, cost and technical requirements for the National Theatre and the wider performing arts archiving sector. A more active approach to archiving with collaboration from practitioners could lead to far more representative archives of the performing arts across the sector. This type of collecting increases the entry points to the work and casts the archive in a generative and creative light.

The potential for the subsequent archive collections to speak to every area of a theatre's strategic objectives is consequently greater whether that is to support in engaging audiences, demonstrate a throughline in a company's history for funding applications or garnering government support, inspire the next generation of theatre makers, facilitate research for upcoming productions, or lift the lid on a whole sector of creative jobs for young people. My practice has not only shown that active archiving can function within a theatre and that there is a sustainable model moving forward but also that an archive can be a creative and generative partner in the goal of producing new work and engaging audiences.

Taking the case study of archiving through embedded and parallel practice with *TTSCD*, this thesis has shown the areas of dialogue between archival science and theatre and performance studies, which facilitated the active archiving of a production and opened new possibilities of understanding and interpreting the work. There is great potential for archiving in this way to encourage productions to be studied further and even for the plays and practitioners to be added to the English or Drama syllabi. Having such extensive holdings and contextual information around a production will almost certainly increase awareness and prolong the life of a production, highlighting to practitioners the efficacy of this sort of archiving. In summary, this thesis research has generated new ways of thinking about what an active archivist can achieve within a theatre and how third-party archivists can adapt this approach for their own relationships with theatre institutions. It has also shown how archivists can embrace theatre and performance studies and become part of a cycle of creativity.

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Appendix A – List of production-related materials

The production-related materials that have already been catalogued in the NT Archive are:

- Archive production recordings
- cast lists
- costume bibles, budgets, descriptions, photos, designs and references
- education background packs
- front of house reports
- graphics development files[113]
- marketing: audience reports
- marketing: box office reports
- marketing: plans and reports
- music files
- New Work Department files[114]
- NT Live camera scripts
- NT Live pre-show content
- NT Live recordings
- NT Live trailers
- original/early versions of scripts[115]
- photographs: production
- photographs: rehearsal
- photographs: technical[116]
- posters
- press releases
- press reviews
- production office show files: full[117]

[113] These files contain the various options explored by the Graphic Design Studio when creating visual branding for a production.
[114] These can cover early versions of the scripts, casting information from workshops and audio and video files from workshops.
[115] The NT Archive aims to keep the earliest version of a script that is available whether that is the first version or an intermediate version. The prompt script provides the final version.
[116] These are taken from the back of the stalls and capture the full stage for each scene.
[117] These include budget and health and safety information, floorplans, model photographs and production office meeting minutes.

- production office shows: minimal[118]
- programmes
- programme administrative files[119]
- promotional materials[120]
- props bibles[121]
- prompt scripts[122]
- rehearsal diaries
- short-form content[123]
- stage management reports
- talks programmes
- talks recordings
- wigs, hair and make-up bibles[124]

The NT Archive does not regularly receive materials from the Lighting or Sound and Video departments as these departments are not as forthcoming as others about transferring materials to the NT Archive.

[118] These are a partial version of the full production office show files.
[119] These administrative files include correspondence between the NT and programme article writers, mock-ups of the programme, photographs and rights clearance documentation.
[120] These include leaflets and flyers created around a production using the same visual language as the poster and programme.
[121] These include information related to props that were made and sourced for the production.
[122] These include a version of the script annotated by the deputy stage manager with blocking and cueing information as well as rehearsal notes, call sheets, props lists and cast headshots.
[123] These include contextual video content such as background information on the themes related to the productions.
[124] These include information on each character's requirements along with photographs.

Appendix B – Catalogue of the Erin Lee PhD Archive (ELPA)

Level	Series	Ref_No	Extent	Title	Date	Description	Public access	Internal access
Fonds		EL	145. png, 556 .jpg, 11 .mov, 66 .xlsx, 186 .doc, 356 .pdf, 24 .ppt, 47 .mp4, 94 .wav, 25 .m4a, 22 .dwg, 2 .aac, 1 .eml, 2 .xml, 7 .vwx, 2 .lw6, 1 .ccz, 1 .lsf, 2 .esf3d, 1 .mla, 1 .webp, 1 .avif, 1 .als, 1 .dbpr, 1 .ses, 1 .qlab5, 3 .jfif, 1 .psd, 2 .srt, 1 .mp3	Erin Lee PhD Archive	2019-2024	The Erin Lee PhD Archive contains materials relating to Erin Lee's PhD, undertaken 2019-2025 as part of her role as Head of Archive. This includes PhD proposals and planning information as well as publications and talks delivered during the PhD. The PhD focused on the development and producing of Till the Stars Come Down by Beth Steel, staged in the Dorfman Theatre in 2024. This collection contains the materials Lee gathered as part of her embedded and parallel practice with this production from 2020 to 2024. This includes materials that would have been transferred to the NT Archive normally as well as materials that Lee has collected and produced specifically as part of this practice such as interviews with practitioners and more detailed documentation from back of house teams. Some materials in this collection will be duplicated in the Royal National Theatre collection if they were materials that would normally have been transferred to the NT Archive.	Open	Open

Sub-series	**Erin Lee PhD Archive**	**EL/1**	**12 .doc, 1 .pdf**	**Planning and overview**	**2019-2024**	**Documents relating to the application for PhD, research proposals, annual reviews, ethics information, and the transfer process.**	**Open**	**Open**
File	Planning and overview	EL/1/1	3 .doc	Research overview	2019-2020	Research proposal, project outline, table of contents.	Open	Open
File	Planning and overview	EL/1/2	2 .doc	Annual reviews	2021-2023	Annual reviews for 2021-2022, 2022-2023.	Open	Open
File	Planning and overview	EL/1/3	3 .doc	Ethics information	2021-2024	Ethics forms for different aspects of the project.	Open	Open
File	Planning and overview	EL/1/4	4 .doc, 1 .pdf	Transfer documents	Oct-20	Documents relating to the transfer process from MPhil to PhD carried out in October 2020.	Open	Open
[125]								
Series	**Erin Lee PhD Archive**	**EL/3**	**9 .doc, 4 .ppt, 2 .pdf**	**Reports, publications, and findings**	**2021-2024**	**Reports, publications, and findings disseminated during the course of the PhD.**	**Open**	**Open**
Item	Reports, publications, and findings	EL/3/1	1 .pdf	Archival Science journal article	01-Jul-24	Archival Science journal article entitled "Creating a representative archive of performance practice at the National Theatre of Great Britain" (2024)	Open	Open
Item	Reports, publications, and findings	EL/3/2	1 .doc	NT Archive Review Report	23-Apr-21	Report written following an audit of the collections in the NT Archive covering sample productions from 2015-2019.	Open	Open

[125] EL/2 will be the completed PhD thesis.

