

Karen Mélody Holland. Overture and Beginners Please! A Call for Performing Arts Metadata at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. July, 2017. 101 pages. Advisor: Denise Anthony.

In August 1947, Scotland hosted its first Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama. Unbeknownst, it simultaneously hosted an uninvited set of eight theatre troupes, whose performances included a staging of *Macbeth*, alongside Marionette puppet plays. These undeterred artists set into motion what would become the single largest celebration of arts and culture in the world: the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The year 2017 is the Festival's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Yet, little attention has been paid to its documentation and description. The literature suggests that metadata schemas dedicated to performing arts are recent, and none have been explored in the context of the Fringe. This research project conducts a case study of an archival collection entitled *Follow the Fringe*. It employs qualitative content analysis to explore how well the current metadata schemas modeled for performing arts address the descriptive needs of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

#### Headings:

Metadata

Theatre

Performing Arts Libraries

Performing Arts Archives

Festivals

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

OVERTURE AND BEGINNERS PLEASE! A CALL FOR PERFORMING ARTS  
METADATA AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE

By

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Approved by

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Denise Anthony

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### **Note on Theatrical Term Usage in This Paper**

The theatre world demands a willingness to play on the part of its performers. This playfulness is often reflected in theatre jargon. I have chosen to incorporate and disperse throughout the paper a variety of theatrical terms and jargon. It is hoped this will not only serve to educate and inform, but to entice the reader into grasping or experiencing a bit of the context of the theatre world.

All terms have been sourced from *The Oberon Glossary of Theatrical Terms: Theatre Jargon Explained*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., by Colin Winslow (London: Oberon Books, 2011). Thus, each usage of a theatre term herein will not be accompanied by formal citation. All theatre terms will appear with an immediate parenthetical definition and/or an explanatory footnote.

## Act I. *Prologue*

The theatre, where many arts are combined to produce a magical effect; where the most lofty and profound poetry has for its interpreter the most finished action, which is at once eloquence and an animated picture; while architecture contributes her splendid decorations, and painting her perspective of illusions, and the aid of music is called in to attune the mind, or to heighten by its strains the emotions which already agitate it; the theatre, in short, where the whole of the social and artistic enlightenment, which a nation possesses, the fruit of many centuries of continued exertion, are brought into play within the representation of a few short hours, has an extraordinary charm for every age, sex, and rank, and has ever been the favorite amusement of every cultivated people. <sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1808, in the Austrian city of Vienna, August Wilhelm Schlegel gave a series of Lectures to 300 students of Dramatic Literature. In the above excerpt from Lecture II, Schlegel speaks to the charms of the theatre. He could also be describing Scotland and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

In August of 1947, Europe was in need of renewal post World War II. This need was answered with the first Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama. The City welcomed thousands of performers and visitors, eager to celebrate the values of culture and artistic excellence. The finest plays and ballet, orchestras and opera, performed morning, noon, and night. This showering of exuberance led eight companies, *sans* invitation, to show up and perform nonetheless. Not at the official Edinburgh festival, but rather ‘round the fringe.’ Thus was born the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

In 2017, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Fringe is regarded as the single largest celebration of arts and culture in the world.

Indeed, 11 July 2017 marks the first ever World Fringe Day. Yet, little attention has been paid to the Fringe by scholars and archivists. A survey of the fields of metadata and performing arts reveal that metadata schemas designed uniquely for performing arts are recent. Further, it appears that none of these schemas has been explored in the context of Fringe.

This research project questions *how* and *how well* the current metadata schemas modeled for performing arts address the descriptive needs of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It seeks to set upon the stage a dress rehearsal of these dedicated schemas, by performing a case study of a Fringe archival collection called *Follow the Fringe*.

The paper is structured like that of a play. This was not by design. Rather, this outline emerged on its own, as organically as any live performance. A serendipitous homage to the theatre world, no doubt. To continue this foray into the Fringe, a note of theatrical jargon is in order. ‘Overture and beginners please!’ is a call to perform. A Call given five minutes before the start of a musical show to request opening performers and musicians to take their places in the orchestra pit or onstage.

So I call the reader to take their seat. As we step into the world of theatre, performing arts, metadata and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Overture and Beginner’s Please!

## ACT II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Scene 1. Metadata and the Performing Arts

Performance is an evanescent art. Yet, for as long as performance has existed, it has lingered. ‘The Dressing Up Game’ (theatrical profession) may present a smidgen or a sumptuous production. Both will linger in the theatre of the mind; in libraries, archives, and museums; and most recently, in the theatre of the digital.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the European Renaissance flourished. A time of Shakespeare and England’s reigning monarch, Elizabeth I (1558-1616). It is called ‘The Golden Age,’ an era in which arts like music, painting, literature and drama were sublime and desired like never before. It was a Golden Age of Performance. Hence, the building of new Performing Arts libraries and archives (private and public) was thrust into the limelight.\*

“Those large repositories collected texts, books and photos about the Performing Arts for the use of a few selected and privileged scholars, historians and academics. It was a niche community.”<sup>2</sup> The passage of time and all things digital has changed this, providing carriage-trade † seats (best seats) for all!

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\* The term ‘Limelight’ originates from the intense white light created when a flame produced from a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen is directed at a cylinder of quicklime (calcium oxide). First used at Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London in 1837, and rapidly becoming popular worldwide, used in the same way as a modern Follow Spot (spotlight). Replaced by electric arc lights near end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

† Carriage Trade – Upmarket members of the audience occupying the best seats and paying the highest prices. Originally referring to those travelling to the theatre in their own carriages.



The digital era has brought opportunities. In “How Are On-Line Libraries Changing Theatre Studies and Memories?” Maia Borelli coalesces five reflections:

1. The record of a performance or a conference if digitized and uploaded on-line, is more easily accessed by a greater number of users than the original item conserved in an archive.
2. The recent introduction of new audiovisual and hypermedia tools is deeply transforming the way Performing Arts researchers are doing their work.
3. The on-line access to digital video opens the way to a new management of Performing Arts documents.
4. What was scarce in the past is now more and more abundant and easily accessible not only to experts but to everybody.
5. Electronic Arts and Digital New Media forecast a new aesthetic and imaginary, different from the market driven way of describing the world. <sup>3</sup>

These reflections highlight the possibilities for new metadata standards in the Performing Arts. In 2002, the Global Performing Arts Consortium observed:

There is an urgent need for a metadata standard for the performing arts. Existing standards fail to provide a satisfactory framework for describing performance, a complex event that often has multiple creators and participants. Yet, it is exactly this complexity, the ephemeral nature of the performing arts, their dependence on image and sound, the involvement of multiple creators, that make the use of digital technologies in the study of performance particularly potent. Without a satisfactory metadata structure, however, the potential for exploration and study of the performing arts in the virtual environment cannot be fully exploited. <sup>4</sup>

#### *What is Metadata?*

Michael Day has written,

Metadata is sometimes defined as ‘data about data,’ but the term is normally understood to mean structured data about resources that can be used to help support a wide range of operations. These might include, for example, resource description and discovery, the management of information resources and their long-term preservation. While the first use of ‘metadata’ originated in contexts related to digital information (chiefly databases), the general understanding of the term has since broadened to include, any kind of standardized descriptive information about resources, including non-digital ones. <sup>5</sup>

Metadata facilitates mapping of content and context into the digital realm - “defining and storing different kinds of relationships between objects.” Five relationships often used in information systems,

- Inclusion: one object is included in another object
- Inheritance: one object inherits the characteristics of another object
- Association: one object is associated with another object
- Attributes: an object contains certain attributes, or certain characteristics which describe its state of being or its internal structure
- Web Links: realization of a certain kind of association in a web environment <sup>6</sup>

### *Performing Arts Metadata*

A Performing Arts collection can be archived, digitized, metadata'd, and shared as a digital library, archive, or museum service. What is a performing arts collection? “A performing arts resource collection encompasses a wide range of disciplines, starting with the disciplines of music and film and stretching further toward dance, theatre and the broadcasting arts.” Performance resources: (a) comprise different types of data - e.g. sound, video, text, image, and binaries;\* (b) contain complexities of data - images and video might be stored as single binary data objects, whereas music, theatre and broadcasting arts could involve storing and accessing highly structured data, presenting complex or ‘composite’ objects; (c) possess different relationships; and (d) are time-based in nature.

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\* These data types can evolve into more complex types when stored, e.g. html, mpeg, wav, gif, jpeg. To minimize the danger of storing data in standards that may not be supported in the future, a best practice is to separate the content of a resource from its presentation. *Ibid.*, 3.

Performing Arts ‘data’ consists of both primary resources (the digitized multimedia objects themselves) and secondary resources (materials about the performing arts, moving image and sound-based media).<sup>7</sup>

To manage Performing Arts information, three types of metadata are needed: *descriptive* metadata to provide tools for searching; *structural* metadata to provide public and internal links to images, audio/video, and more; and *administrative* metadata to provide the control elements needed for current and long-term access (e.g. rights and access information, and data on creation and preservation of the digital objects).<sup>8</sup> *Structural* metadata and *administrative* metadata serve as the legs<sup>\*</sup> for the digital staging of performing arts resources. Whereas, *descriptive* metadata about resources has two purposes: efficient retrieval of resources, and comparative study of resources. Both are important for the study of performing arts.<sup>9</sup>

“In the area of descriptive metadata, neither the various cultural repositories nor the performing arts community has reached consensus”<sup>10</sup> on a standard data model.

### *Data Modeling*

A *data model* is an organized way to record information. “Like a shared language that develops in rehearsal, it is a way of talking about the work.”<sup>11</sup> Modelling of Performing Arts metadata is complex. Artistic creation presents physical manifestations

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\* In theatre terms, the ‘Legs’ are the lengths of fabric hanging vertically to mask the sides of the stage, usually made of black velour or serge, but sometimes coloured for decorative effect. Not to be confused with a ‘Leg Show’ (any musical with attractive girls wearing costumes designed to show off their legs).

(e.g. photos of a set or costume), and performances (e.g. the live, *real time* performance, adaptations, interpretations) in which “the artistic capabilities are again dominant.”<sup>12</sup>

Several ‘standard description models’ have been used with performing arts.

Broad models: Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DC), European Data Model (EDM), International Committee for Documentation - Conceptual Reference Model for museums (CIDOC-CRM), and Functional Requirements of Bibliographic Records ‘object oriented’ (FRBRoo). Narrowly focused models: Categories for the Description of Works of Art (CDWA), Visual Resource Association’s Core visual resource descriptors (VRA-Core), Moving Picture Experts Group video descriptors (MPEG-7), and Film Identification - Minimum Set of Metadata Cinematographic Works (EN 15744: 2009). There is even the Web Annotation Data model, an ontology model for *live* performance.<sup>13</sup>

None excel at modeling performing arts. “The most relevant lacks are related to the semantic descriptions and to modeling of the information connected to the performers and performances, which are obviously distinguishing aspects of the performing arts and are essential to the preservation of our cultural heritage and literature, which is strongly connected with the performing arts.”<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, it is important to distinguish Performing Arts ‘documentation’ from ‘description’. In a recent survey of twelve digital theatre projects across the globe, Jonathan Bollen distinguishes three types of projects: (1) research projects, (2) collection-based archival projects at theatre companies and venues, and (3) commercially-oriented projects. Examples such as AusStage (Australia), Scottish Theatre Archive (Glasgow), and Internet Broadway Database (IBDB), respectively. Projects are often framed by national borders, institutional endeavors, or lifework of individuals. Such as Theatre

Aotearoa (New Zealand), Abbey Theatre Archives Performance Database (Ireland), or Ibsen Stage (Norway). Across all he observes:

These projects converge in their efforts to describe the who, what, where and when of performance events. Performances are ephemeral by nature, fluid in their temporary assemblage of people and plans, but specific – at least to some degree of precision – as to their occurrence in time and location in place. In this regard, these projects share a focus on documenting events, which may be distinguished from other projects that aim primarily at the description of items in archival collections.<sup>15</sup>

In short, standard description models have each worked as a Cazzie (casual) metadata standard for describing Performing Arts resources. A ‘Cazzie’ is a part-time theatre worker, especially one engaged to help with technical work during a set-up or get-out period, or to assist with running a live show. To be certain, the aforementioned standard models have kept Performing Arts collections ‘performing’ in the digital world. Nonetheless, these collections are ready to broaden their audiences. To do this requires a metadata model designed expressly for Performing Arts.

## **Scene 2. Performing Arts Schemas**

Pulling the festoon (stage curtain) back in the theatre of Performing Arts descriptive metadata, I expected a billow of schemas moving about the stage, facilitating description and access to theatrical content. In fact, I found myself tempted to ask: ‘Has the Ghost Walked?’\* Theatre jargon for “Have the salaries been paid?,” I surmised that

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\* The phrase ‘Has the Ghost Walked?’ is steeped in lore. There is a tradition that Shakespeare played the ghost in Hamlet, giving him a long wait between his entrances in Act I and Act III, Scene 4. He would therefore have had time between entrances to collect the takings, from which he would pay the actors, while still wearing his ‘ghost’ costume. The often heard remark: ‘The ghost walks on Friday’ derives from the same tradition.

either the noble funders had not supported forays into the creation of performing arts metadata, or else such is a relatively new topic of active interest. The latter appears to be the dominant explanation for the few players acting in the role of a dedicated Performing Arts metadata schema.

