Managing Image Volume in Digital Performing Arts Collections

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The Theatre and Dance Platform (TDP) is a leading Australian digital repository which houses and showcases a wide range of theatre and dance collections. It aims to acknowledge and provide access to many important facets of Australian theatre and dance history, including the stories of key individuals, companies and institutions.

The TDP hosts a range of digitised material related to the performing arts, including photographs, scenic and costume designs, video recordings, posters and textual material such as programmes, reviews and correspondence and is easily searchable by key words and standard catalogue terms.

By contributing to preservation and online management of Australian theatre and dance materials, the University is supporting engagement with a wider public and research community. All the content in the collections is aggregated through Trove, the National Library of Australia’s search engine, and with AusStage, a database of Australian live performing arts. This provides researchers with access to the collections from different entry-points, as well as adding to the context in which the Theatre and Dance Platform informs and shapes Australia’s cultural heritage.

Key collections include items in the University archives and collections, as well as content that belongs to artists and companies external to the University. We have been excited by our first major partnership with Lucy Guerin Inc, and as a digital repository we welcome further contributions.

https://digitised-collections.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/92018
The Problem of Image Volume

“The sheer volume of born digital images requires archivists to economize their efforts, and capturing metadata can be one of the most costly aspects of acquiring a born digital collection.”

Keough and Wolfe, 2012: 75
Image Volume 1963 vs 2005

_A Cheery Soul_ by Patrick White
Union Theatre, Parkville, VIC
19 November 1963

148 images (or 12-13 rolls of film)
Description
Photograph 67: From act three: "Miss Docker, you have killed my saint." Shows (l-r) Nita Pannell as Miss Docker, Brian James as Mr Wakeman (collapsed) and Gerda Nicolson as Mrs Wakeman. Photographs 66-74 similar.
Image Volume 1963 vs 2005

A Cheery Soul by Patrick White
Union Theatre, Parkville, VIC
19 November 1963

148 images (or 12-13 rolls of film)

Aether, by Lucy Guerin
North Melbourne Town Hall, North Melbourne, VIC
15 March 2005

1,331 image files (across 35 folders)
Possible Solutions?

1. Integrated workflow
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2. Retention guidelines

“... deleting content is hard work ...”

(Ball and Day, 2009: 147)
Possible Solutions?

1. Integrated workflow
2. Retention guidelines
3. Interface development
Our Solution

Delivery version (PDF photo wallet) combining images from a single performance or shoot into one document
Our Solution

Document Type: Photograph
Access Status: Open Access
URI: http://hdl.handle.net/11343/213401
Linked Resource URL: https://www.ausstage.edu.au/pages/event/78588
Description: A photo wallet (PDF) created by the Theatre and Dance Platform combining 286 rehearsal images provided by Lucy Guerin Inc.
Notes: Original files labelled Corridor1_001.JPG to Corridor1_286.JPG.
Work: Corridor; Country of Origin: Australia; Creator Contributors: Lucy Guerin; Organisations: Lucy Guerin Inc.
Keywords: Contemporary Dance

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Concluding thoughts...

... on the challenges faced by researchers trying to curate their data in the context of an institutional repository.