Item	Reports, publications, and findings	EL/3/3	1 .doc	NT Archive Audience Segmentation Report	22-Apr-21	Report written following an audit of the audience segments using the NT Archive 2017-2020.	Open	Open
File	Reports, publications, and findings	EL/3/4	7 .doc, 4 .ppt, 1 .pdf	Talks given during PhD	2019-2024	Drafts of talks given to internal and external audiences throughout the PhD including slide decks when used. Drafts of articles written for the Central research blog.	Open	Open
Series	**Erin Lee PhD Archive**	**EL/4**	**145. png, 556 .jpg, 11 .mov, 66 .xlsx, 165 .doc, 353 .pdf, 20 .ppt, 47 .mp4, 94 .wav, 25 .m4a, 22 .dwg, 2 .aac, 1 .eml, 2 .xml, 7 .vwx, 2 .lw6, 1 .ccz, 1 .lsf, 2 .esf3d, 1 .mla, 1 .webp, 1 .avif, 1 .als, 1 .dbpr, 1 .ses, 1 .qlab5, 3**	**Till the Stars Come Down**	**2020-2024**	**Materials collected by Erin Lee for Till the Stars Come Down from embedded and parallel practice.**	**Open**	**Open**

			.jfif, 1 .psd, 2 .srt, 1 .mp3					
Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/1	4 .doc, 1 .mp3	Access	2024	Files from the Access Department relating to Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Access	EL/4/1/1	1 .doc, 1 .mp3	Audio description files	Feb-24	Audio introduction notes and audio recording of these notes sent to the audience before the touch tour and audio described performances of Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Access	EL/4/1/2	2 .doc	Chilled performance files	Feb-24	Chilled performance pre-show announcements for front of house staff for Till the Stars Come Down and signage for use in the foyer about restricted movement in the pit.	Open	Open
Item	Access	EL/4/1/3	1 .doc	Large print cast list	11-Apr-24	Large print cast list for Till the Stars Come Down from Access department.	Open	Open
Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/2	6 .m4a, 5 .wav, 11 .mp4, 35 .doc, 39 .pdf, 11 .jpg	Artistic team	October 2021-April 2024	Files deposited by members of the artistic team of Till the Stars Come Down including interviews carried out by Erin Lee, script drafts, and rehearsal notes.	Open	Open

Sub-series	Artistic team	EL/4/2/1	3 .m4a, 2 .wav, 5 .mp4, 17 .doc, 13 .pdf, 11 .jpg	Beth Steel, writer	October 2021-April 2024	Files deposited by Beth Steel, writer of Till the Stars Come Down including interviews carried out by Erin Lee from June 2023 to April 2024, drafts of scripts, and correspondence.	Open	Open
Sub-series	Beth Steel, writer	EL/4/2/1/1	10 .pdf, 6 .doc	Script drafts	February 2022-October 2023	Drafts of Till the Stars Come Down script delivered to the New Work department between February 2022 and October 2023.	Open	Open
File	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/1	2 .pdf, 1 doc	Partial draft of script	25-Feb-22	Acts 1-3, partial draft of Act 4, notes related to unwritten Act 5 of Till the Stars Come Down, and email from Beth Steel to New Work Senior Dramaturg, Stewart Pringle, Director of New Work, Nina Steiger, and Erin Lee.	Open	Open
File	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/2	2 .pdf, 1 .doc	First draft of script	01-Aug-22	Email from Beth Steel to Stewart Pringle, Senior Dramaturg, Nina Steiger, Director of New Work, and Rachel Twigg, Head of Studio, with first draft of script of Till the Stars Come Down attached and notes to be read after the script.	Open	Open
File	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/3	1.pdf, 2.doc	Second draft of script	27-Nov-22	Email from Beth Steel to Nina Steiger, Director of New Work, Rachel Twigg, Head of Studio, Stewart Pringle, Senior Dramaturg, Sacha Milavic Davies, Associate Dramaturg, and Erin Lee attaching second draft of the script of Till the Stars Come Down, notes and explaining the questions that she has bene tackling with the third draft.	Open	Open

File	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/4	1 .doc, 1 .pdf	Rehearsal draft of script	30-Nov-22	Rehearsal draft of the script for Till the Stars Come Down submitted 30 November 2023 and emails between Sarah Clarke, New Work Administrator, and Beth Steel, writer, about the process of script dissemination.	Open	Open
Item	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/5	1 .pdf	Third draft of script	02-Mar-23	Third draft of Steel's play: Till the Stars Come Down. Sent to Erin Lee by Sarah Clarke, New Work Administrator.	Open	Open
Item	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/6	1 .doc	Fourth draft of script	01-Apr-23	Fourth draft of Steel's play: Till the Stars Come Down. Sent to Erin Lee by Sarah Clarke, New Work Administrator. Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: Play has 'Third draft' in file title but this is the fourth version of the script received so far.	Open	Open
Item	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/7	2 .pdf	Whole draft of script	07-Jun-23	Email from Beth Steel with attached draft of the whole script for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
Item	Script drafts	EL/4/2/1/1/8	1 .pdf	October workshop draft of script	16-Oct-23	Script draft delivered prior to October workshop for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
Sub-Series	Beth Steel, writer	EL/4/2/1/2	3 .m4a, 5 .mp4, 10 .doc, 2.wav	Interviews	June 2023-April 2024	Interviews with Beth Steel carried out by Erin Lee from June 2023 to April 2024 around Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/1/2/1	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Beth Steel	16-Jun-23	Interview with Beth Steel, writer, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 1 hour). Zoom transcript file, and edited transcript by Erin Lee and document of questions asked. This	Open	Open

						interview covers Steel's involvement in and reflections about the research trip to Mansfield 10-11 June 2023 and the design workshop at the NT Studio 12-14 June 2023.		
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/1/2/2	1 .wav, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Beth Steel	03-Jul-23	Interview with Beth Steel, writer, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with edited audio and video recordings (approx. 30 minutes), edited transcript, redacted at the request of Steel. Document of questions asked. This interview covers the read-through of the script on 30 June 2023 at the New Work Department.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/1/2/3	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Beth Steel	31-Jul-23	Interview with Beth Steel, writer, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 45 minutes). Transcript file, edited transcript and document of questions asked. This interview covers the workshop and sharing at the New Work Department and concepts meeting for the visual design of the poster and short-form content.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/1/2/4	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Beth Steel	11-Jan-24	Interview with Beth Steel, writer, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 1 hour). Transcript file, edited transcript and document of questions asked. This interview covers Steel's involvement in and reflections about the rehearsal period to date.	Open	Open

File	Interviews	EL/4/2/1/2/5	1 .wav, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Beth Steel	18-Apr-24	Interview with Beth Steel, writer, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with edited audio and video recordings (approx. 30 minutes), edited transcript, redacted at the request of Steel. Document of questions asked. This interview covers technical rehearsals, preview, press night, and audience reception.	Open	Open
File	Beth Steel, writer	EL/4/2/1/3	1 .doc, 1 .pdf	Progress to date summaries	October 2021 - October 2022	Documents written by Beth Steel to Erin Lee outlining her progress on writing Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
Item	Progress to date summaries	EL/4/2/1/3/1	1 .doc	Progress to October 2021	01-Oct-21	Document written by Beth Steel to Erin Lee outlining progress on her writer in residence play, Till the Stars Come Down, up to October 2021. Written for Lee when it was agreed by New Work that Lee would be embedded with Steel's play for her PhD embedded practice.	Open	Open
Item	Progress to date summaries	EL/4/2/1/3/2	1 .pdf	Progress to October 2022	20-Oct-22	Email from Beth Steel to Erin Lee updating on her redrafting process of Till the Stars Come Down script and how a meeting with Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, had gone. Steel outlines the areas of focus for her redraft and the next steps once the script has been submitted.	Open	Open
File	Beth Steel, writer	EL/4/2/1/4	11 .jpg	Photographs of Beth Steel's office walls	15-Oct-21	x11 colour photographs taken by Erin Lee of Beth Steel's walls in her writer in residence office in the NT Studio. These represent Steel's thinking and planning during Autumn 2021 around Till the Stars	Open	Open

						Come Down and did not change before the end of her residency in February 2022. They depict the structure of Acts as well as key themes and visuals that Steel used for inspiration.		
Item	Beth Steel, writer	EL/4/2/1/5	1 .pdf	Dramaturgy notes	25 Februar y-1 March 2022	Emails between Beth Steel, Stewart Pringle, Senior Dramaturg, and Nina Steiger, Director of New Work regarding the script for Till the Stars Come Down. Email accompanying Acts 1-3, partial draft 4, and notes relating to unwritten Act 5 from Beth Steel with email containing Pringle's initial feedback and Steiger's suggestion of a meeting.	Open	Open
Item	Beth Steel, writer	EL/4/2/1/6	1 .pdf	Emails about play title	31 May-6 June 2023	Emails between Beth Steel and Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, relating to Steel's choice of title for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
Item	Artistic team	EL/4/2/2	1 .pdf	Gareth Fry, sound designer	15-Mar-24	Gareth Fry's, sound designer, responses to questions Erin Lee sent to him via email about his process on Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Artistic team	EL/4/2/3	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Paule Constable, lighting designer	27-Mar-24	Interview with Paule Constable, lighting designer, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 40 minutes). Transcript file, edited transcript and document of questions asked. This interview covers Constable's work as lighting designer on Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open