The literature reveals just two functioning schemas created expressly for describing performing arts: Global Performing Arts Consortium (GloPAC), and Europeana Collected Library of Artistic Performance (ECLAP). In addition, Performing Arts Core Metadata Standard (PACore) is a conceptual model that did not develop into a formal metadata schema, yet is useful to examine. The approximate timeline of development for these three models: 2006 (GloPAC), 2010 (PACore), and 2012 (ECLAP). GloPAC and PACore were conceived in the United States, whereas ECLAP was devised in Europe.

I hence present the following. A Passerelle (catwalk)\* of Performing Arts metadata models to highlight the prime activities that have been uniquely devoted to capturing the performing arts.

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\* A 'Passerelle' is the theatrical term for a Catwalk, for use by Showgirls for self-display, passing from one side of the stage to the other around the front of the Orchestra Pit, often with a translucent surface lit from underneath.

### A. Global Performing Arts Consortium

The Global Performing Arts Consortium (GloPAC), conceived in 1998, is “an international organization of institutions and individuals committed to using innovative digital technologies to create easily accessible, multimedia, and multilingual information resources for the study and preservation of the performing arts.”<sup>16</sup> Its founding members: Karen Brazell, Professor of Japanese Literature and Theatre at Cornell University; Cornell University; and Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre. International partners include libraries, archives, museums, and performing arts organizations.<sup>17</sup> GloPAC’s technical hosting resides at Cornell University.

GloPAC took center stage when it set out to address the lack of an existing metadata standard for performing arts. In 2002, it partnered with Cornell University, Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre, Museum of the City of New York, San Francisco Performing Arts Library, University of Washington Libraries, and St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music (Russia).<sup>18</sup> Thereby, it secured an *Institute of Museum and Library Services* grant, and designed “a sophisticated metadata schema that accommodates the particular descriptive requirements of performance.”<sup>19</sup>

Amongst GloPAC’s goals: enable libraries, museums, performing arts groups, and individuals to provide global access to their performing arts collections; reframe the study of performing arts from a global view; and facilitate study of performing arts in source languages as well as in English.<sup>20</sup> GloPAC’s two components: the Global Performing Arts Database (GloPAD), and Performing Arts Resource Centers (PARCs).<sup>21</sup>

GloPAD is a free multimedia, multilingual, database containing over 6,000 digital objects (e.g. images, texts, video clips, sound recordings, and complex media like 3-D) relating to performing arts worldwide. Features include,

- Two Interfaces. An input interface for editors to upload digital objects and descriptive metadata with online help and templates, and a public interface offering search (Boolean and phrase) and browse functions.
- Entirely Web-Based. Both interfaces afford global access.
- Six Languages. The public interface offers English, French, German, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese. The editors' interface offers all entries in English, and the original language(s) of performance and materials.
- Authoritative. Scholars and performing arts specialists oversee input of records in their field of expertise. Thus, some digital objects are described in great depth, whilst others reflect only minimal information.
- Controlled Vocabularies. GloPAC seeks a high level of consistency and so controls vocabulary input into most database fields.<sup>22</sup>

PARCs are web sites that focus one set of GloPAD contents. This focus may be geographical, temporal, genre or thematically oriented. PARCs provide a “new venue for scholars to produce creative online publications (exhibits, lessons, multimedia essays, reference materials, bibliographic and other resources).” Tools and templates facilitate use of recent technologies without needing advanced technical skills. PARCs “actively connect to GloPAD providing a constantly expanding resource collection and allowing exploration of material outside a PARC module’s context.” A prototype is The Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center (JPARC).<sup>23</sup>



*Description, Description, Description!*

GloPAC sought to develop a stagecraft.\* Neither Thespian, † Noise Boy or Lamp Tramp.‡ Rather, GloPAC's stagecraft is description. Developing its database highlighted the need for this craft: "It was quickly realized that existing metadata standards fail to provide a satisfactory framework for describing performance, a complex event that often has multiple creators and participants." GloPAC thus sought to create a prototype to accommodate "the particular descriptive requirements of performance."<sup>24</sup>

GloPAC collects and offers for display digital media and their descriptive information. It is the descriptive metadata that is unique, for it lets one describe various elements of the performing arts. Description is enhanced via active links and "dynamic rendering of page contents." Many pieces of information need only be entered once and are then automatically linked to all related items. Viewing a photo of a costume, one can link to performance pieces using that costume, then link to a specific production of the piece, to the person who directed the piece, then to other pieces that person directed.<sup>25</sup>

GloPAC seeks a wide scope of materials so as to,

- Cover the entire array of performing arts materials, e.g. representations of performance, set models, letters from playwrights, musical instruments, architectural drawings, promptbooks, posters, box office records.
- Draw on performing arts from a wide range of cultural traditions.
- Use a variety of audiovisual formats, such as slides, photographs, streaming video and audio, sound recordings, 3D models.

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\* 'Stagecraft' is the technical skills employed by technicians, performers, directors, writers, etc., as applied to theatre.

† 'Thespian' is an antiquated term for an actor, from Thespis of Icaria, a Greek poet of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, generally considered to be the founder of drama.

‡ A 'Noise Boy' is a sound technician, and a 'Lamp Tramp' is a lighting technician.

Each digital object carries rich, descriptive information. Data about the performing art represented, its component parts related to the performance (e.g. set, costume, script), and the items (e.g. photo, video, painting) from which the digital surrogates are created, including details on repositories and intellectual property.<sup>26</sup>

### *Context*

Rich description and an entirely *Web-based* database go far to affording context to performing arts resources. Two additional aspects of GloPAC contribute to contextualizing collections - collaboration and sustainability. GloPAC notes: “access has been a double-edged sword, introducing new visual materials but discarding in the process the expected contextual information that has traditionally been taught through training in a performing art tradition or in the use of an archives.”

In contrast, GloPAC not only allows access to previously isolated archives, *it also provides information that puts the materials of those archives into their performing arts contexts.* Specifically, GloPAC projects brings together not only the materials from various collections, but also people who have specialized knowledge about those materials, people who collect the materials (archivists), study the materials (scholars) and practice the performing arts out of which the materials were born. This collaboration among archivists, scholars and practitioners is fundamental. The database has been designed not simply to collect, but to exist as a space for continuous collection and collaboration between people in different geographic regions. (emphasis added)<sup>27</sup>

GloPAC’s model of collaboration is expansive, forming a “group of museum curators, librarians, archivists, metadata specialists, scholars, technology experts, information specialists, and artists.”<sup>28</sup> Additionally, evidence of GloPAC’s ongoing commitment is seen in its response to a 2012 review of GloPAD) which noted a lack of

phrase searching, no allowance for spelling variances such as ‘theater’ and ‘theatre’, and an inability to recognize diacritics. It appears these items have since been addressed.

GloPAC was and is unique in its global orientation. It created an international metadata standard for the performing arts, and an international model of cooperation in design, project implementation, and sustainability. The results being access, standardization, customization, context building, and ongoing collaboration.

### *GloPAC Metadata Model*

Conventional theatre-related databases are “either indexes of performances records, biographical collections, or philological archives of dramatic texts (the piece).” In addition, they center their structure around the ‘performance’ - the entire ‘show’. The GloPAC model is different. Its metadata is structured to capture all elements that may comprise a performance and its traditions. Thus, its structure is centered on the ‘performance moment’: the moment of performing represented in the digital object.

Further, it centers materials as ‘generic objects.’ Rather than organize the database around a certain type of information, such as listings of show dates and locations or chronologies of actors’ appearances, “the system simply captures an object of any material sort and allows a description of that object’s relevance to performing arts history.”<sup>29</sup> In essence, description is like an organic, encore performance. One, hopefully, that produces neither a yawn or sitting on hands.\*

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\* A ‘Yawn’ is a boring production. The theatre phrase ‘Sitting on Hands’ is used to describe an unresponsive audience, i.e. reluctant to clap.

Importantly, the ‘performance moment’ captures a more authentic context. Typically, context means information about “the given day’s show, the two-hour event, the production, or a two-week run of performances.” This emanates from the narrow tradition of drama, but is not applicable to many histories of performing arts.

For instance, “the typical program for Kabuki theatre is what might be called ‘scenes from pieces’. To present photos of a given five minutes of one night’s show, as representing the show as a whole, would miss the main focus of Kabuki – to present the acting and design rather than retelling a narrative story.”<sup>30</sup>

### *GloPAC Metadata Structure*

To represent an artifact in GloPAC’s database, one must first catalogue the digital capture of that artifact (technical metadata) and then go on to describe the artifact and its performing arts significance (‘actual content’). GloPAC identifies two needs of Performing Arts description. That centered on the performance itself, and description of the nature of the item digitized.

To describe a digital object, the GloPAC structure divides the description into two paths: information of what is *represented* in the object (Core Record) and background information needed to describe the specific object but not unique to that object (Background Record). Core Records have a one-to-one relationship with a digital object, describing its unique elements. Background records are used repeatedly, such as for biographical or historical information.

**Core Records** describe the direct representation of a performance and its related objects (such as architectural drawings, theatrical posters, props, costumes). A Core

Record is comprised of a *Performance Record* and one or more *Component Records*. If a digital object contains a ‘performance moment’, it is described in the *Performance Record*. Anything not a performance moment, is described in a *Component Record*.<sup>31</sup>

To illustrate, take a painting of a production scene from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* that features the character Bottom. The Core subject matter is the depiction of Bottom, his costume, his posture and gestures, and the depiction of the performance space he occupies. The Background significance, it was done by a famous painter or it was executed in pastel or oil. Further, a photo of a ‘performance moment’ also serves as an example of a particular set (a ‘component’), such as a forest scene of Oberon.<sup>32</sup>

**Background Records** are the ‘who, what, when, where, and why.’ In the performing arts domain, such have “inflections which change with each different genre of performing art.” Background Records include ‘Piece’, ‘Person’, and ‘Production’.

Piece. The pieces performed during a production are one of the first bits of information entered into a Production Record. This is done by linking a ‘Piece’ Record to the Production Record, as well as describing how it was used in that Production. GloPAC allows many elements to be described by their relationship to a named Piece, such as a given scenery is used in a certain Piece. An element’s relationship to a piece is a standard index for performing arts.

Person. The Person Record is a biographical record of names, birth and death dates, and institutional associations of a person. It is then put into relationship with other records, thereby creating a performing arts history of the individual. Two connections to a person are quite important: the ability to track multiple names of an individual, and a

list of functions that people carries out. The GloPAC structure allows entry of alternate names and their types – e.g., Alternate spelling, Alternate transliteration, Nickname, and Earlier stage names. The functions a person fulfills depend on context, and so are not part of the Person Record. Functions are generated as a person is associated with other records, e.g. Production, Piece, or Performance Moment. Importantly, the types of functions in the performing arts are “limited only by imagination.” The list of Functions, like other lists, is expandable as new performing arts are described.<sup>33</sup>

Production. The concept of a ‘production’ is widely used in performing arts, but its definition varies by genres. To accommodate all variations, GloPAC defines a production as simply: a collection of one or more performances.

The Production Record is completed by first selecting a *production type* from a fixed list of five: long run, multi-performance program, repertory theatre run, single event, and tour. These generic types are flexible by not adhering to a single performing arts tradition, leaving details to be explained within the record.

A widely held notion of a production is “a run of once-a-day performances over a period of time.” Yet, variations abound:

A Broadway show may run daily for years, while a repertory theatre may mix multiple performances of different pieces in a season. In Japan, a NOH play is performed only once with the same cast in an event that includes several NOH plays, as well as sung or danced pieces, and a Kyogen play. Kabuki and puppet theatres run on twenty-day cycles of programs, comprised of scenes taken from different pieces, often with distinct day and evening programs.<sup>34</sup>

A *production name* is auto-generated: a default combination of the required entries of beginning date, venue, performing group, and piece title. There is also a field

for Production Alternate Name, where one can enter the name given to the production from within its performing arts tradition, e.g., the name given on a published program.

Abundant are *production roles*. Here, “complicated vocabularies of performance are given their place.”<sup>35</sup> GloPAD maintains several vocabularies:

- person alternate name types (e.g. stage name, nickname)
- piece alternate name types (e.g. title in original language, title of individual scene)
- functions (e.g. composer, circus performer, Corps de ballet, set designer)
- character types (e.g. courtiers, walking gentleman, supernatural being)
- sections of performance (e.g. dress rehearsal, Performance: Act I, intermission)
- component types (e.g. lobby, drop curtain, wig<sup>\*</sup>, publicity photograph, ticket, audience presenting gifts, applying makeup<sup>†</sup>)
- arts of performance (e.g. dancing, puppetry, storytelling).<sup>36</sup>

### *GloPAC Schema & Application Profile*

The Application Profile for the GloPAC Performing Arts Metadata Schema, Version 5.1, was issued February 12, 2006. It comprises 54 elements, plus 13 additional ‘unmapped’ fields.<sup>37</sup> The Schema is seen on the GloPAD editors’ interface, where it structures how artifacts are described via tools and templates. The descriptive metadata is expandable – terms and relationships can be built up over time.<sup>38</sup> To create its schema, GloPAC incorporated mappings to several schemas:

The Universal Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, and specialized schemas such as Visual Resources Association Core 3.0, the Getty Categories for Describing Works of Art, the Art Museum Image Consortium Data Specification. Also used were existing schemas devoted to a single format, e.g. NISO Metadata for Images in XML Schema and, even those

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<sup>\*</sup> In theatre jargon, a wig is often referred to as a ‘rug’.

<sup>†</sup> Crude or badly applied stage make up is oft referred to as ‘Sadler’s Wells make up.’ The dressing rooms at the old Sadler’s Wells Theatre in North London were reputed to supply all the ingredients necessary for free make-up. Flakes of the ochre distemper and brown paint could be scraped from the walls into a tobacco tin with a coin, then ground with water to form a base. A fingertip run along the dusty ledges provided a substitute for eye-shadow.

intended for physical rather than digital objects, like U.S. Machine-Readable Cataloging.\*

The Application Profile reveals how GloPAC maps to these schemas, via ‘Namespaces’, and documents the GloPAC metadata schema. The schema covers people, places, objects, and events relating to the performing arts.

### **B. European Collected Library of Performing Arts**

The European Collected Library of Performing Arts (‘ECLAP’) is known as ‘ECLAP, the e-library for performing arts.’ It is a best practice network and service portal,<sup>39</sup> and project of Europeana.<sup>40</sup> ECLAP serves as official content aggregator for Europeana, using the European Data Model (EDM), via an OAI-PMH server.<sup>41</sup>

ECLAP was set up by the European Commission, with a 3-year, grant-funded project running from 2010 - 2012. The ECLAP project was realized via a consortium of 20 European partners. Performing arts institutions, universities and research institutes endeavoring to link the theatre domain with the digital world. Original partner countries included Greece, Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, England, and Scotland. ECLAP is coordinated by Paolo Nesi, professor at the University of Florence (Firenze, Italy).<sup>42</sup> ECLAP could be described as in ‘The Business.’<sup>†</sup>

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\* To allow metadata records to be harvested using OAI / PMH (Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting), a simplified version was created in unqualified Dublin Core (the most basic metadata language). The simplified records facilitate discovery alongside other digital collections in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s IMLS Digital Collections Registry.

† ‘The business’ is jargon for ‘the theatrical profession’. As in ‘Is he in the business?’



ECLAP offers a large, collaborative, multilingual library for the performing arts community in Europe and beyond. It collects (aggregates), enriches, and distributes European performing arts content:

The ECLAP initiative brings together hundreds of thousands of Europe's most relevant performing arts content (often previously inaccessible on the internet) including collections on theatre, dance, music, cinema and film. These consist of performances, lessons, master classes, educational material, festival information, costumes, sketches, scenography, lyrics and posters. File formats include video and audio files, documents, images, animations, playlists, 3D, e-books, interactive and cross-media content.<sup>43</sup>

ECLAP publishes more than 180,000 distinct objects, comprised of over one million items, reflecting 500 plus file formats. Its content originates from 35 countries, with descriptive metadata in 13 languages, a public interface in 21 languages, and accessed from 184 countries.<sup>44</sup> It divides its content into information content (e.g. images, video, Braille, animations, and 3D), aggregated content (e.g. playlists, collections, annotations, synchronization), and support and networking content (e.g. blogs, events, webpages, forums, comments, votes, messages).<sup>45</sup>

ECLAP comprises over 2,300 individual registered users.<sup>46</sup> They include “teachers, students, performers, researchers, and performing arts lovers for edutainment, infotainment, and entertainment.” A user distribution profile is viewable at <http://www.eclap.eu/103996>. Institutional members are also brought together. A list of ECLAP ‘partners’ can be accessed at <http://www.eclap.eu/partners>.<sup>47</sup>

### *ECLAP Semantic Model*

The core of ECLAP is its semantic model - defined expressly for aggregating and enriching performing arts content. This model is the foundation, whereby ECLAP “exploits the use of advanced social media and semantic computing technologies.”<sup>48</sup>

ECLAP services include: (1) tools for content ingestion, workflow management, metadata enrichment, IPR definition; (2) content aggregation and multi-channel distributions (personal computers and mobile devices); (3) intellectual property supervision; (4) support for live events and museums via mobile applications, QR and GPS technology; 5) increasing content visibility via the ECLAP portal and publication to Europeana.<sup>49</sup>

ECLAP users can,

- Search, retrieve and play multilingual content
- Upload and share multilingual content
- Aggregate content in playlists, collections, and e-courses
- Enrich and contextualize content
- Perform audio/visual annotations with MyStoryPlayer
- Comment, tag, and vote on content ... perhaps ‘Quoth the raven’<sup>\*</sup>
- Embed ECLAP content in other Web portals
- Receive alerts on similar, local and Europeana content
- Enjoy feeds and augmented reality at events and museums.<sup>50</sup>

ECLAP is a provider of content and user services, and a best practices network. It has three working groups: (1) Digital Libraries and Models for Performing Arts Content, (2) Intellectual Property Management and Tools, and (3) Digital Content Based Tools for

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<sup>\*</sup> ‘Quoth the raven’: coded phrase indicating dissatisfaction sometimes entered as a comment in the Visitors’ Book in old-style theatrical digs, referring to the famous line from Edgar Allen Poe’s poem The Raven: ‘Quoth the raven, “Nevermore”’.

Teaching and Learning of Performing Arts in a New Era.<sup>51</sup> It also facilitates networking and collaboration amongst its content providers (CPs).<sup>52</sup>

### *Linked Open Data*

ECLAP publishes Linked Open Data (LOD).<sup>\*</sup> It is mapped from the ECLAP Semantic Model to EDM.<sup>53</sup> In turn, Europeana provides the LOD via SPARQL (an RDF query language). The LOD affords access to the model of ECLAP, including content description, taxonomy of classification, relationships, user descriptors and annotations.<sup>54</sup>

LOD content is described in RDF. Fields that are existing Dublin Core terms in the ECLAP model are provided as they are, while specific fields for ECLAP are provided using specific properties (e.g. *eclap:performancePlace*) that are declared refinements of more generic properties taken from standard schemas (e.g., *dcterms:spatial*). Long term goals are to identify person names in descriptions, and to create an authority file of people in performing arts. In short, the ECLAP portal offers description as both RDF (LOD machine readable) and HTML (human readable).<sup>55</sup>

Features of ECLAP's LOD include the following. *Social Graph*. This tool allows users to visualize and navigate among ECLAP semantic relationships and LOD, and filter relationships by interest. *Timeline*. Dates are disambiguated and classified: first performance, performance, upload, last change, issuing, acceptance, creation, recording, etc., averaging five dates per project. A user can access content along the

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<sup>\*</sup> Linked Open Data (LOD): Technique for data publishing, which uses common web technologies to connect related data and make them accessible on the Web. It identifies resources with HTTP Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI), and, uses standards like Resource Description Framework (RDF) to provide data about resources and connect them to other resources on the web. In most cases, for resource description, a common practice is to exploit available vocabularies, e.g. Dublin Core, Friend of a Friend, and Basic Geo Vocabulary. Bellini and Nesi, "Modeling performing arts metadata," 428.

timeline, and it affords Europeana “regular and clean dates with a unified format.”

*Geospatial Capabilities.* Certain Dublin Core and ECLAP performing arts metadata elements (e.g. coverage, spatial, performance place, performance city and country) can be mapped to GeoNames entities, thus linking to GeoNames linked data service.<sup>56</sup>

### *ECLAP Schema*

To initially classify content, ECLAP uses six thesauri of terms (total of 231 terms):

- Subject (e.g. Teaching, Multi-Culture)
- Genre (e.g. Comedy, Drama)
- Historical Period (e.g. Classical, XX Century)
- Movement and Style (e.g. Experimental, Theatre of the Absurd)
- Performing Arts (e.g. Dance, Ballet, Music, Theatre, Noh)
- Management and organization (e.g. Performance, Choreography).<sup>57</sup>

The ECLAP schema consists of 541 metadata fields, divided into 8 categories. “Some important multilingual metadata (i.e. text, title, body, description, contributor, subject, taxonomy, and Performing Arts metadata) are mapped into a set of 8 catchall fields, for searching purposes.” The Performing Arts category reflect 23 metadata fields.<sup>58</sup>

ECLAP content is described using the ECLAP *semantic* model, which is far richer than the ECLAP *ingestion* model (which facilitates conversion from various ingested metadata formats such as Dublin Core, FRBR, MARC and EAD).<sup>59</sup> Some of the elements defined for performing arts are defined as a specialization of Dublin Core properties. These were revealed by analyzing the metadata schemas used by ECLAP partners, schemas used by other projects, and various metadata standards. Among them,

info about the performance depicted in the resource (place, city, country, and date); the premiere of the performance (place, city, country and date); the contributors to the performance creation, each one having the specific cast/crew role (actor, dancer, light designer, hairdresser, director, set

designer); the type of performing art (e.g. theater, dance); name of the theater or dance company or musical group (e.g. Momix); object used in the performance; artistic movement and acting styles the work can be classified in (e.g. Classicism, Dada, Expressionism); date when the recording was made, etc. <sup>60</sup>

A complete description of ECLAP metadata fields for Performing Arts is recorded in the ECLAP Schema. <sup>61</sup> The ECLAP project concluded: “The experience highlighted that some relevant elements produced, enriched and aggregated by ECLAP cannot be mapped into EDM, while the ECLAP model can address some of the details related to the performing arts which are not at present addressed by the available standards.” <sup>62</sup>

#### *ECLAP extension: German Case Study*

Currently, an EDM case study in Germany is applying the ECLAP extension. The *Specialised Information Service Performing Arts* is a project funded by the German Research Foundation, and operating at the ‘University Library Frankfurt am Main’ from January 2015 to December 2017. The project aggregates German language performing arts resources from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. It then displays them as linked open data in *Entity Facts* – a portal run by the German National Library. <sup>63</sup>

The resources originate from numerous metadata standards (e.g., PICA, METS/MODS, Allegro, LIDO). They are mapped to EDM, then enriched with ECLAP performing arts namespaces like *eclap:performancePlace* and *eclap:performingArtType*. Using properties like *eclap:dancer* and *eclap:setDesigner*, ECLAP can also reflect the various roles or contributions of a performance.

Persons and their contribution are a major focus in the performing arts. This study highlights the difficulty of representing such. “The general *edm:wasPresentAt* can

link to an event, but does not capture the granularity that *eclap:SetDesigner* or *eclap:choreographer* can in a specific Event.”<sup>64</sup> Thus, ECLAP and the ECLAP-extension are tools for progress in this realm.

A full set of guidelines is currently being maintained.<sup>65</sup> For details on what ECLAP elements are being utilized to describe performing arts in this project, see: “Properties for the Specialized Information Service Performing Arts sorted by purpose” (Draft version: February 28, 2017)<sup>66</sup> and “EDM Application Profile for the Specialized Information Service Performing Arts” (Draft version: February 28, 2017).<sup>67</sup>

### C. Performing Arts Core Metadata Standard

The Performing Arts Core Metadata Standard (PACore) is a conceptual model used to design the application profiles for two performing arts archives in New York: Roundabout Theatre Company (RTC) and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM).<sup>68</sup>

In 2009, RTC and BAM consulted with *Whirl-i-gig*, the New York based open-source software firm developing *CollectiveAccess* (a digital content management system). Both institutions sought to redefine their metadata profiles for their *CollectiveAccess* installations. PACore was a response to their collaborative research and conclusion that existing metadata standards were insufficient to capture the complexity of performing arts archival collections – atypically organized via a chronology of time-based events. PACore drew upon FRBR, Dublin Core, GloPAC, CDWA, and institutional schemas. In short, PACore sought to “capture the core information about an asset within a collection as well as the performance related to the asset.”<sup>69</sup>

The PACore collaboration never went beyond the conceptual model reflected in its poster.<sup>70</sup> A sort of Flop d’estime (worthy flop).<sup>\*</sup> For, a PACore descriptive metadata standard for performing arts was not realized. Rather, RTC and BAM developed their own institutional schemas for *CollectiveAccess*. Yet, “The beauty is in Collective Access’ facility in capturing this information and in [one’s] ... ability to translate this into a performing arts standard.”<sup>71</sup>

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\* A ‘Flop d’estime’ is a generally well-regarded production, that nevertheless fails to attract audiences.

The schemas of RTC and BAM can be accessed in the Configuration Library of *CollectiveAccess* under Performing Arts Archives.<sup>72</sup> Each listing therein captures the distinctness of performing arts institutions:

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY, USA

- *A digital archive for a 150-year-old performing arts organization*
- Metadata Standards: DACS, GLOPAD, FRBR
- Object Types: documents, media, born-digital material, promotional items and memorabilia, with hierarchical sub-types.
- Occurrence Types: works, eras, years, seasons, series, productions and special events

Roundabout Theater Company, New York, NY, USA

- *A digital archive for a theatre company*
- Metadata Standards: none
- Object-Types: documents, news clippings, merchandise, costumes, props,\* and media, with hierarchical productions.
- Occurrence Types: stage productions, play readings, galas, opening nights, special events, student productions.