Sub-series	Artistic team	EL/4/2/4	3 .wav, 2 .m4a, 5 .mp4, 10 .doc, 15 .pdf	Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director	June 2023-March 2024	Files deposited by Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director for Till the Stars Come Down including interviews carried out by Erin Lee from June 2023 to March 2024, rehearsal diaries and notes.	Open	Open
Sub-Series	Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director	EL/4/2/4/1	5 .mp4, 3 .wav, 2 .m4a, 10 .doc, 3 .pdf	Interviews	June 2023-March 2024	Interviews with Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director for Till the Stars Come Down, carried out by Erin Lee from June 2023 to March 2024.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/4/1/1	1 .wav, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze	16-Jun-24	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with edited audio and video recordings (approx. 45 minutes), edited transcript, redacted on request of von Schultze. Document of questions asked. This interview covers von Schultze's involvement in and reflections about the research trip to Mansfield 10-11 June 2023 and the design workshop at the NT Studio 12-14 June 2023.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/4/1/2	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze	21-Jul-24	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 32 minutes). Transcript file, edited transcript and document of questions asked. This interview covers von Schultze's involvement in and reflections about the workshop 10-14 July 2023 at the New	Open	Open

						Work Department. Recording has glitchy moments due to poor Wi-Fi connection.		
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/4/1/3	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze	03-Nov-23	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 30 minutes). Transcript file, edited transcript and document of questions asked. This interview covers von Schultze's involvement in and reflections about the workshop 16-18 October 2023 at the New Work Department.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/4/1/4	1 .wav, 1 .mp4, 2 .pdf, 2 .doc	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze	20-Feb-24	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with edited audio and video recordings (approx. 45 minutes), edited transcript, redacted on request of von Schultze. Document of questions asked. This interview covers von Schultze's involvement in and reflections about the rehearsal period, technical rehearsals, previews, and the run so far. Emails exchanged about von Schultze postponing original interview from 16 January 2024.	Open	Open
File	Interviews	EL/4/2/4/1/5	1 .wav, 1 .mp4, 1 .pdf, 2 .doc	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze	18-Mar-24	Interview with Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with edited audio and video recordings (approx. 19 minutes), edited transcript, redacted on request of von Schultze. Document of questions asked.	Open	Open

						This interview covers von Schultze's involvement in and reflections about the NT at Home recording of the production on 6 March 2024. Email correspondence organising interview.		
Item	Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director	EL/4/2/4/2	1 .pdf	Research trip notes	10-11 June 2023	Notes taken by Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director for Till the Stars Come Down, during the research trip to Mansfield with Beth Steel, writer, Bijan Sheibani, director, and Samal Blak, designer, on 10-11 June 2023.	Open	Open
Item	Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director	EL/4/2/4/3	1 .pdf	Staff director update email	31-Aug-23	Email from Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director for Till the Stars Come Down, outlining what he has been working on in the month of August since his last interview with Erin Lee.	Open	Open
File	Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director	EL/4/2/4/4	4 .pdf	Staff director notes	Nov-23	Documents created by Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director for Till the Stars Come Down, for rehearsals of the production. Timeline of the scenes in the play; timeline of the play; character fact files; and places in the play.	Open	Open
File	Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director	EL/4/2/4/5	6 .pdf	Rehearsal Diaries	December 2023-January 2024	Rehearsal diaries written by Stepan Mysko von Schultze, staff director for Till the Stars Come Down, and circulated to various NT staff.	Open	Open

Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/4/3	37 .pdf, 8 .jpg, 1. jfif, 8 .doc, 1 .xlsx	Casting	2023-2024	Files from the Casting Department relating to Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Casting	EL/4/4/3/1	37 .pdf, 8 .jpg, 1. jfif, 6 .doc, 1 .xlsx	Casting folders	26-Mar-24	Casting advice notes for all company members, salaries, availability checks for potential future life of the production, headshots, audition lists, young performer licences and applications, chaperone information and young performer schedules, information on emergency covers, draft cast grid, good luck card for opening night, availability check for covers, tracking document of actors. all related to Till the Stars Come Down.	Closed	Closed
Item	Casting	EL/4/4/3/2	1 .doc	Cast list	15-Apr-24	Cast list for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
Item	Casting	EL/4/4/3/3	1 .doc	Management briefing notes	23-Aug-23	Notes from Management briefing with announcement of casting for Till the Stars Come Down.	Closed	Open
Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/5	102 .pdf, 9 .doc, 2 .xlsx, 129 .jpg, 113 .png, 1 .psd, 1 .ppt, 23 .mp4, 2 .srt	Marketing and Digital Media	July 2023-April 2024	Files from the Marketing and Digital Media teams around Till the Stars Come Down including concepts documentation, photoshoot information, production photographs, social media campaigns, and short-form content.	Open	Open

File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/1	2 .doc, 17 .pdf	Marketing campaign concepts meetings	July-August 2023	Questions written and sent out by Marketing department to Beth Steel, writer of Till the Stars Come Down, and Bijan Sheibani, director, in advance of the Concept meeting on Monday 3rd July 2023. Answers to these questions were discussed at the meeting. Briefing notes written by Billy Bull, Senior Designer, following the concept meeting on 3 July 2023. Email from Ali Forbes, Head of Content Production Studio, to all attendees of concept meeting (3 July 2023) about timelines and deadlines for the marketing campaign. Copy of email and PowerPoint sent to Alex Bayley, Chief Marketing Officer, with original concepts for the graphic design and short-form content for Till the Stars Come Down. Copy of Bayley's reply and suggestions for whittling the options down for the concepts presentation meeting with Steel and Sheibani on 26 July 2023. Copies provided by Jen Dennis, Head of Design, via Teams. Feedback from Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, via Jen Dennis on the final concepts. Two documents of notes from concepts meeting presentation of ideas to Steel and Sheibani taken by Billy Bull and Erin Lee. PowerPoint presentation that was shared with Steel and Sheibani with final three concepts. Miro board export showing	Open	Open

						Billy Bull's ideas and development of the concept.		

File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/2	39 .pdf, 7 .png, 5 .jpg, 3 .doc	Documentation of first photoshoot	August-September 2023	Photoshoot correspondence for What's On Guide and Poster images for Till the Stars Come Down including cast availability, locations, schedules, costumes, and updated concept deck for shoot, and Teams messages. Information for and from photoshoot for first version of the poster at Grocery Studios, 99 Turnpike Lane, studios of Simon Sorted, photographer on 18 September 2023. Simon Sorted shot list for the shoot. Call sheet. Wedding couple poses collated by Billy Bull, Senior Designer, to give Simon Sorted an idea of what the team were looking for. Email from Jen Dennis, Head of Design, letting attendees of the photoshoot know that someone had Covid-19 on set. Deck of photo selects by Marketing and Graphic Design Studio with correspondence to and from Bijan Sheibani and Beth Steel about the photo selected for the What's on Guide. Teams messages around Covid-19 and photo selects. Correspondence and decks following the photoshoot showing decision making process of which image to feature in the What's on Guide, title treatment, costs. Title treatment deck alongside one for Dear Octopus, being designed at same time by Billy Bull. Teams message showing sign off by Bijan Sheibani and Beth Steel. Teams messages about the	Open	Open

						digital rollout with AMEX, email, social and web, and part 2 with Google Discovery, Access Images, YouTube Thumbnail. Designs for the beacon outside the NT with Teams messages.		
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/3	2 .pdf, 4 .png, 6 .jpg	October on-sale	17-Oct-23	Press release announcing Till the Stars Come Down. Screenshots from social media of announcement with campaign imagery. Press images.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/4	28 .pdf, 19 .png, 41 .jpg, 1 .psd, 1 .xlsx, 1 .doc	Documentation of second photoshoot	01-Dec-23	Planning for second photoshoot on 1 December 2023 for Till the Stars Come Down with fuller cast including photographer availability and budget planning including schedule and risk assessment. Selects, poster mock-ups and final assets for social media using the photographs from the second photoshoot.	Open	Open