Efforts towards PACore raised the question: Is it possible to create a “Core” metadata schema for performing arts archives? When BAM assessed RTC’s schema, it was deemed ‘too institution specific.’ However, the PACore collaboration decided:

- GloPAD provided an excellent model for descriptive metadata.
- Mapping [GloPAD] to Dublin Core would ensure metadata flexibility.
- The FRBR model provided the necessary structure for performing arts collections.

It was concluded that Dublin Core elements capture the necessary basic descriptive information within a FRBR relationship hierarchy.<sup>73</sup> This was the ‘contextual core’ of PACore as a possible descriptive metadata standard for performing arts.

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\* A ‘Prop-wrecker’ is an Actor with an unfortunate tendency to break Props; usually the result of clumsiness brought on by nerves, rarely deliberately.



In sum, the PACore initiative resulted in the development of institutional standards for BAM and RTC. Nonetheless, descriptive metadata elements can be extracted from these customized *CollectiveAccess* schemas, and ‘translated’ into a seedling metadata standard for comparison with GloPAC and ECLAP.

Having viewed the ‘Playbills’ for GloPAC, ECLAP, and PACore - the details of these productions revealed - it is clear that more than ‘Rhubarb’ (background conversation)\* is being uttered across the Performing Arts metadata landscape. The digital arts are staging the performing arts in a virtual theatre. One that can embrace yet goes beyond the sets of ‘Penny plain, two pence coloured’ toy theatres.†

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\* ‘Rhubarb’: Word traditionally muttered by actors when required to produce the sound of background conversation.

† Penny plain, two pence coloured: Printed paper sheets of Scenery and Characters intended for use in Toy Theatres, popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sold for one penny each un-coloured or two pence each coloured by hand. Reprints are still available.

## ACT III. METHODOLOGY

This research enquiry employs Qualitative Content Analysis to engage with the materials. Additionally, a Case Study is utilized as a research strategy. This Case Study examines the archival special collection entitled “Follow the Fringe Project”, INST 729F, documenting the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (‘Follow the Fringe’). This collection resides at the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, University of Maryland (College Park).

### **Scene 1. Qualitative Content Analysis & Case Study**

**Content Analysis** is oft defined as “the study of recorded human communications.”<sup>74</sup> The object of analysis may be “any kind of recorded communication”, e.g., books, transcripts, protocols of observation, audio video tapes, websites, photographs and paintings. Qualitative Content Analysis has been described as “the most prevalent approach to the qualitative analysis of documents.”<sup>75</sup>

Qualitative Content Analysis is a highly customized methodology. Its essence is rooted in the qualitative paradigm:

a focus on interpretation rather than quantification; an emphasis on subjectivity rather than objectivity; flexibility in the process of conducting research; an orientation towards process rather than outcome; a concern with context - regarding behavior and situation as inextricably linked in forming experience; and finally, an explicit recognition of the impact of the research process on the research situation.<sup>76</sup>

Putting the methodology itself in context:

*Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world.* It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (emphasis added) <sup>77</sup>

Phillip Mayring defines Qualitative Content Analysis as ‘an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification.’ He offers a 3-step model of the analytical process:

1. *Summary*: reduce the material in such a way as to preserve the essential content and by abstraction to create a manageable corpus, which still reflects the original material.
2. *Explication*: explaining, clarifying and annotating the material.
3. *Structuring*: corresponds more or less to the procedures used in classical content analysis and is also viewed as the most crucial technique of content analysis, the goal of which is to filter out a particular structure from the material. Here the text can be structured according to content, form and scaling.

Steps may be carried out either independently or in combination, depending on the research question.<sup>78</sup>

A key feature of Qualitative Content Analysis, in contrast to quantitative content analysis, is that *context is central* to the interpretation and analysis of the material. Examined are manifest context, as well as latent context and formal aspects of the material. The approach emphasizes “allowing categories to emerge out of data.” It also emphasizes subject-reference instead of technique, and implies that procedures of content analysis “cannot be fixed but have to be adapted depending on the subject and its context.” <sup>79</sup>

In sum, Qualitative Content Analysis as a methodology offers unique benefits in that it accounts for the context of text components; latent structures of sense; distinctive individual cases; and things that do not appear in the text. “It is not by counting and measuring that ‘patterns’ or ‘wholes’ in texts can be demonstrated but by showing the different possibilities of interpretation of ‘multiple connotations.’”<sup>80</sup>

**Case Studies** are a common way to do qualitative inquiry. They serve a desire to understand complex social phenomena, as they “allow investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.” Purposes of case study research may be exploratory, descriptive, interpretive and explanatory. The research question will shape the case study design. A case study is not a method but a research strategy of what is to be studied. “By whatever methods (qualitative, quantitative or both), we choose to study the case.” Thus, “a case study cannot be defined through its research methods, but rather in terms of its theoretical orientation and interest in individual cases.” “Case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study does not represent a ‘sample’, and in doing a case study, your goal will be to generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization).”<sup>81</sup>

The key feature of a case study approach “is not method or data but the emphasis on understanding processes as they occur in their context. Therefore, research questions about ‘how’ and ‘why’ rather than ‘what’ or ‘how much’ are best suited to the case study strategy.”<sup>82</sup> In the instant case, this research project questions ‘how’ and ‘how well’ the current metadata schemas modeled for performing arts address the descriptive needs of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

## Scene 2. Selecting Material: Creating a Frame of Fringe

The distinguishing traits of Qualitative Content Analysis - context is central, emergence of categories, subject reference, flexible procedures - benefit a case study of performing arts metadata in the context of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. In the qualitative tradition, “it is only in the course of doing field research that one can find out which questions can reasonably be asked and it is only at the end that the researcher will know which questions can be answered by a study.” Accordingly, “qualitative methods are often used when the field of research is yet not well understood or unknown and aim at generating new hypotheses and theories, while quantitative methods are frequently used for testing hypotheses and evaluating theories.”<sup>83</sup>

A survey of the field of metadata in performing arts reveals that efforts toward a metadata standard, designed uniquely for describing performing arts, are fairly recent. It also appears that none of the dedicated performing arts schemas that exist have been tested against fringe festivals, i.e., the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Additionally, *Follow the Fringe* is a lightly processed, archival collection. This is an added value for testing a metadata application.<sup>84</sup> Lastly, the Edinburgh Fringe will celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. Many fringe festivals have formed around the world in inspiration. In the United States, Orlando Fringe marks its 26<sup>th</sup> year and Fringe NYC its 20<sup>th</sup> year in 2017.<sup>85</sup> Yet, as the Theatre Library Association recently stated, “Rarely have these festivals received dedicated attention from scholars and archivists.”<sup>86</sup>

In commencing to examine this collection in its entirety, I first put order to the collection, whilst allowing the categories to emerge naturally - magazines, flyers, leaflets,

performance video, etc. I accounted for duplicates. I then reduced the collection to a representative, manageable corpus. This task was guided as follows.

Qualitative research often involves large amounts of material. Because of this and to avoid ‘cognitive overload’, typically only a part of the material is used in building the coding frame. Therefore, the first step in building a frame is to select a suitable amount of material. The most important criterion here is to select the material so that it reflects the full diversity of data sources. If the data consist of interviews with different stakeholder groups, at least one interview from each group should be selected. If the material consists of newspaper articles from three different time periods, all three time periods should be represented in the selection.<sup>87</sup>

In creating a coding frame of Fringe, the goals were twofold. First, I assembled a representative corpus, in effect to document *Follow the Fringe*. Second, I attempted to recreate context. Specifically, I sifted through the collection like a festival attendee ... aware that it is impossible to experience every performance and possible to experience just a sliver.\* I allowed subjectivity to influence selection of a corpus that peaked my interest. Such objective and subjective selection is entirely consistent with the Edinburgh Fringe experience. Moreover, the notion of a ‘representative’ corpus can only be equated to a specific year’s festival, given its concomitant uniqueness and ephemerality.

In *The Fringe Survival Guide*, playwright Mark Ravenhill notes: “Fringe-goers are an enthusiastic, risk-taking audience. Away from the Fringe, audiences are often looking for the reassuring and the familiar. But in the midst of the noise and clamour of the festival, the audience embraces the new, the innovative and the downright weird.” In essence, “it is impossible to make any rules about the kind of theatre that proliferates.”<sup>88</sup> Thus, to allow subjectivity in creating a frame of Fringe seems ever more appropriate.

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\* “In 2010, first-time Fringe-goer Matthew Somerville, managed to see 136 shows in just under four weeks. Despite this awesome achievement, he calculated he had seen only 5.54 per cent of what was on offer. The phenomenon is no more manageable for a dedicated theatre critic.” Mark Ravenhill, Foreword to *The Edinburgh Fringe Survival Guide* by Mark Fisher (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012), 8.

In short, I attempted to navigate this special collection with the Braggadocio\* (theatre swagger) of an attendee to the Edinburgh Fringe. Thereby becoming a Metteur en scène (theatrical director)† of a frame of Fringe. It is hoped that this Model Box‡ (scale model) will set *Follow the Fringe* in its broader context of the Edinburgh Festival. A case study of *Follow the Fringe* offers multiple perspectives of this cultural heritage wonder. The ‘possibilities of interpretation’ and ‘multiple connotations’ evoked by four contextual players: performers, audiences, festival producers, and Edinburgh itself.

### **Scene 3. *Follow the Fringe***

THE COURSE. During the summer of 2013, the University of Maryland, College of Information Studies, offered a new course: “Follow the Fringe: Documentation and Preservation of Cultural Movements in Media” (‘Follow the Fringe’).<sup>89</sup> Directed by Mary Edsall Choquette, *Follow the Fringe* took eight students to Scotland for two weeks to participate in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013.<sup>90</sup>

The course was designed to introduce students to “archival documentation and preservation of, and access to, performance activity”.<sup>91</sup> In addition, students were to research and follow performance groups from the CalArts Festival Theater Summer Program, California Institute of the Arts, which had been participating in the Edinburgh Festival for the past 10 years. The course description states,

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\* Braggadocio is from a character of that name in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen* (1590).

† Metteur en scène: French: ‘one who places on stage’.

‡ Model Box is a simplified scale model of a theatre’s stage to contain the designer’s Set Model and place it in its architectural context.

Students will plan a documentation strategy; implement that strategy; and create metadata for the resulting media and data to ensure future accessibility; and place the media and data in the archives at the University of Maryland and the Institute Archive at CalArts. The course activities also include tours and lectures by archives professionals, festival organizers and includes tours of the libraries and archives in the area as well as attending other performances.<sup>92</sup> Throughout the experience, students will “document and collect found cultural information,” namely the world of ‘festival culture’ that is the Edinburgh Fringe.<sup>93</sup>

In short, the *Follow the Fringe* project sought to document the festival and create archival material, adding to the historical record of the Festival Fringe. Therefrom, the next stage of inquiry is how do we ‘describe’ this archival collection of materials?

How can metadata be used to describe performing arts in the context of the Fringe? What challenges are uniquely presented when attempting to capture *festival* culture, ephemera, and the meaning of a live performance or moment of time past? What strengths and limitations might exist in describing these archival materials as collected by students? This and more will be explored in the instant case study.

THE COLLECTION. During the week of 13 February 2017, I reviewed the materials brought back by the 2013 *Follow the Fringe* project. The repository: Special Collections in Performing Arts, Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, Clarice Smith Performing Art Center, University of Maryland, College Park. The materials were deposited over time, in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

The collection is titled: “Follow the Fringe Project” Collection, INST 729F, documenting the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.” Its extent: 1.5 Linear Feet, 108 GB. “The collection consists of both papers and born digital content. Papers include flyers, festival guides, ephemera, and documentation pertaining to the course. Born digital



content includes oral histories, performances, and site seeing footage.” There are no access restrictions. Paper materials are stored in one archival box. The finding aid designates paper materials “minimally processed”, born digital content “processed”.<sup>94</sup>

### *Contents of Collection*

The *Follow the Fringe* Collection contains a broad array of paper materials. Their format runs from the more easily described ‘newspaper’, ‘magazine’, ‘map’, and ‘poster’, to an assortment of promotional items not so easily described. Promotional materials broadly thought of as ‘festival guides’ – intended to provide listings of performances, e.g. general listings, venue specific programming, and free performances. And materials intended to market specific shows via flyering.

These ‘flyering’ materials (the finding aid counts 427 fliers) are predominately postcards (large and small). Flyering materials also include handbills (single sheets of paper), leaflets of various design (shape, size, fold), and booklets. One paper flyer is even designed to convert into an Origami fortune-teller finger game. Another to be read as a graphic novel. One ‘flyer’ can only be described as one to be delivered personally, for its advert is placed on a condom!

The Collection documents the CalArts participation at the Fringe, with items to include a commemorative T-Shirt, nine oral history videos, and performance videos – theatre setups, dress rehearsals, and full performances. Videos (52 clips) encompass the following theatre performance titles: Goose, Pomegranate Jam, Things from Before, Victims of Influence, Yellow Fever, Kaspar, and Mask.