						Style guide for production, digital rollout assets, DC and Digital Screens assets. Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: this photoshoot was the first time the cast had all met, ahead of rehearsals starting on Monday 4 December 2023.		
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/5	58 .png, 1.pdf, 5 .jpg	Social media campaign	December 2023-May 2024	Screenshots from Facebook and Instagram stories featuring Till the Stars Come Down taken by Erin Lee, from release of poster artwork after second photoshoot and trailer, rehearsal photographs, from post-press night with press stars and other content featured throughout the run of the show, and for launch of recording on NT at Home. Deck presentation delivered by Lottie Fowler, Social Media and Content Coordinator, to Beth Steel, writer, and Bijan Sheibani, director, on 6 February 2024 re. planned additional social media campaign elements.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/6	3 .pdf, 1 .mp4	Sessions	09-Jan-24	Emails to all staff regarding Sessions interview by Nina Steiger, Director of New Work, with Beth Steel, writer of Till the Stars Come Down, and Bijan Sheibani, director. Recording of Sessions interview.	Open	Open
Item	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/7	1 .jpg	Poster on Underground	20-Jan-24	Photograph taken by Erin Lee of poster at Marylebone Underground Station for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open

File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/8	22 .jpg	Production photographs	24-Jan-24	Production photographs of Till the Stars Come Down taken by Manuel Harlan on 24 January 2024.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/9	2 .pdf	Press night communication	31-Jan-24	Email invite to press night and ticket for Till the Stars Come Down belonging to Erin Lee.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/10	3 .pdf, 2 .doc, 1 .xlsx	NT at Home recording materials	25-Mar-24	Materials relating to the NT at Home recording of Till the Stars Come Down on 6 March 2024 including: NT at Home camera plan showing location of cameras and off-sale seats for the NT at Home recording; edit schedule; cast headshot sheet; production schedule; contact sheet; and planning meeting minutes.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/11	46 .jpg	Disposable camera photographs	26-Mar-24	Digital versions of photographs taken by the company of Till the Stars Come Down on a disposable camera for the social media team. Context note added by Erin Lee, Head of Archive: No flash was used so the photographs were too dark to use on any social media posts.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/12	4 .png, 1 .pdf	Short-form content usage reports	26-Mar-24	Reports showing viewing statistics for the short-form content created for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/13	3 .pdf, 1 .doc, 1 .ppt	Marketing wrap up	10-Apr-24	Wrap up documents from Marketing department for Till the Stars Come Down including close down report written by Ella Nettleton, Senior Marketing Manager,	Open	Open

						wrap up report for customer relationship management, press performance by Emily Ritchie, Press Manager.		
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/14	2 .pdf	Programme	Jan-24	Digital version of the programme content and the programme cover for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/15	13 .mp4, 8 .png	Concept trailer	December 2023-January 2024	Concept trailer versions for Till the Stars Come Down with notes downloaded from Portals. Final version of trailer. Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: filmed on same day as second photoshoot for final poster 1 December 2023.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/16	1 .mp4	In Scale film	16-Apr-24	Final version of video on the set design of Till the Stars Come Down featuring Samal Blak, designer, and the set model. This forms part of the 'In Scale' series of short films showcasing set design on particular productions.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/17	6 .mp4, 5 .png, 1 .pdf	New Work film	16-Apr-24	New Work film with Nina Steiger, Director of New Work, and Beth Steel, writer, discussing Steel's writer in residency and the development of Till the Stars Come Down. Versions and notes as well as final version. Call sheet for filming on 8th February 2024. Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: from conversation with producer in Digital Media, B-roll was captured in the Dorfman on 23rd January 2024.	Open	Open

File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/18	3 .jpg, 8 .png	NT at Home filming	11-Jun-24	Screenshots from Instagram of posts relating to the release of the Till the Stars Come Down recording onto the NT at Home platform.	Open	Open
File	Marketing and Digital Media	EL/4/4/19	2 .mp4, 2 .srt	NT at Home recording	11-Jun-24	Digital production recording of Till the Stars Come Down filmed in the Dorfman Theatre for the NT at Home platform. Subtitles available. Additional file with audio description available. Good quality video.	Open	Open
Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/5	1 .m4a, 2 .mp4, 12 .doc, 9 .xlsx, 4 .pdf	New Work	2023	Files from the New Work department relating to Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	New Work	EL/4/5/1	1 .m4a, 1 .mp4, 2 .doc	Interview with Stewart Pringle	12-Jul-23	Interview with Stewart Pringle, Senior Dramaturg, by Erin Lee, recorded on zoom with audio and video recordings (approx. 25 minutes). Transcript file, edited transcript, and document of questions asked. This interview covers Pringle's involvement with Till the Stars Come Down to date.	Open	Open
Item	New Work	EL/4/5/2	1 .pdf	Script draft	Nov-23	Rehearsal script draft of Till the Stars Come Down for November 2023.	Open	Open
File	New Work	EL/4/5/3	10 .doc, 9 .xlsx, 3 .pdf	New Work department folders	June-October 2023	Folders from New Work Department, downloaded on 27 February 2024, for Till the Stars Come Down production including draft scripts, casting information and photo sheets for the workshops held at the New Work Department. Transferred across the	Closed	Open

						documents specific to this production and none of the blank template documents.		
Item	New Work	EL/4/5/4	1 .mp4	Sharing video recording	15-Jul-23	Video recording made by New Work department of the reading of Till the Stars Come Down following the June workshop week.	Closed	Open
Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/6	4 .pdf, 1 .xlsx	Planning and Producing	2023-2024	Files from the Planning and Producing teams including the Music department relating to Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Planning and Producing	EL/4/6/1	3 .pdf	Repertory chart	06-Apr-23	Email from Jo Hornsby, Head of Planning, to various members of Planning, Producing, Casting, Stage Management, Contracts, and New Work teams regarding the scheduling of Till the Stars Come Down alongside two other productions. Attached is a repertory chart dated 06.04.2023 covering January 2023 to June 2024. Sarah Clarke, New Work Administrator, forwarded this email with attachments to Erin Lee.	Open	Open
File	Planning and Producing	EL/4/6/2	1 .xlsx, 1 .pdf	Music	19-Apr-24	Application to PRS for music rights clearance including tracks that were not able to be cleared and resulting invoice for the music that was used in Till the Stars Come Down. Invoice closed.	Closed	Open

Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/7	91 .pdf, 38 .jpg, 12 .png, 2. jfif, 1 .mp4	Press and Communications	December 2023-December 2024	Files from the Press and Communications departments relating to internal and external coverage of Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/1	12 .png, 1 .pdf	Press release	07-Dec-23	Screen grabs from Erin Lee's iPhone of social media announcement on Instagram and Twitter of the full cast for Till the Stars Come Down including headshots. Press release.	Open	Open
Item	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/2	1 .pdf	Press campaign plan	Jan-24	Press campaign strategy document for Till the Stars Come Down created by Press Manager, Emily Ritchie.	Open	Open
Item	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/3	1 .pdf	Photographer's contract	03-Jan-24	Signed photographer's contract for Manuel Harlan for Till the Stars Come Down rehearsal and production photography.	Closed	Closed
File	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/4	38 .jpg	Rehearsal photographs	03-Jan-24	Rehearsal photographs for Till the Stars Come Down taken by Manuel Harlan on 13 January 2024. Context note from Erin Lee, Head of Archive: from rehearsal call sheet, the rehearsal photographs were taken in Copperfield Rehearsal Room while the company was rehearsing Act 2. For more information on rehearsal room activities during the photographs, see rehearsal diary for week 4.	Open	Open
Item	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/5	1 .pdf	National Theatre Weekly	19-Jan-24	Internal NT newsletter to all staff with mention of Till the Stars Come Down with rehearsal photographs and photographs from the fit up.	Closed	Open