Digital files also contain still photographs of performances. These photographs are of the CalArts theatre performances, as well as of various Fringe street performers. There are a small number of sightseeing images. There are a few metadata spreadsheets for photographs and performance video - labeled as using Dublin Core. The spreadsheets are few in number, in comparison to the amount of documentation in the collection. Lastly, there is a digital folder of Course Materials (e.g. syllabus, Fringe media demos, and an audio of a class meeting in preparation for the Fringe). *Note on Releases.* A CalArts production - 'Whispering in the Dark' - contains a written release but a performance video was not found in the collection. Conversely, virtually all of the CalArts performance videos do not contain written releases. However, most oral histories contain releases.

To conclude, this *Follow the Fringe* collection is rather like an End-of-the-Pier Show.\* The variety of performances, as reflected in the array of promotional materials, is hard to reduce to writing. I have not attended the Edinburgh Fringe. Yet, as I perused the collection, I felt a tiny, encore view as if standing at the 'end of the pier.' My view via the lens of this collection captured an essence of this festival culture. The enormity of staging, vastness of creative energy, and concentrated dalliances of artistry that gather in Edinburgh for its special assemblage they call the Fringe.

Now on to the scène à faire.† The Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

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\* End-of-the-Pier Show: Once a popular seaside entertainment consisting of an assortment of Variety Acts. So called because it generally took place on a small stage located literally at the end of the pier.

† Scène à faire: Crucial scene to which preceding scenes build.

## ACT IV. EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE

Where ... 'Any Conceivable Thing is Worth a Try!'

“Even in telephone boxes ... in the back of cabs ... people are putting on shows” at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (also known as the ‘Edinburgh Fringe’ or ‘Fringe’).<sup>95</sup> For three weeks in August, the city of Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital, hosts what is well regarded as the single largest celebration of arts and culture in the world.<sup>96</sup> The 2017 programme marks the Fringe’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>97</sup> It advertises, “Be part of the world’s greatest platform for creative freedom in this landmark year! 04-28 August 2017.”

Every year thousands of performers take to hundreds of stages all over Edinburgh to present shows for every taste. From big names in the world of entertainment to unknown artists looking to build their careers, the festival caters for everyone and includes theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, circus, cabaret, children’s shows, musicals, opera, music, spoken word, exhibitions and events.<sup>98</sup>

“With 50,266 performances of 3,269 shows in 294 venues in 2016,” and the attendant 2,475,143 tickets issued,<sup>99</sup> it is easy to see why the Edinburgh Fringe ultimately eclipsed the ‘official’ festival of Edinburgh, around which the ‘Fringe’ forged its name.

*Backdrop: The ‘Official’ Edinburgh International Festival*

On Sunday 24 August 1947, shortly after the end of World War II, the first Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama (‘The Edinburgh International

Festival’) opened, with “a service of praise” in St. Giles’ Cathedral, the seat of Scottish Presbyterianism:

The inaugural opening concert was performed by L’Orchestre des Concerts Colonne, while the full programme served up a rich feast of European high culture: The Hallé,\* Jacques, Liverpool Philharmonic and BBC Scottish orchestras were all represented; there was chamber music, morning concerts, recitals of Scottish song, and the Glyndebourne Opera presenting *Macbeth* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. Sadler’s Wells Ballet presented *The Sleeping Beauty*, and drama lovers could see the Old Vic doing *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Richard II* as well as La Compagnie Jovet de Théâtre de L’Athéné performing *L’École des femmes* and *Giraudoux*.<sup>100</sup>

The singer Kathleen Ferrier recalled: “It was unforgettable. The sun shone, the station was decked with flags, the streets were gay. Plays and ballet by the finest artists were being performed, literally morning, noon and night, and hospitality was showered upon guests and visitors by the so-called ‘dour’ Scots! What a misnomer!”<sup>101</sup>

The festival reaffirmed the values of culture and artistic excellence. The City’s Lord Provost hoped the festival would give audiences “a sense of peace and inspiration with which to refresh their souls and reaffirm their belief in things other than material.”

<sup>102</sup> Culture was also an economic tool (the Scottish Tourist Board was founded in 1946). “When the Edinburgh Festival began, there was little competition in the way of other arts festivals in Europe.” The idea of an International Arts Festival in Europe was ‘in the air’, but European pre-war venues like Salzburg, Bayreuth and Munich would be unavailable for a time due to damages from the War. Lastly, culture was a means of reconciliation amongst nations. “The Edinburgh International Festival [...] sought to bolster a badly damaged sense of European identity by supporting the post-war revival of

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\* The **Hallé** is Manchester’s symphony orchestra since 1858, founded by Sir Charles **Hallé**. See, <http://www.halle.co.uk/>.

European arts and culture.”<sup>103</sup> Importantly, the Edinburgh International Festival was underpinned by the ‘high culture’ of Scotland and Europe, as well as other nations.

In the context of European arts festivals, the Edinburgh International Festival was distinctive, as it “encompassed a variety of art forms (including opera, ballet, drama and music) and was not focused on the work of any particular artist, director or composer, or on the culture of any one nation or locale, unlike most pre-war festivals.” Its ‘multi-arts programming’ allowed interaction between art forms and hybridization, and gave audiences a comparative view to varying arts and artists.<sup>104</sup>

A perhaps subtle impact of war, the Provost of the 1947 Festival asked the city of Edinburgh to “surrender itself to visitors.” The 2017 Edinburgh International Festival runs for three weeks simultaneous to the Fringe<sup>105</sup> and the city expects to surrender to audiences from 70 nations, with 2,020 performing artists from 40 nations. Spanning not only geography but time, visitors can see, e.g. Aeschylus’ play *The Oresteia* – first performed in 485 BC, alongside Australian Chanteuse *Meow Meow* performing *Meow Meow’s Little Mermaid*, a theatrical retelling of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale.<sup>106</sup>

### *Once Upon the Fringe*

The tale of the Fringe begins - like the Edinburgh International Festival - on Sunday, 24 August 1947. It turns on a single fact, namely to be part of the Edinburgh Festival, an invitation was required. Undeterred and without invitation, eight companies showed up and performed.<sup>107</sup> Not as part of the ‘official’ Edinburgh Festival, but rather ‘round the fringe’.

Six groups were from Scotland, the remaining two from England: the Lanchester Marionette Theatre, who put on puppet plays in an Edinburgh cinema, and the Pilgrim Players from the Mercury Theatre in London, who presented T.S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion* and *Murder in the Cathedral* at the Gateway Theatre. In 1947, these eight performances were not referred to as 'the Fringe'. Rather, newspapers like *The Scotsman* referred to them as 'barnacle' events. Early programmes of the Edinburgh Festival included references to 'festival adjuncts'.<sup>108</sup>

It is uncertain when the term 'Fringe' was coined. Three early uses are often attributed, all seen in the *Edinburgh Evening News*. In 1947, one article stated that the location of a certain performance was 'only on the fringe of the official programme.' Another remarked it was a shame the show *Everyman*, performed in Dunfermline Cathedral, nearly 20 miles outside Edinburgh, was so far out 'on the fringe of the festival.' In 1948, an article by Robert Kemp noted 'Round the fringe of the official Festival drama, there seems to be more private enterprise than before.'<sup>109</sup>

Critical to the burgeoning of the Fringe, is the fact that anyone could, and still can, take part in the Fringe – no invitation required. In 1958, the Festival Fringe Society was created, formalizing the Fringe. Its constitution provided that "the Society was to take no part in vetting the festival's programme." The Fringe seeks "anyone with a story to tell and a venue willing to host them."<sup>110</sup>

*The Flourishing Fringe*

Edinburgh. Two parallel streets. Old Town's Royal Mile connects Edinburgh Castle with the Palace of Holyroodhouse, official residence of the Queen. Just north, New Town's Princes Street, with chain stores on one side and gardens on the other. <sup>111</sup>

Come the festival, this is where street-theatre performers do their juggling, acrobatics and fire-eating while Fringe companies act out extracts from their shows, strike poses in their stage costumes and hand out flyer after flyer in the hope of drumming up an audience. <sup>112</sup>

Until you see this for yourself – see what it means to have every basement, lecture hall, Masonic Lodge, and back room turned into a performing space; to have your way blocked on the Royal Mile because of the sheer volume of people; to come out of a show at 10 pm knowing there is still time to catch a couple more before bedtime – it is impossible to appreciate the scale, relentlessness and energy of the Edinburgh Fringe. <sup>113</sup>

The City gives the Fringe its 'Thunder run'.\* Built around a volcanic rock at the top of which sits the castle with buildings dating back to the twelfth century. "The medieval atmosphere of the Old Town, with its warren of closes, cobbled streets, and tottering tenements, plays against the cool Georgian elegance of the New Town." <sup>114</sup>

"Although the word 'fringe' has connotations of being alternative, underground, and low-budget, it need not be any of these things." <sup>115</sup> No-budget student revues and sophisticated, professional theatre coexist. <sup>116</sup> Many famous names got their start at the Fringe – Michael Palin, Sir Derek Jacobi, Emma Thompson. <sup>117</sup> The trick of the Fringe is that it functions as a true 'laboratory' for the new, with a 'right to fail' ethos that

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\* Thunder run: Long wooden chute, common in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century theatres, situated above the ceiling of the Auditorium, down which cannon balls were rolled to create the sound of thunder. Now obsolete.

nurtures all. <sup>118</sup> From the Classics to the unheard of to the spontaneous, both ‘high-brow’ and ‘low-brow’, amateur to big names, anything that entertains will thrive at the Fringe.

### *Performing at the Fringe*

*Shows.* The Fringe has 10 categories of performance: Cabaret and Variety; Children’s Shows; Comedy; Dance, Physical Theatre and Circus; Events; Exhibitions; Music; Musicals and Opera; Spoken Word; and Theatre. <sup>119</sup> The Fringe advises to categorize a show “according to form not content” e.g. a musical goes in the ‘Musicals and Opera’ section even if it includes dance. <sup>120</sup>

The breadth of artistry within each category can be broad. Cabaret has gained in prominence as an art form. It includes “burlesque, vaudeville, torch singers, comedy, music, dance, magic, drag, circus and performance art.” Comedy means stand-up, sketch shows and revues (not comic plays or musicals). Anything ‘experimental’ can show up anywhere - as Hungarian dancer Yvette Bozsik showed up “writhing in a glass coffin in a performance that lasted until her air supply ran out.” <sup>121</sup>

The average Fringe show runs a sixty-minute time slot (including get-in and get-out). Due to the volume of shows, it is normal to share spaces and perform at different time slots with a fast turnaround. Two challenges are of note. Whilst the Fringe draws artistry from around the globe, “it can be tough to sell shows in a language other than English unless they have a strong visual or musical appeal.” Dance and physical acts can struggle to find the right space of “sprung floors and perfect sight lines.” <sup>122</sup>

*Venues.* Few Fringe shows take place in permanent, purpose-built theatres. Moreover, “there is always a buzz around shows in non-theatre spaces. There have been



performances on a double-decker bus, in a car, in an out-of-hours department store, in a pub, on the streets, in a rented flat, in public toilets, on a boat and in a children's playground." <sup>123</sup> The production of *Must* - a medically themed show - was staged in a university's medical lecture theatre:

They have these amazing elephant skeletons outside and there's a whole bit in the show about this, so it was an amazing venue, but it is obviously used by medical students until 5 p.m. every day for lectures and dissections. The show was at 7:30 p.m. so we had to get in very quickly and we couldn't leave a lot of stuff because it was a public place and there are issues about insurance. So it's not straightforward using those spaces. <sup>124</sup>

The City of Edinburgh has an architectural and historical landscape that offers an array of intriguing venue locations.

#### *Marketing Hath No Fury Like a Flyer*

Marketing at the Fringe is as creative an endeavor as any performance might be. At times, a performance it literally is. Marketing on the Fringe operates by its own rules. As a publicist notes, "You wouldn't stand on the Strand flyering for your show in the West End, yet on the streets of Edinburgh, it is not only normal to see performers plugging their own shows, it is actually expected." <sup>125</sup>

Marketing encompasses thinking of the audience, promoters, agents, editors, critics. It means the Fringe Programme, words and pictures, and 'adverts, posters and flyers'. Every entry in the Fringe Programme has a picture: "Come up with a striking image and use repeatedly – on adverts, posters, sweatshirts, underwear (it happens), newspaper articles and flyers – the more they will associate it with your show."

Publications eagerly accept ads, from newspapers to festival magazines, venue pamphlets, websites, and of course the official Programme in print and online.<sup>126</sup>

Yet, flyering is the ritual. Posters typically have a half-hour lifespan. The Fringe Office estimates over 40,000 posters are stuck to its special flyer pillars on High Street. Although fly-posting is illegal with fines. “With so much paper printed (from 5,000 to 20,000 flyers per show) and so much effort gone to, can it really be worth it? Yes.”<sup>127</sup>

The sight of people handing out flyers, especially in key areas such as the Royal Mile, the Mound and Bristol Square, is one way the people of Edinburgh know the Fringe has started. It is probably not what you are used to when performing anywhere else, but if you do it properly, it works. If you can go up to someone on the street and engage with them, they’ll trot off and buy a ticket.<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, no one is ‘too big to flyer’. What is good flyering? Engaging with the public and giving them a sense of what the show is about.<sup>129</sup>

Taking a short walk up and down the Royal Mile in front of the Fringe Office, we find a woman in a flat cap sitting on a picnic blanket, a man dressed as Elizabeth I, a youth theatre group carrying trays of barbiturates, a woman in a 1920s flapper dress, a company in dinner jackets, someone in a toga and a woman looking like a torture victim sitting on a bed with mouth gagged and hands tied. All are trying to catch attention in a way that links to the theme of their shows. They are not only competing with each other for audiences, but also with street theatre performers who draw big crowds all through the day.<sup>130</sup>

In short, one may encounter along the street a prima ballerina assoluta\* dressed in Kensington Gore† or dressed in Ballet Blanc.‡ The Fringe is about drawing on all the

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\* Assoluta (Prima ballerina assoluta): Title, granted by general acclaim, to a prima ballerina possessing exceptional talent and charisma.