File	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/6	3 .pdf	Internal emails	29-Jan-24	Emails from Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, to all staff informing them of cancelled previews and cancelled performances of Till the Stars Come Down.	Closed	Open
File	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/7	6 .pdf, 2. jfif	Press coverage	January-December 2024	Press coverage of Till the Stars Come Down including emails sent to staff from the press team and cuttings. Email chain sent to Erin Lee by Press Manager, Emily Ritchie, showing the emails sent from her to NT senior management and the artistic team of Till the Stars Come Down on a regular basis with detailed breakdown of reviews and with quotes pulled out for quick reference.	Open	Open
File	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/8	1 .pdf, 1 .mp4	Staff Town Hall	11-Apr-24	Video recording of and slides from the all staff Townhall meeting on Thursday 11 April 2024. The future life of Till the Stars Come Down is mentioned and how the production performed against the Theatre Green Book standards.	Closed	Open
Item	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/9	1 .pdf	NT at Home press release	20-May-24	Press release for the NT at Home release of Till the Stars Come Down recording alongside Dear Octopus and The Underdog: The Other Other Bronte.	Open	Open
File	Press and Communications	EL/4/7/10	14 .pdf	Internal newsletters	5 January - 14 June 2024	Internal newsletters issued weekly to all staff by the Internal Communications team with mentions of Till the Stars Come Down.	Closed	Open

Sub-series	Till the Stars Come Down	EL/4/8	20 .png, 370 .jpg, 11 .mov, 53 .xlsx, 104 .doc, 86 .pdf, 19 .ppt, 10 .mp4, 89 .wav, 18 .m4a, 22 .dwg, 2 .aac, 1 .eml, 2 .xml, 7 .vwx, 2 .lw6, 1 .ccz, 1 .lsf, 2 .esf3d, 1 .mla, 1 .webp, 1 .avif, 1 .als, 1 .dbpr, 1 .ses, 1 .qlab5	Production and Technical	August 2023-March 2024	Files from the production and technical departments relating to Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/1	1 .pdf, 2 .mov, 1 .doc, 1 .mp4, 1 .xlsx	Armoury department	September-November 2023	Armoury department costing and materials tracker for Till the Stars Come Down. Notes from Chris Hay, Production Manager, on the trial viewing of the flaming lantern at the Armoury with Paul Wanklin and Grace Cowie of the Armoury. Two videos of second trial with thicker flash paper. Video of trial in Dorfman Dock. Notes from Erin Lee for same event.	Open	Open

File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/2	19 .png, 25 .jpg, 5 .mov, 9 .xlsx, 78 .doc, 46 .pdf	Company and Stage Management department	December 2023-March 2024	Company and stage management files for Till the Stars Come Down including: audio description notes per character; rehearsal room ground plans; costume plots; rehearsal calls and notes; schedules; food preparation notes and photographs; copies of scripts. Includes photographs taken by Ian Farmery, Company and Stage Manager, on 21 December 2023 of images on Thompson Rehearsal Room walls pre-move to external rehearsal space and on 15 January 2024 of Copperfield Rehearsal Room pre-fit-up. Taken at request of Erin Lee. Stage management and front of house reports for the full run of the production.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/3	184 .jpg, 21 .xlsx, 9 .doc, 1. webp, 1 .avif, 1 .png	Costume and Running Wardrobe department	December 2023-March 2024	Costume and Running Wardrobe departments' records for Till the Stars Come Down including: designs and reference images; costing; materials tracker; costume descriptions; dressing plots; running wardrobe and get out notes; technical rehearsal and preview notes; bibles; fitting photos; online shopping links.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/4	8 .jpg, 1. pdf	Design	Aug-23	Photographs of the set model for Till the Stars Come Down, uploaded to Teams by Kate Jones, Deputy Production Manager. Photographer: unknown. Feedback from a feasibility meeting around the design.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/5	18 .pdf, 19. dwg	Drawings department	November 2023-	Drawings for Till the Stars Come Down produced by Alan Bain, Head of Drawing Office, in .dwg and .pdf formats.	Open	Open

					January 2024			
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/6	3 .pdf, 2 .xml, 7.vwx, 2 .lw6, 6 .xlsx, 1 .mov, 1 .ccz, 1 .lsf, 2 .esf3d, 48 .jpg, 1 .doc, 1 .mla	Lighting department	January-March 2024	Lighting department records for Till the Stars Come Down including: drawings; operator's guide; show file; press night recording; focus plots; focus images; cue sheets; budget; resources requests.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/7	4 .jpg, 4 .doc, 4 .xlsx, 1 .mp4, 9 .pdf	Production department	September 2023-March 2024	Production department files for Till the Stars Come Down including: stage crew daily pre-show checks; notes from the get out meeting; CDM (Construction Design and Management) meeting notes by Kate Jones, Deputy Production Manager; stalls sightline video; costume photograph for Act 2; materials research. Production meeting minutes, taken by Jones. Production department decision log spreadsheet for elements of the production process. Production department materials tracker. Teams message from TJ Nash, Production Office Administrator, that the Production Teams channel is now public. Discussion on General Teams channel about whether casting is complete as the production has been announced. Environmental Impact Report for Till the Stars Come Down	Open	Open

						written by Frances Dawes, Production and Technical Sustainability Manager.		
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/8	1 .eml, 18 .pptx, 1 .mp4, 3 .mov, 5 .xlsx, 3 .dwg, 11 .jpeg, 3 .doc, 4 .pdf	Props department	November 2023-March 2024	Props files for Till The Stars Come Down including screensaver photographs for prop mobile phones; photographs of props from the hire store; research around aspects of the production such as eco hair spray, lantern, melamine plates; consumables listings; photographs of the set model; props list by Camilla Winter, Props Supervisor; drawings; videos of rain demonstration; costing and materials tracker; workshop list; props bible including photographs of props, their locations, where they were purchased or how they were made. Includes packing list and show graphics.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/9	2 .xlsx, 7 .doc	Safety department	April 2023-March 2024	Risk Assessments for elements of the Till the Stars Come Down production: rehearsal room; production; licensing document; lantern rigging; props; fit up	Open	Open

						and get out; rain set up; along with production safety file check list and CDM (Construction Design and Management) checklist.		
Item	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/10	1 .xlsx	Scenic Construction department	Nov-23	Costing and tracking chart from Scenic Construction for Till the Stars Come Down.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/11	1 .als, 1 .dbpr, 1 .ses, 26 .jpg, 2 .pdf, 1 .qlab5, 2 .aac, 18 .m4a, 89 .wav, 7 .mp4, 1 .xlsx	Sound and Video department	January-March 2024	Sound and Video department files for Till The Stars Come Down including: copies of script; health and safety information; Qlab files; photographs; video recordings of press night performance 31 January 2024, performance with Deputy Stage Manager audio on 1 February 2024, performance with Deputy Stage Manager audio on 1 February 2024, performance on 2 and 3 February 2024, infrared recording from temporary seating bank, and recording from seating bank of final performance 16 March 2024. Production sound bible created by the Sound department.	Open	Open
File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/12	2. pdf, 2. xlsx	Stage, Rigging and Automation department	January-March 2024	Stage, Rigging and Automation files for Till the Stars Come Down including: lifting plan; rehearsal deck; and CDM (Construction Design and Management) check list. Included is report on truss design calculations carried out by Campbell Reith.	Open	Open

File	Production and Technical	EL/4/8/13	1 .doc, 1 .xlsx, 1 .ppt, 64 .jpeg	Wigs, Hair and Make-up department	December 2023-March 2024	Wigs, Hair and Make-up files for Till the Stars Come Down including: plot notes; materials and spend tracker; and fitting photographs showing before and after hairstyles.	Open	Open

Appendix C – Retention Schedules

	New materials for NT Archive			
	Materials collected for TTSCD, which were previously identified for sending but never transferred			
	Materials collected as usual			
Department	**Existing retention schedule**	**What departments send**	**What I have collected**	**New retention schedule**
Administrative Teams				
Access			Audio description files including audio introduction notes, audio recording of these notes sent to the audience	Audio description files including audio introduction notes, audio recording of these notes sent to the audience, audio described performance recording
			Chilled performance pre-show announcements for front of house staff and signage used in the foyer	Chilled performance pre-show announcements for front of house staff and signage used in the foyer
			Large font cast list	Large font cast list
Casting	Production cast information (cast sheets, photo sheet, contact sheet)	No records	Casting folders including casting advice notes, salaries, availability checks, headshots, audition lists, young performers' schedules and licences, information on covers, cast grids	Casting folders including casting advice notes, salaries, availability checks, headshots, audition lists, young performers schedules and licences, information on covers, cast grids
	Audience feedback (letters of interest etc.)	Intermittent files transferred.		Audience feedback (letters of interest etc.)

			Cast list	Cast list
Digital Media	Administrative files (contracts, schedules etc.)	No records		Administrative files (contracts, schedules etc.)
	Recording (whether Archive, NT Live, NT at Home)	Recording (whether Archive, NT Live, NT at Home)	NT at Home recording	Recording (whether Archive, NT Live, NT at Home)
	NT Live camera scripts (if applicable)	NT Live camera scripts (if applicable)		NT Live camera scripts (if applicable)
	Caption, audio described and BSL interpreted files where available	Caption, audio described and BSL interpreted files where available		Caption, audio described and BSL interpreted files where available
	Short-form video content	Short-form video content	Short-form video content including concept trailer, In Scale film, and New Work film	Short-form video content
			NT at Home recording materials such as camera plan, edit schedule, cast headshot sheet, production schedule, contact sheet, planning meeting minutes	NT at Home and NT Live recording materials such as camera plan, edit schedule, cast headshot sheet, production schedule, contact sheet, planning meeting minutes
			Versions of short-form film	
Graphic Design Studio	Repertory leaflets	Repertory leaflets		Repertory leaflets
	Show leaflets	Format has changed since schedule written		

	Posters	Posters	Poster	Poster
	Decks (creative concept decks, creative style guides, presentation decks)	Visual guidelines were transferred for show and non-show campaigns in 2017.	Concept deck of initial proposals, PowerPoint of final three concepts, briefing notes and write up from concept meetings	Decks (creative concept decks, creative style guides, presentation decks)
	All other leaflets/forms	Sample of these		All other leaflets/forms
	Administrative paperwork (process document, strategy document etc.)	No records		Administrative paperwork (process document, strategy document etc.)
Marketing	Administrative files (segmentation reports, audience planning tool etc.)	Meeting agenda and minutes previously transferred to Archive from around 2012 to 2014.		Administrative files (segmentation reports, audience planning tool etc.)
	Monthly social media reports	Format has changed since schedule written		
	Campaign closedown reports	No records.	Marketing wrap-up report	Marketing wrap-up report
	Media campaign and evaluation reports	No records.	(included in Marketing wrap-up report)	
	Customer relationship management reports	No records		
	Survey synopses	Audience reports.		
	Box Office ticket sale reports	Box Office ticket sale reports	Box Office ticket sale reports	Box Office ticket sale reports

			Marketing campaign concepts questions sent to artistic team, timelines and deadlines, notes from meetings and emails exchanged between marketing and artistic team	Marketing campaign questions to artistic team
			Photoshoot information including schedule, planning, budget, costumes, call sheet, PowerPoint of photo selects, title treatment presentation alongside images, information on digital rollout and versions of images required and end cards	Call sheet for photoshoot, PowerPoint of photo selects and title treatment
			Style guide for rollout of assets	Style guide for rollout of assets
			Social media campaign including screenshots, deck campaign presented to artistic team of social media plan, disposable camera photographs	Social media campaign proposal deck, assets created for social media campaign, X exports, analytics reports
			Short-form content usage report	Short-form content usage report
Music	Show files (final conductor's scores, draft score for band calls, orchestra layouts)	Show files (final conductor's scores, draft score for band calls, orchestra layouts)		Show files (final conductor's scores, draft score for band calls, orchestra layouts)

	Show admin files (fixing spreadsheets, dep spreadsheets, PRS applications)	No records	Show admin files containing application to PRS for music clearance and resulting invoice	Show admin files (fixing spreadsheets, dep spreadsheets, PRS applications)
	Contracts for musicians	No records		Contracts for musicians
	Musicians Union annual agreements	No records		Musicians Union annual agreements
New Work	Project files (project brief, budget, list of participants, project evaluation/outcome)	No records	Production file including all draft scripts, casting information, photo sheets	Production file including draft scripts, casting information, photo sheets
	Writers' files (reports and interesting correspondence around decisions)	Writers' files (reports and interesting correspondence around decisions)		Writers' files (reports and interesting correspondence around decisions)
	Studio scheduling	Room scheduling/planning documents 2015-2023.		Studio scheduling
	Scripts first drafts	Scripts first drafts	Scripts first drafts	Script first draft
	Administrative files	No records		Administrative files
			Subsequent drafts from workshops and as a result of dramaturgy conversations	First draft of script, workshop drafts, post-workshop drafts
			Interview with dramaturg	
			Rehearsal script	Rehearsal script
			Sharing video recording	Sharing video recording
Press and Internal Comms	Campaign reports, plans and logs	No records	Press campaign strategy document	Press campaign strategy document
	Press cuttings	Press cuttings	Press cuttings	Press cuttings

	Rehearsal photographs	Rehearsal photographs	Rehearsal photographs	Rehearsal photographs
	Production photographs	Production photographs	Production photographs	Production photographs
	Other photography	Other photography		Other photography
	General press cuttings	General press cuttings		General press cuttings
	Press admin files	No records		Press admin files
	Press releases	Press releases	Press releases	Press releases
	Administrative files	No records		Administrative files
			Social media screenshots of production casting announcement	
			Sessions recording	Sessions recording
			Photographer's contract	Photographer's contract
			Internal comms about the show including newsletters, emails, and Staff Townhall mentions	Internal comms about the show including newsletters, emails, and Staff Townhall mentions
Planning and Producing			Repertory chart	Repertory chart
Publishing	Programme	Programme	Programme	Programme
	Published NT books	Published NT books		Published NT books
	Programme admin files	No longer kept		
	Programme show files	No longer kept		
	Touring programmes	Touring programmes		Touring programmes
	Learning background packs	Learning background packs		Learning background packs

	Special projects (souvenir programmes etc.)	Special projects (souvenir programmes etc.)		Special projects (souvenir programmes etc.)
Production and Technical Teams				
Armoury			Materials tracker	Materials tracker
			Videos of flaming lantern demonstrations	Videos of demonstrations
			Notes from production manager re. flaming lantern	
Costume	Costume designs	Costume designs		Costume designs
	Costume bible including swatches of materials and accessories, actors' measurements, reference images, costings, costume descriptions, dressing plots	Costume bible including swatches of materials and accessories, actors' measurements, reference images, costings, costume descriptions, dressing plots	Costume information including actors' measurements, reference images, costings, costume descriptions, dressing plots, technical rehearsal and preview notes	Costume information including actors' measurements, reference images, costings, costume descriptions, dressing plots, technical rehearsal and preview notes
	Costume photographs	Costume photographs	Costume photographs	Costume photographs
	Costume props records	Costume props records		Costume props records
			Materials tracker	Materials tracker
Digital Drawing	All issued ground plans	All issued ground plans	All issued ground plans	All issued ground plans
	Bench drawings for workshops	Bench drawings for workshops		Bench drawings for workshops