† Kensington Gore: Type of artificial blood supplied for use on stage, named in punning reference to the London thoroughfare of the same name.

‡ Ballet Blanc (Fr: white ballet): Classic form of Ballet in which female dancers wear traditional white ballet skirts, either long or short.

senses and conveying meaning. Unsurprisingly, flyers are the predominate items in the *Follow the Fringe* collection.

### *Edinburgh Festival Model*

Edinburgh is known as the Festival City.\* Collectively, Edinburgh International Festival and the Fringe are considered a “model for the evolution of many of the world’s estimated 10,000 art festivals.” Yet, as written by Angela Bartie in 2013, “their own history has barely been explored. What has been written about the Festivals has largely been from the personal perspectives of administrators, journalists, and critics.”<sup>131</sup> Accordingly, by exploring descriptive metadata as applied to the Edinburgh Fringe, the instant case study will expand upon these perspectives. By engaging with the *Follow the Fringe* collection, one may draw on the perspectives of Fringe participants – performers and audiences.

### *Musical Interlude*

To experience ‘The Smell of the Greasepaint’ (magic of theatre)<sup>†</sup> that is the Edinburgh Fringe, visit <https://sway.com/TkoogktrlIykJzdS?ref=Link> for a digital presentation of images, audio, and video. Included are curated items from the *Follow the Fringe* Collection.

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\* Summer festivals that take place around the same time as the Edinburgh Festivals include: Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh Mela, Royal Military Tattoo, Edinburgh Art Festival, and the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival. Fisher, *Edinburgh Fringe Survival Guide*, 7.

† The Smell of the Greasepaint: The nostalgic phrase used to suggest the ‘magic of theatre’. Greasepaint (theatrical makeup made of grease-bound pigment) does have a distinctive odour, but the most noticeable smell in an old theatre is more likely to have been a combination of dust and ‘Size’ (animal-hide glue) used in scene paint.

## ACT V. ANALYSIS

### Scene 1. Describing the Mise en Scène of Performing Arts

To describe the performing arts, one must enter the unique world of the theatre. Where, ‘The Smell of the Greasepaint’ is the nostalgic phrase used to suggest the ‘magic of theatre’.\* Where the Greasepaint was used not only in set design, but also in traditional theatre make-up, known as ‘Five and Nine’ or Leichner (Greasepaint) sticks.†

Mise en scène (French for ‘placing on stage’) is the direction or staging of a production. It refers to all the visual elements of a theatrical production within the space provided by the stage itself. A production is a specific performance or run of performances.

Describing a performance involves more than description of Mise en scène. Yet, as with any theatre (performing arts) experience, it often begins with what one sees. Indeed, the word ‘theatre’ originates from the Greek word *Theatron*: ‘seeing-place’.

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\* Greasepaint does have a distinctive odour, but the most noticeable smell in an old theatre is more likely to have been a combination of dust and the ‘size’ used in scene paint. ‘Size’ is animal hide glue (granular form) to be dissolved in hot water before use. A traditional ingredient for fixing powder colours used for scene painting or mixed thinly with chalk-whiting (calcium carbonate) to prime a canvas for painting.

† ‘Five and Nine’ reference numbers of cream (No. 5) and reddish-brown (No.9) used in combination to provide a light or dark flesh-coloured base for stage make-up. Developed in ‘stick’ form in 1873 by German opera singer Ludwig Leichner, to avoid the messy necessity of mixing dry pigments with goose-fat. Used universally until near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it was gradually supplanted by pancake make-up.

This context offers a bit of theatre aura in which to examine the theatre's unique aspects that shape our relationship with description itself.

*'Imagination' is Beyond Ordinary Description*

In *Performance: An Alphabet of Performative Writing*, Ronald J. Pelias defines,

Performance:

1. An act, a doing, behavior
2. An art, an aesthetic form.<sup>132</sup>

To describe 'an act or doing' seems straightforward; the physical parameters are perhaps more tangible. To describe 'an art' is not so contained; rather, it brings forth an overarching influence on attempts to describe:

Art aims at baffling us as much as providing us with information, refusing to say what it would say. Art, even dramatic art, implies more than it represents. [...] Art defies our intellect, not because it is incredible, but that it is super-credible: evading our attempts to reduce it to the level of a thing among things, it reaches out to us, grabs us and takes us somewhere else.<sup>133</sup>

Art and its imagery conjures "*a priori* categories of imagination" that defy description ... or at least ordinary description. In *Suspending Disbelief: Theatre as Context for Sharing*, Roger Grainger poses that theatre is a context for sharing the imagination between performer and audience, and states: "if we are going to use our imagination in such a way we must provide it with material to work on, a *mise en scène* for us to bring to life and share with one another." Yet, this theatrical experience is "something which is much easier to do than to describe."<sup>134</sup>

*Two Modes of Representation in Theatre*

There are two modes of representation in the theatre: image making and narration. Between direct scenic enactment and the presentation of absent events through narration. This “productive tension” in theatre highlights how the staging of unseen people and events will “tap spectators’ imaginations.” A ‘poetic imitation’ of switching from third to first person that began with Plato.<sup>135</sup>

Similarly, this translates into two modes of representation when describing performing arts. Narration occurs via metadata descriptors. Image creation occurs via metadata elements’ relation to one another on a broader stage of context and imagination. The audience of performing arts metadata is akin to the audience of a ‘Promenade Performance’. Specifically, a performance with no audience seating, but several different acting areas. The audience moves from one location to another, following the action ... and tapping their imagination.

*Performance Writing is a Means of Experience*

Pelias suggests that performance writing “is not a record of experience at all; it is a means of experience.” Its goal is to dwell within multiple perspectives and cherish the uncertain, thereby marking a point of all possibilities. Performance writing is,

more interested in evoking than representing, in constructing a world than in positing this is the way the world is. It is a case that does not just rely upon its descriptive portrayal, no matter how precise or poignant, but also depends upon its ability to create experience.<sup>136</sup>

To stay true to this purpose of the performing arts, metadata is challenged to not simply describe, but to ‘create’ an experience. The benefit of this challenge, however, is that the experiences offered to the users of performing arts metadata will mirror the

endless possibilities and unique experiences bestowed on each and every audience member witnessing a performance.

*Documentation: A Little or a Lot*

The performing arts domain reflects a diversity of cultural heritage objects. The performance itself, and such multi-media as printed books, manuscripts, drawings, paintings, photographs, ephemera, realia, audio and video which thereby documents it. Persons, places and events are another layer of domain knowledge. In addition, the experience is multi-sensory. To illustrate, “Operatic audiences have an inter-artistic experience incorporating theatre, visual art and music. Multisensory performances allow audience members to engage with the work in different sensory domains, increasing the amount of expressive information that can be conveyed.”<sup>137</sup>

This abundance and richness of information can be a challenge to capture within the constructs of metadata. Such abundance is seen where the artistic tradition has a strong history of collecting the media used in their performances, and “using those archives to reproduce productions and to train performers.” Conversely, a lack of documentation can also challenge metadata. “Some performing arts traditions do not preserve the material of their performances, focusing solely on the kinetic training of their performers’ bodies and leaving the recording of performances to external agents.”

The “cycle of production and reception” builds an artistic tradition, whereby both performers and audience “train to read the signs of an art.” Thus, how multi-sensory texts born out of performance are preserved, accessed, and reproduced impacts the long term viability of the performing arts. “We must not denigrate the archivists and the Web masters as taxonomists of dead artifacts, but rather work with them to allow the particular

relationships of the performing arts traditions to be expressed in the materials being collected.”<sup>138</sup>

*Rich Metadata: De-Construction or Re-Construction*

Historically, the performing arts were a live gathering of “people, objects, and actions to express meaning.” The study of performing arts reduced this exchange to the medium of the *written word* (augmented with sketches, painting, and the like). Today, metadata is the digital realm’s written word. Thus, it “would seem to magnify this reduction, and yet it actually offers a crucial structure on which a system of rich explanation can bring life back to events of performances as they are studied.”<sup>139</sup>

This sentiment is echoed in “How to Catalog the Cultural Heritage ‘Spectacle.’” Donatella Gavrilovich questions how to catalog cultural heritage (i.e. costume) related to the spectacle, as a unified whole:

Complexity for a catalog of that kind should be solved, according to the author, by using a ‘product’ and ‘addition’ method instead of a ‘substitution’ and ‘division’ method.

Fundamental parts which constitute spectacle cultural heritage’s memories shall not be separated. [ ... ] Scope of this work is giving back to spectacle, which is told to be a ‘fleeting and expressive cultural heritage’ in our [Italy’s] current law, its historical consistency [met] by collecting, archiving, and preserving all objects that compose it as a complete art work.<sup>140</sup>

Metadata, then, can effectuate both deconstruction and reconstruction. Perhaps the goal is in finding a harmonious balance between the two. A comfortable knowing that any post production ‘writing’ is an *attempt* to document a brief moment, this briefness being the much valued yet inescapable essence of performing arts.



*Theatre as 'Agent Provocateur'*

In *The Open Space: Theatre as Opportunity for Living*, Roger Grainger posits that theatre acts as an 'agent provocateur' – a story told for the purpose of sense making by performer and audience. Otherwise, theatre taken literally would “cease to be a story and become simply a description, useful for information and little else.” In addition, theatre’s ability to create emotional experience works “more by impression than argument.”<sup>141</sup> Grainger’s theatre as ‘living metaphor’<sup>142</sup> comprises theatre space, play space, space for change and more, including ‘remembered space.’ Descriptive metadata is dependent upon remembered space – documentation of it and its inspiration. Description assists with the preservation of emotional experience. Like the theatre, it imparts an ‘impression’ upon the user.

*Theatre as Voyeurism Leads to Layers of Context*

Every performing arts event has an original context of performance. A space for things to happen ... to ‘take place’. “A recognizable context – a definable shape – that gives meaning to the things we perceive. Context is not all, but it is necessary for anything.”<sup>143</sup> An event has additional layers of context, or re-contextualization, too.

In *Theatre as Voyeurism: The Pleasure of Watching*, George Rodosthenous defines theatre as a “visual art par excellent and an institutionalized space for voyeurism.” Where the performer is the object of the audience’s gaze and the audience is the voyeur. Theatrical voyeurism, as presented, “can go beyond an exploitative thirst for watching. It can be recontextualized as a need to connect, to explore and to understand.” Ironically, Rodosthenous’ book began in connection to a performance he viewed at the

2002 Edinburgh Festival.<sup>144</sup> By extension, repetitive ‘voyeurism’ of performing arts metadata adds additional layers of context. This being the re-contextualization that occurs when metadata is created, and again when a user of metadata seeks to ‘connect, explore and understand’ a performance. In a manner, descriptive metadata facilitates ‘encore performances’ via changing contexts.

### *Ephemerality within Ephemerality & Blurriness*

Performing arts are ephemeral. A performance occurs just once. And, as noted by the Theatre Library Association, “Fringe performances are often the most ephemeral examples of the most ephemeral art form.”<sup>145</sup>

There is an additional aspect of ephemerality. That of improvisation within the staging of any performance. Improvisation occurs across the spectrum of performing arts. It is often seen in physical comedy. Performers’ Dominique Abel and Fiona Gordon, both with a theatre and circus background, discuss their art while promoting their film *L’iceberg*:

Emotions are expressed physically and the actors act with a second sense of an audience’s presence. We’ve been influenced by the eccentric actor/directors of the silent film era. They managed to reconcile art and entertainment, making films that were inventive and refined, yet funny and popular.

If physical comedy has become rare, it’s probably because it’s a risky form of art. Physical clowning needs practice and experience. *It can’t simply be written.* Improvisation feeds the script and the script feeds new improvisation. Most of all, the actor’s personality is essential to the style. (emphasis added).<sup>146</sup>

The inability to ‘write’ improvisation is especially interesting here, for the key performers of *L’iceberg* are also the film’s writers and directors. Their comments in such capacities shed light on another challenge in performing arts metadata: blurriness.

Blurriness can show up in any creation and even amongst the creators themselves: “We wrote and directed *L’iceberg*, our first feature film, together. We don’t have defined roles when we work together. We share all the roles, including the writing of the script. After three years of collective script writing, none of us were able to recognize who wrote what.”<sup>147</sup>

Blurriness can exist in roles, functions, creative attribution, genre, geographic origin, the proverbial ‘who did it first?’ and more. Artistry, in its purest sense, is a blurry composite of humanity amongst its history. Metadata is but a language for expressing information that we wish to share, at a given moment in time. To think of metadata as improvisation is, perhaps, to enjoy its performance that much more.

### *Temporality*

Metadata creation captures information ‘at a given moment in time.’ In the performing arts, the time at which a performance or a component part thereof is captured can be a valuable piece of metadata. This is demonstrated in a case study conducted at the University of Bologna (Italy), which attempted to define a cataloging model for Opera. The Department of Art, Music and Performing Arts used the VAC Model (Vestimenti Antichi e Contemporanei - Contemporary and Ancient Clothes) to catalogue costumes:

We have chosen to catalogue only the costumes of the operas of the theatrical season, immediately after the performance’s first night, as the first aim was to fix not only the objects as remnants, but also as physical evidences of a performing event in a precise place and time. In fact, the theatrical costumes can undergo countless modifications during a tournée, because of transport and/or eventual substitutions.<sup>148</sup>

It observed that the VAC model catalogues ‘continuant’ objects, whilst the theatrical costume is an ‘ephemeral’ object. Therefore, the model had limitations, namely cataloging ancient clothes did not provide for accessories, and each VAC file cataloged only one object – while costume is an entity of many components. The project observed, “The theatrical costume, therefore, is not only an aggregate entity, but also, so to speak, a temporal aggregate.”<sup>149</sup>

### *Complexity: Structuring Conventions & Variations*

“To learn about a performing art or a performance within a performing art genre, whether as an audience member or as a practitioner, one must work with conventions and variations. And the organization of conventions and variations is what a metadata structure attempts.”<sup>150</sup> Figure 1 below can help one envision all the efforts that go into creating a typical theatre production:

The venue that brings together the performers and audience; the designers who set the scene of action with backdrops, costumes, or light and sound accompaniment; the rehearsals that prepare the ensemble action; or the publicity that attracts the audience and frames the performance for their appreciation. Each of these components has its own subcomponents: its temporal definition (publicity goes out before the opening) or creative roles.

The components seen in the diagram extend into further and further detail. While individual productions may do away with one or more branches, many productions demand even further detail to “properly make sense of what happened.”<sup>151</sup>

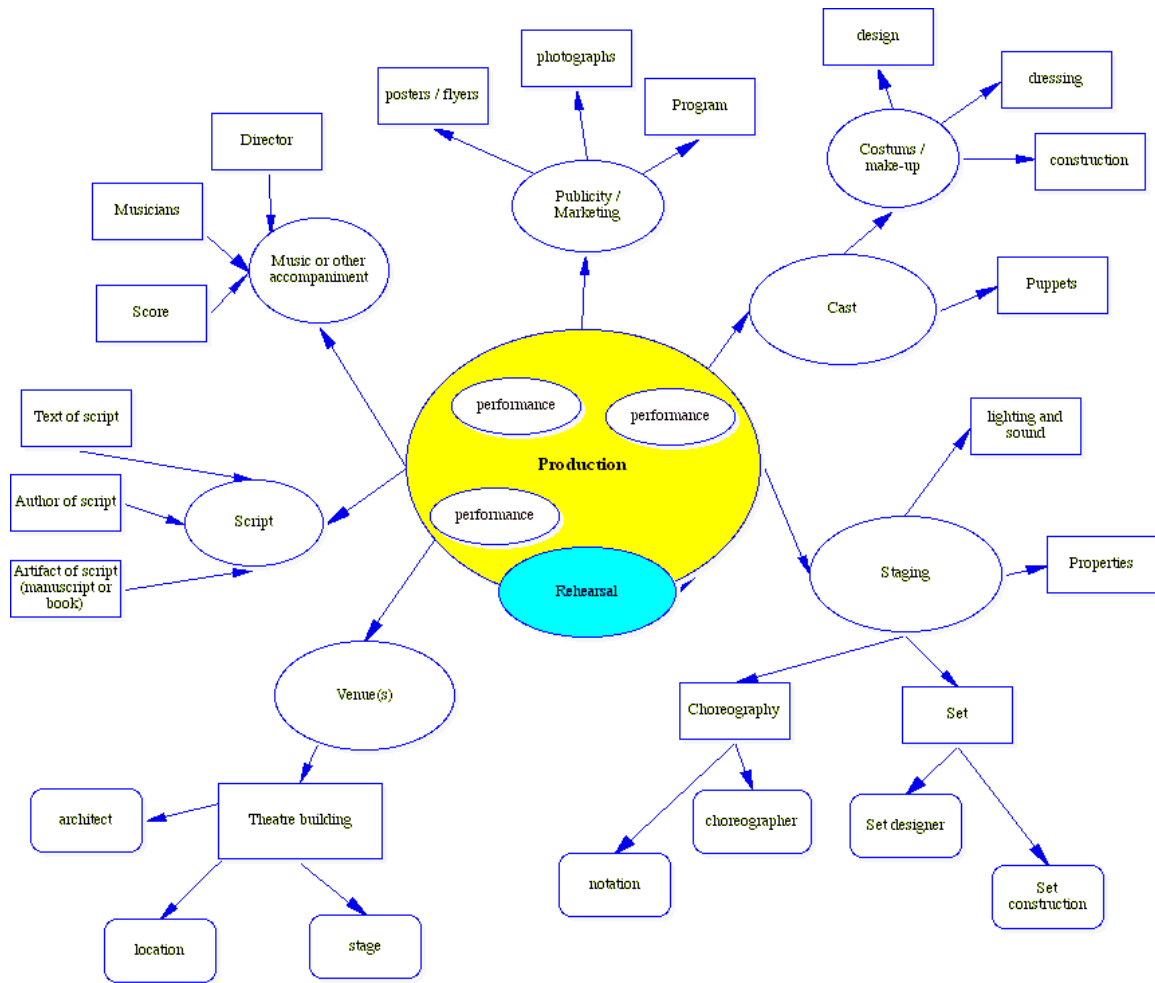


Figure 1. Visual schema of some of the elements of a typical theatre production. <sup>152</sup>

### Conclusion

In consideration of theatre's unique aspects, descriptive metadata creates its own *mise en scène*, akin to putting on a play or staging a performance. Choosing what resources to display and how to display them, in order to create an experience that conveys meaning and moves the user to further inquiry. The 'artistry' of descriptive metadata draws upon the same threads of creativity and the creative process as does the theatre, in order to create a place for the imagination to set.

Metadata also creates its own stage lighting. Like the effect from a mélange of bubbles,\* ack-acks,† and redheads,‡ it seeks to maximize an audience's ability to see the performance it describes ... in both realistic terms and in one's imagination.

The vignettes of consideration herein remind us that the theatre is at once ethereal and yet earthly. The materiality that emanates from both, affords metadata that chance to invite us all to an encore performance and a visit backstage. It buys us a ticket to step beyond the illuminated marquee and into the main entrance of a theatre. A chance to experience a rough penny gaff § or a refined Agatha Christie play.

Incidentally, *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie (1890 - 1976) opened in London in 1952. Still running, it is presently the longest-running play in world theatre history. Can Performing Arts metadata keep up? Let us raise the House Tabs \*\* on GloPAC, ECLAP, and PACore and see how they perform at the longest-running festival in the world: Edinburgh Festival and its impresario, the Fringe.

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\* A 'Bubble' in theatre terms is any kind of electric lightbulb.

† Ack-Ack (Acting Area Lantern): a non-focusable luminaire with a wide beam, now generally obsolete.

‡ Redhead: An 800 watt, open face luminaire.

§ Gaff: Victorian slang for a cheap, popular theatre, usually presenting particularly bloodthirsty and melodramatic plays. Sometimes known as a penny gaff, in reference to the usual price of admission.

\*\* House-Tabs (House Curtain): Large, semi-permanent curtains hanging just behind the Proscenium Arc, traditionally opened (or raised) at the start of a performance or Act, and closed (or lowered) at the end. Also known colloquially as the Rag, or in N. America, the Grand Drape.

## Scene 2. How Do Schemas ‘Follow the Fringe’?

To follow the Fringe into a digital realm, one must extend the parameters of the theatre of Fringe to Edinburgh – the city - as its stage. It must then wed the material and the symbolic. To recall, GloPAC identified two needs of performing arts description: that centered on the performance itself, and description of the nature of the item digitized. In the case of the Fringe, this bears out. Yet *Follow the Fringe* reveals a unique aspect to its description. Namely, what ‘is’ a performance.

The predominate items in this collection are flyers. The posters, postcards, leaflets, handbills and unique flyering objects that performers use to engage in the ‘performance’ of flyering. The festival culture of the Fringe is intimately tied to this ‘not purely marketing’ item. The flyer in its festival context is both a material item and a symbolic performance. How is this? A flyer performs the early narrative verses of the staged Fringe production, akin to a literary hook that is part of the written piece. The flyer is often a prop to the symbolic performance staged on the streets of Edinburgh. The preview clip or other street performance designed to carry you to the officially staged, venue performance. Lastly, flyers and flyering are the props and *collective* performance that captures the festival culture of the Edinburgh Fringe. In sum, flyers perform on the stage of Edinburgh city and on their individual venue stage.

This essence of the flyer as performance can be captured in the following anecdotes. Magician Mike Daniels recounts:

I really took my hat off to the attractive girl who slipped a note to me as I was walking up the Royal Mile. It really looked handwritten and it said something like, ‘I know you might think this is forward of me, but I saw you across the street and I’ve been following you because I feel strangely attracted to you. Would you like to meet tonight in such-and-such a venue?’ And it was the venue for the play she was in.<sup>153</sup>

Some flyers are an edible performance. To promote her show *The Naked Brunch*, Natalie Bak handed out toast and chocolate spread with the name of her show toasted onto the surface.<sup>154</sup> Indeed, in *The Edinburgh Fringe Survival Guide*, playwright Mark Ravenhill concludes his forward: “With this book in your hand, you’ll have a head start on the incredible adventure of taking a show to the Edinburgh Fringe. Good luck and before you go - can I give you a leaflet for my show?”<sup>155</sup>

In *Navigating the ‘Archive City’: Digital Spatial Humanities and Archival Film Practice*, Les Roberts examines the idea of the archive city, a spatiotemporal construct oriented around the metaphor of ‘city as archive’.<sup>156</sup> Where access to the archival city is granted by “consenting to let go of our familiar reference points in personal and collective time and space.”<sup>157</sup>

Similarly, in accessing the Edinburgh Fringe – the festival city, the archive city, city that is a stage – it is useful to shift or broaden our familiar reference points (the marketing item and the show referenced therein) as to what is a performance. The Fringe festival culture is a continual evolution of this notion. Why stress the ‘flyer as performance’? Because description of Fringe materials should seek to capture this essence. It demands a richer description than capture of a text document as a routine aside to the ‘main’ performance. Further, given that a rule of the Fringe is to have your creativity inure to your flyer, the task of describing archival materials from this festival culture will likely expand and fuzzy the lines between object and performance.



In fact, during the final days of assembling this thesis, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe commemorated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, announcing “To celebrate this landmark more than 200 fringes from across the world will join together on 11 July 2017 for the first ever World Fringe Day.”<sup>158</sup> The cultural heritage of fringe festivals will grow.

Description of such festivals is in its infancy. Therefore, the contextual backdrop of flyers and flyering that vividly revealed itself in this *Follow the Fringe* collection will be relevant to future description in this realm.

Flyering performance is a musical vamp.\* It entertains audience and performer as they await that official live performance. Humorously, as I had set out to describe my coding frame with the relevant metadata schemas, a ‘vamp’ or pause was required.

#### *Preparatory Pause*

Seventeen categories emerged from the *Follow the Fringe* collection: Newspaper, Magazine, Map, Poster, Postcard (programmer), Postcard (multi-production), Postcard (single production), Postcard (children’s production), Handbill, Booklet (venue), Booklet (genre), Leaflet, Flyering Object, Memorabilia, Performance Video, Still Image, and Interview.

In the process, questions arose in assigning items to these categories. For instance, take a tri-fold flyer made of postcard-grade paper. Is this classified as a Leaflet or Postcard? The fortune-teller finger game; one sat in the archival box as a Handbill, the other as an assembled 3D Flyering Object. Was it handed out at the Fringe as a Handbill or an Object? Am I describing form or content? I took a lead from the Edinburgh

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\* Vamp: To repeat or extemporize a passage of music to cover a wait, either deliberate or accidental. Sometimes indicated in scores as ‘Vamp until ready.’

Fringe Society and used form as a guide. Thus, the tri-fold flyer was a Leaflet, and the fortune-telling game was classified as its final, most unique form, a Flying Object.

Such dilemmas highlight how descriptive metadata has a significant temporal aspect and a vantage point aspect. First, description may involve an item that changes form during flying. Description of that item is thus impacted by what point in time a description is placed on it. Second, depending on the vantage point, that of performer or audience, an item may be described differently. A CalArts T-shirt can be a promotional item to the performer, and memorabilia to the audience. Description must at times choose a time-point and vantage point when describing the Fringe.

The influence of vantage point is seen in how Edinburgh and festival producers labeled items. A publication in Booklet form was labeled 'Guide' in one instance, 'Brochure' in another. Semantics are always a thorn in metadata. For a festival as prolific as the Fringe, semantics are even more free to roam. Again, focusing on form moved the classification process forward.