	3D office drawings from the model	3D office drawings from the model		3D office drawings from the model
	Contractors' drawings where applicable	Contractors' drawings where applicable		Contractors' drawings where applicable
	Designer's drawings where applicable	Designer's drawings where applicable		Designer's drawings where applicable
	Digital art	No records	Digital art	Digital art
	Images for drawings (photos of the set model)	No records		Images for drawings (photos of the set model)
	Technical photos of production on stage	Technical photos of production on stage		Technical photos of production on stage
Lighting	Lighting focus plots	No records	Focus plots and focus images	Focus plots and focus images
	Lighting plans	No records	Drawings, cue sheets	Drawings, cue sheets
	Show bible	Format has changed since schedule written		
	Show files	No records	Show file	Show file
			Press night recording with cues on screen	Press night recording with cues on screen
			Operator's guide	Operator's guide
			Budget and resources requests	Budget
Production management	Images (models, storyboard)	Images (models, storyboard)	Photographs of set model	Photographs of set model
	Summary budget sheets and costings	No records		
	Schedules	Schedules	Schedules	Schedules
	Production meeting minutes	No records	Production meeting minutes	Production meeting minutes
	Documents of flying and other production elements	No records		

	H&S agreements and forms including work permits	H&S agreements and forms including work permits		
	Props lists and information/sketches	No records		
			Stalls sightline video	Any video content created for reference
			Get out information	Get out information
			Materials research	Materials research
			Materials tracker and decision log	Materials tracker and decision log
Production sustainability			Environmental impact report	Environmental impact report
Props	Props bible	Props bible	Props file including photographs of props used, research, consumables listings, photographs of set model, props list, drawings, costings, locations of props, packing list, graphics	Props file including photographs of props used, research, consumables listings, photographs of set model, props list, drawings, costings, locations of props, packing list, graphics
			Materials tracker	Materials tracker
Running Wardrobe			Running wardrobe and get out notes	Running wardrobe and get out notes
			Costume descriptions	Costume descriptions
	Fitting photographs	Fitting photographs	Fitting photographs	Fitting photographs
Safety	Accident reports and claim documents	Accident reports and claim documents	Accident reports and claim documents	Accident reports and claim documents
			Risk assessments	Risk assessments
			Licensing information	Licensing information

			Production safety file checklist and Construction Design and Management checklist	Production safety file checklist and Construction Design and Management checklist
Scenic Art				
Scenic Construction			Costing and tracking chart	Costing and tracking chart
Sound and Video	Plans	No records		
	Final script	No records	Script with sound operator's mark up	Script with sound operator's mark up
	Images	No records	Photographs of practicals and speakers	Photographs of practicals and speakers
	Mic paperwork	No records		
	Headshots	No records		
	Schematic	No records		
	Versions of any software or plugins used	No records		
	Show file (desk, QLAB, mainstage, DME)	No records	Qlab , Abelton, D&B, Digico, drawing	Qlab , Abelton, D&B, Digico, drawing
			Video recordings of press night, version with DSM audio, infrared recording from temporary seating bank, and recording from seating bank of final performance	Video recordings of press night, version with DSM audio, and any subsequent recordings later in the run
			Sound bible	Sound bible
Stage Management	Annotated blocking and cueing script	Annotated blocking and cueing script	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Annotated blocking and cueing script
	Cast and crew list with or without photographs	Cast and crew list with or without photographs	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Cast and crew list with or without photographs

	Technical show information including stage cue sheet, stage LX cue sheet, floor sound cue sheet, flys cue sheet, automation cue sheet, wardrobe plots, wigs, hair, and make-up lots	Technical show information including stage cue sheet, stage LX cue sheet, floor sound cue sheet, flys cue sheet, automation cue sheet, wardrobe plots, wigs, hair, and make-up lots	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Technical show information including stage cue sheet, stage LX cue sheet, floor sound cue sheet, flys cue sheet, automation cue sheet, wardrobe plots, wigs, hair, and make-up lots
	Props setting lists	Props setting lists	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Props setting lists
	Rehearsal notes	Rehearsal notes	Rehearsal notes	Rehearsal notes
	Story boards	Story boards	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Story boards
	Set and model photographs	Set and model photographs	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Set and model photographs
	Character descriptions if available	Character descriptions if available	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Character descriptions if available
	Scene change lists	Scene change lists	Pending (transferred post West-End run)	Scene change lists
			Audio description notes per character	Audio description notes per character
			Rehearsal room ground plans	Rehearsal room ground plans
			Costume plots	Costume plots
			Rehearsal calls	Rehearsal calls
			Schedules	Schedules

			Food preparation notes and photographs	Food preparation notes and photographs or other relevant show-specific materials
			Rehearsal room photographs	Rehearsal room photographs
			Stage management reports	Stage management reports
Stage, Rigging, and Automation			Lifting plan, rehearsal deck and Construction Design and Management checklist	Plans and checklists
			Report on truss design	Reports compiled
Wigs, Hair and Make-up	Digital images	Intermittent records transferred.	Fitting photographs showing before and after hairstyles	Fitting photographs showing before and after hairstyles
	Video footage of techniques and fabrication methods	No records		Video footage of techniques and fabrication methods
	Reference images	Often included in WH&M bibles.		Reference images
	WH&M bibles	WH&M bibles	Bible information including plot notes	Bible information including plot notes
			Materials tracker	Materials tracker
Artistic Team				
Writer			All script drafts	First draft, workshop drafts, post-workshop drafts, rehearsal draft
			Interviews with archive	
			Photographs of working space	
			Dramaturgy notes	
			Written up notes on progress	
Director			N/A	Director's notes

Staff Director	Rehearsal diaries	Rehearsal diaries	Rehearsal diaries	Rehearsal diaries
			Interviews with archive	
			Workshop and research trip notes	Workshop and research trip notes
			Notes including character fact files, timelines of the play, locations in the play	Any relevant notes
Rest of artistic team			Interviews with archive	

Appendix D – Erin Lee PhD Archive (ELPA) finding aid

Summary

Creator: Erin Lee

Title: Erin Lee PhD Archive

Dates: 2019-2025

Size: 42GB

Archive reference: EL

Content: Materials relating to Erin Lee's PhD including related publications and presentations. The majority of the collection is materials gathered from the active archiving of *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024).

Language: English

Repository: National Theatre Archive, 83-101 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL

Biography

Erin Lee is Head of Archive at the National Theatre, where she has worked since 2012. She is a PhD candidate at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where she is researching how to archive the development period of productions at the National Theatre in London. She gained an MS in Library and Information Science from Syracuse University and an MA in Classics from the University of Oxford. She sits on the APGRD's International Advisory Board and BAFTA's Heritage Committee, and she stepped down from the board of the Association of Performing Arts Collections in 2023 after nine years.

Scope and Content Note

The Erin Lee PhD Archive contains materials relating to Erin Lee's PhD, undertaken 2019-2025 as part of her role as Head of Archive. The PhD focused on the development and producing of *Till the Stars Come Down* by Beth Steel, staged in the Dorfman Theatre in 2024. The collection is divided into four series:

Planning and Overview: This includes documents relating to the application for PhD, research proposals, annual reviews, ethics information and the transfer process.

Thesis: The completed PhD thesis.

Reports, publications, and findings: This includes reports, publications and talks written and disseminated during the PhD.

Till the Stars Come Down: This collection contains the materials Lee gathered as part of her embedded and parallel practice with *Till the Stars Come Down* from 2020 to 2024. This includes materials that would have been transferred to the NT Archive normally as well as materials that Lee has collected and produced specifically as part of this practice such as interviews with practitioners and more detailed documentation from back of house teams.

Restrictions

Access restrictions:

Access to materials requires advance notice to prepare them for your visit. You can book a visit using this form.

A small number of records have restricted access. Requests to access restricted materials can be sent in by using this form.

Use restrictions:

Written permission must be obtained from the NT Archive and all relevant rights holders before publishing excerpts or images from any materials in this collection.

Related Materials

The Royal National Theatre Collection holds materials from *Till the Stars Come Down* (2024), which were transferred as part of the existing record transfer protocols. These can be searched for using the NT Archive catalogue and searching by production or in the catalogue itself.

Four pieces of short-form content are available online:

Till the Stars Come Down trailer

Till the Stars Come Down NT at Home trailer

Till the Stars Come Down NT at Home 'My Wife!'

Till the Stars Come Down New Writing for the Stage

Some members of the artistic team have worked at the National Theatre before, and related productions are listed below:

Paule Constable, Lighting Designer, has worked on many productions at the NT so listed here are her Dorfman Theatre productions:
Mosquitoes (2017), Dorfman Theatre; *Nine Night* (2018), Dorfman Theatre; *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2019), Dorfman Theatre; *Dixon and Daughters* (2023), Dorfman Theatre.

Aline David, Choreographer and Movement Director:
Our Class (2009), Cottesloe Theatre; *The Kitchen* (2011), Olivier Theatre; *Greenland* (2011), Lyttelton Theatre; *Damned by Despair* (2012), Olivier Theatre; *Antigone* (2012), Olivier Theatre; *Romeo and Juliet* (2013), The Shed; *Emil and the Detectives* (2013), Olivier Theatre; *A Taste of Honey* (2014), Lyttelton Theatre; *Barber Shop Chronicles* (2017), Dorfman Theatre.

Gareth Fry, Sound Designer:
Iphigenia at Aulis (2004), Lyttelton Theatre; *A Matter of Life and Death* (2007), Olivier Theatre; *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (2011), Lyttelton Theatre; *Othello* (2013), Olivier Theatre; *Barber Shop Chronicles* (2017), Dorfman Theatre.

Bijan Sheibani, Director:
Our Class (2009), Cottesloe Theatre; *The Kitchen* (2011), Olivier Theatre; *Greenland* (2011), Lyttelton Theatre; *Damned by Despair* (2012), Olivier Theatre; *Romeo and Juliet* (2013), The Shed; *Emil and the Detectives* (2013), Olivier Theatre; *A Taste of Honey* (2014), Lyttelton Theatre; *The Comedy of Errors* (2015), Temporary Theatre; *Barber Shop Chronicles* (2017), Dorfman Theatre.

Selected Search terms

Names:

Aline David; Beth Steel; Bijan Sheibani; Erin Lee; Gareth Fry; Paule Constable; Samal Blak; Stepan Mysko von Schultze

Subjects:
Acoustics; Archive development; Archive records; Archive science; Design; Drama; Fashion; Interdisciplinary research; Lighting; Marketing; Press; Theatre directors; Theatre management

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation: Erin Lee PhD Archive, National Theatre Archive.

Acquisition Information: Gift of Erin Lee in 2024.

Processing Information: All materials are digital and stored on NT Archive servers prior to ingest into Preservica software. Erin Lee catalogued the materials prior to transfer.

Finding Aid Information:
Created by: Erin Lee
Date: 2024
Revision history: N/A

Arrangement

The original order of the collection has been maintained.

Themes

There are several subject areas in this collection and this section will take you through some prominent themes and outline which records to start with if you are interested in learning more. These are only some suggestions of jumping off points, which will hopefully show some routes into the materials.

Artistic team process:

- Directing

There are limited materials from the director, Bijan Sheibani, but the staff director, Stepan Mysko von Schultze, has provided a lot of information about the directing process and

materials from Beth Steel, the writer, are also very useful for understanding the direction of the production.

The writer, Beth Steel, and director, Bijan Shebani, discuss the play in an interview by Director of New Work, Nina Steiger (EL/4/4/6).

The staff director, Stepan Mysko von Schultze, provided rehearsal diaries for each week of rehearsal (EL/4/2/4/5) as well as notes from the artistic team's research trip to Mansfield (EL/4/2/4/3) and notes that were used in rehearsals (EL/4/2/4/4), such as character fact files. Von Schultze also provided five interviews with Erin Lee, Head of Archive, from June 2023 to after closing night in March 2024. These interviews detail what the artistic team were working on, how workshops and rehearsal were going and then how the production was running once it had opened. There are video and audio recordings of the interviews as well as transcripts (EL/4/2/4/1).

The Production department meeting minutes (EL/4/8/7) contain information about rehearsals and questions and challenges that were coming up for the director and artistic team as a whole.

- Lighting Design

The lighting designer, Paule Constable, provided an interview with Erin Lee, Head of Archive, outlining her approach to this production (EL/4/2/3). The Lighting department files show how Constable's designs were brought to life including focus charts, show file and operator's guide (EL/4/8/6). The production meeting minutes have a Lighting section each week, showing issues and challenges arising during rehearsal (EL/4/8/7).

- Playwriting and play development

The writer, Beth Steel, provided interviews with Erin Lee, Head of Archive, from June 2023 to after the production ended in March 2024 (EL/4/2/1/2). All drafts of Steel's play are available (EL/4/2/1/1) as well as progress updates sent from Steel to Lee (EL/4/2/1/3). There are photographs of the walls in Steel's office when she was writer in residence at the NT Studio (2020-2022) (EL/4/2/1/4).

The New Work department files offer information on the development of the scripts and the workshops that were held between July 2023 and October 2023 (EL/4/5/3). There is also an interview by Erin Lee with Stewart Pringle, dramaturg, about his involvement with the development of the play (EL/4/5/1).

The interview recording mentioned above with Bijan Sheibani, director, and Nina Steiger, Director of New Work (EL/4/4/6) discusses Steel's writing and the New Work Department film (EL/4/4/17) features Steel and Steiger discussing Steel's writer in residence experience.

- Set and Costume Design

The set and costumes were designed by Samal Blak and information on these can be obtained through a variety of sources. For a brief introduction to the design in Blak's own words, look at the *In Scale* film (EL/4/4/16).

The Costume and Running Wardrobe files (EL/4/8/3) contain more practical information about the costumes, fittings and hired items. The Wigs, Hair and Make-up files (EL/4/8/13) also contain information relating to the physical appearance of the actors including fitting photographs and plot notes.

For the set design, production photographs (EL/4/4/8), design drawings (EL/4/8/4) and materials from the Production Department files (EL/4/8/7) such as the production meeting minutes, research for the AstroTurf flooring, materials tracker and stage crew daily pre-show checks will be of use.

The production meeting minutes have sections on Set, Costume, Wigs, hair and make-up and Running Wardrobe each week, showing issues and challenges arising during rehearsal (EL/4/8/7).

- Sound Design

The sound designer, Gareth Fry, provided written answers to questions from Erin Lee, Head of Archive, about his process for designing the sound for the show (EL/4/2/2). The Sound and

Video department files add information to this with a sound bible, photographs of speaker set-up and desk files, among others. The production meeting minutes have a Sound section each week, showing issues and challenges arising during rehearsal (EL/4/8/7).

Themes in the play:
You can also explore particular themes in the play through the materials. Throughout the play there is the recurring theme of circles and cycles. This can be seen in the interview with the writer in June 2023 (EL/4/2/1/2/1) and in the staff director's notes from the research trip to Mansfield in the same month (EL/4/2/4/2). The designer discusses the use of circles in the play in the short-form film on design (EL/4/4/16) and the set model photographs show the circular revolve (EL/4/8/4). Production photographs show the final set design (EL/4/4/8).

The staff director discusses the use of the revolve in his November interview and December rehearsal diary (EL/4/2/4/1/3; EL/4/2/4/5). The Graphic Design Studio included circular motifs in their planning for the visual language of the play (EL/4/4/1). Elements of the set build, which included a circular rain bar, rostra and lighting bar are included in Lighting department records (EL/4/8/6) and the Drawing office records (EL/4/8/5). The audio description introductory notes for the audience also describe the circular performance space (EL/4/1/1).

These materials demonstrate how you can follow one thread through all phases of the production and understand better where a concept originated and how it has been developed throughout these periods.