A final caveat. The analysis of schemas herein was conducted without access to certain templates, drop down lists, and other interface prompts attendant to the repository systems implementing these schemas. In accord, interaction within such a context would likely alter the observations made.

Now, I will put out the House-Full Boards\* as I present the performances of each metadata schema as it 'follows the Fringe'.

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\* House-Full Boards: Boards bearing the words HOUSE FULL, placed outside a theatre when no more seats are available for the current performance. Generally considered to be an excellent form of publicity for any show.

## A PERFORMANCE OF GloPAC

### *Dates, Times & Prices*

The GloPAC schema captures dates for objects and performances. The *Date Created* element – allowing a single date entry – describes the date the digital or source object or component was created, e.g. date of a video or costume design. For Fringe, *date* entry beyond a single date format is needed. Objects such as magazines can be created (published) for a date range. The *Edinburgh Festival Fringe* magazine is dated August 02-26, 2013. The *List Guides* is issued weekly, e.g. August 8-15, 2013.

For performances, there are *Date*, *Date Beginning* and *Date Completion* elements. Here, date ranges are accommodated, but within an occurrence of one (one entry allowed). One challenge is that Fringe performances often have multiple performance dates and date ranges. For example, *The Dragon Who Hates Poetry* performed August 3-4, 6-11, 13-18, and 20-24. A solution is to enter a single, outer-bounds range (August 3-24). In short, Fringe needs (a) the ability to enter multiple dates and multiple date ranges, and (b) the *Occurrence* for date elements set as ‘unbounded’.

As to performance time and duration, the schema lacks an element to capture this. Given the volume of performances comprising Fringe, this data is valuable for contextualizing individual performances and the festival itself. Likewise, there appears no way to capture pricing. Fringe pricing varies, such as between preview and regular performances. Moreover, a component of Festival Fringe programming is that of *Free Fringe*. *PBH's Free Fringe 2013* uses a logo as well as its own publication to guide

festivalgoers to free shows. This data was entered in Notes. However, dedicated elements for time, duration, and price are needed.

### *Venues*

The GloPAC schema needs a dedicated ‘Venue’ element to adequately describe the Festival Fringe. It does afford three place/location elements that capture: Coordinates (address), Place Type (e.g., Museum building) and Variant Place Names (historical, translated, or transliterated names). To record a Fringe venue in the schema, it is noted in the Coordinates element, in brackets. Such as: [Gilded Balloon: Teviot, Bristo Square] *street address*. Fringe programming typically occurs at ‘Venues’. So described, from the Official Fringe Programme to all who participate. Venue is the locator at the Fringe. For instance, Paradise in the Vault (Venue 29), Venue 13, or Henry’s Cellar Bar. And don’t forget the more unusual locations, like in an elevator or the forest, like *Forest Fringe*. Thus, a free-text ‘Venue’ element is desirable.

### *Websites, Social Media, Logos*

Fringe marketing materials often share contact information for venues, performers, production companies and the like. This is typically offered in the form of websites and social media. These digital contacts can also play a role in selling the show. For instance, *Death Ship 666* was created by Box Step Productions, who are YouTube comedy makers. Their flyer directs you to view the show’s trailer at YouTube. A place to record digital contact information is valuable. It opens a world of research on not only the festival, but the artists, traditions, and history that make it all happen.

The efforts of the visual artist can be seen in the abundance of Logos across Fringe items. From venue logos to theatre company logos, they qualify as a genre of Fringe art. Logos are also a navigation tool at the festival. Logos can be noted in *Inscriptions*. However, a *Logo* element and the ability to upload images of these logos would enhance description and document the uniqueness of the Fringe's festival culture.

### *Subject & Functions*

The *Subject* element employs the controlled vocabulary *Arts of Performance*. Alternately, a user may employ their own controlled vocabulary or classification system. I used *Arts of Performance* to describe both captures of live performance, and the subject of performances reflected in the Flyers. There was one category needed for the Fringe but missing from the list: *Cabaret and Variety*. A formal programme category at the Fringe and growing in popularity.

A flyer may not divulge the necessary information to ascertain the art of performance. The festival culture of Fringe – including flyering – is ultimately designed to lure the audience to a performance. Sometimes, the lure is most effective when its subject is a mystery.

The *Function* that one plays in the world of theatre and performing arts is dynamic. How to credit whom can be a challenge where terms are used interchangeably or overlap, e.g. producer and programmer. Generic terms like 'presented by' can leave one guessing. As can a name like *The Catherine's Club* – it sounds like a venue but is in fact a theatre company, founded October 17, 1754. One function missing from the list that would accommodate Fringe is 'Venue operator'. Take the booklet *Edinburgh*

*Fringe Performance Guide 2013, at Venue 13.* The closest functions listed are ‘producer’, ‘publisher’, ‘publicist’. Yet, the creator of the booklet in reality functions as a venue, notwithstanding that it publishes material.

### *Ratings, Reviews & Honors*

Fringe shows range from children’s shows to X-rated. The play *Moving Family* is “not suitable for under 14 years” whilst PEEP is “an X-rated must see of the festival ... worthy of the turner prize.” Conquering the Fringe is a feat in selecting what shows to attend. Moreover, ratings are cultural markers. A *Ratings* element would bring this information out of *Notes*.

Reviews are scattered about *Follow the Fringe* materials. Such may be preferable in *Notes*. On the other hand, a researcher may wish to search via a certain critic’s work, or an artist may seek out reviews to assess the climate of an emerging art form from year to year. The Fringe often highlights (as well as issues its own) honors, distinctions, and awards. Such as: “World Premier New Musical,” “Winner: Florence for Fringe,” “Double-Fringe First Award-Winning Writer,” and “Winners of the Hat Trick Short & Funnies Award 2013.” Honors can be captured in *Notes* or *Inscriptions*. A dedicated element would cater to the Fringe.

### *Multiple Titles*

Some theatre companies stage multiple productions at the Fringe. Fourth Monkey Productions issued a single flyer noting three different plays. Fortunately, GloPAC’s *Title* element is flexible. The editor can devise a title, or if the artist or creator gives a title, it must be entered in quotes. Further information can be tacked onto the official title by

using a colon. Thus, one flyer promoting three titles can be described as, “Fourth Monkey Productions: *title one, title two, title three.*”

### *Relator Elements*

GloPAC offers relator elements that benefit the describing and connection of *Follow the Fringe* items. To illustrate, the CalArts production of *Mask* is documented in a Postcard and a performance video. Because these items are the same intellectual content in different format, they can be linked with the *Relation.isFormatOf* element. A photograph of a street performance of *Macbeth* is a logical part of the larger venue performance *Macbeth*, as captured in the *Gryphon Venues: 2013 Programme*. The photograph can be linked to the *Gryphon* booklet using *Relation.isPartOf*. The Hurly Burly production, *Death by Shakespeare* (an homage to Shakespeare’s works), can be related to Deadly Theatre Productions staging of *Titus Andronicus*, using the *RelatedWorks* element. These are associated pieces linked by Shakespeare.

In total, GloPAC is a balanced mix of very valuable elements in the context of the Fringe, and wish-list elements that were missing or not readily apparent in its schema. GloPAC’s performance both hit the mark and was a ‘dry’.\*

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\* Dry (v. or n.) An actor forgetting words is said to have ‘dried’ – an evening referred to as ‘a dry’.

## A PERFORMANCE OF ECLAP

The ECLAP *Performing Arts* metadata is specific to performing arts. However, there are *Dublin Core* metadata to be ‘associated’ with the performing arts content to be ingested. In testing ECLAP, these were treated as one Performing Arts schema.

### *Dates*

ECLAP captures several dates. The *First Performance Date* (premier date), *Performance Date* (date of performance being viewed on the ECLAP portal), *Recording Date* (creation date of digital object that is not a public performance, e.g. an interview), and *Date* (a date in the life cycle of an object). These elements all implicate resources in the *Follow the Fringe* collection and so are useful. Yet, all allow entry of a single date. The Fringe’s need for multiple dates and date ranges is again frustrated.

There exists an element, *Coverage* (spatial and temporal). It pertains to the original analog or born digital object. However, the schema states that time periods should be named in preference to numeric identifiers such as date ranges. Further, coverage is typically used for placing an item in historical context. It is not a preferred place to record Fringe Performance dates.

### *Titles*

The Performing Arts metadata has an element, *Piece Record*. The Dublin Core metadata has an element, *Title*. The interplay of these two: *Piece Record* is the original title of the performance/script of the play. *Title* is the name given to the original analog or borne digital resource. For example, *Cymbeline* (Piece record), and *Photo of Cymbeline* (Title). In application to *Follow the Fringe*, *Piece Record* and *Title* are often



the same, due to flyers titled with a respective performance. Where they differ shows up in photos. For example, *Macbeth* (Piece Record), *Photo of Macbeth street scene* (Title), *Photo of Advert for Macbeth* (Title).

Importantly, theatre is traditionally tied to its literary origins, hence performing arts metadata often refers to ‘the script’. Theatre and performing arts are notions that sometimes overlap, terms interchanged, and subsumed within one another when speaking of these realms.

### *First Performance*

The set of *First Performance* elements are very useful for describing the Fringe. They capture *Place* (venue, such as ‘The Globe Theatre’), *City*, *Country*, *Date*. First, there is a dedicated element to record Fringe venues. Second, there are various premiers at the Fringe. World Premiers and Fringe Premiers. The programme *Big in Belgium: A New Wave of Flemish Theatre*, presented a series of five productions premiering at the Fringe. Successful on the European mainland, some were translated and adapted for premier in the English-speaking territories – thereby also being English-language Premiers. The ability to capture ‘firsts’ is well-suited to the Fringe.

### *Describing a Fringe Performance*

The element *Plot Summary* was easily filled for performances with ascribed plots. For instance: Trapped in a library for three decades, the librarians have all gone mad, whilst villainous Mandrake Hardback sets his sights on the title of Chief Librarian. \*

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\* A possible plot summary for University of East Anglia: Minotaur Theatre Company’s production of ‘The Librarians’.

Where to describe performances that are not plays and plots? The *Description* element (for describing the content of the original analog or born digital object) was used to record a “Traditional Jazz Band and Late-Night Speakeasy.” In *Performance Movement and Acting Style*, the Fringe performance PEEP might be described as “an X-rated variety show” and/or “Pop-Up Theatre.” There is also a *Genre* element ... *traditional jazz is a genre of Jazz*. In short, these vignettes illustrate that description can be challenging. Even where, as here, several elements exist in which to do so.

### *Format*

*Format* is a repeatable, broadly inclusive element. A place to record as desired, such things as the physical medium (poster, magazine, still image), dimensions (4 x 6), and software/hardware needed to display or operate a resource. Where ECLAP has a tendency to break apart certain aspects of performance, the *Format* element seems geared to bringing together technical information. This flexibility harmonizes with the context of the festival. Not only the items in *Follow the Fringe*, but the many more ‘Formats’ imagined in the thousands of Fringe productions and in years to come.

### *Entities and Functions*

Unlike GloPAC, which utilizes a single *Creator* element to capture entity participation (plus a *Contributor* element), ECLAP delineates multiple elements for such data. First, the element *Performing Arts Group* made easy the registering of theatre companies and performance troupes.

Second, the *Professional* element describes those involved in the performance and their function, e.g. actor, producer, costumer (a controlled vocabulary is used). Third,

*PerformersandCrew* is used only when the *Professional* elements cannot be used (as where performers are written in a single text not easily split into individuals). Fourth, *Cast*, is use only if the *Professional* elements cannot be used – as where the cast is written in a single text). Fifth, *Creator* captures the creator of the original analog or born digital object. They are the creator of the work of art – the director of a performance, author of a book, composer of a script, a theatre company in the case of devised work. Here too is a *Contributor* element (to note, e.g., a collaborator). To illustrate, The Fringe production of *Eric and Little Earn* was devised and performed by two men. Thus, each one's name will be recorded in in the *Professional* element and the *Creator* element.

I can 'Shake the Ladder' \* and reveal that the two distinct approaches taken by GloPAC and ECLAP to describing entities and functions worked equally well.

#### *Objects Not Used in Performance*

The *Object* element is for 'objects used in the performance' such as Costumes, Props, Programs, Prints, Drawings, Sets. There is no distinct element for objects that are not used in performance. Perhaps, this is a simple matter of description of the *Object* element itself. As this is Performing Arts metadata, a casual reading suggests that objects used [in connection] with the performance are also to be described here. The scope of this element is a bit unclear.

Nevertheless, I used it to describe all objects. Such as the newspaper *Edinburgh on Sunday*, published by The Scotsman (official newspaper of Scotland), and *The*

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\* Shake the ladder: Actors required to enter in a state of great excitement or agitation will sometimes literally shake the ladder leading to the Fly Gallery (high working platform), usually fixed to the wall at the side of the stage, to build up nervous tension before entering.

*Edinburgh Festivals Official Map 2013*, created by Festivals Edinburgh. These are critical items of festival culture, but not objects used in performance. Arguably, they are objects used in the grand performance of the Edinburgh Fringe. There may not be an ECLAP element to accommodate objects not used in performance. ECLAP may be focused narrowly, such that this type of item is not deemed relevant to performance.

#### *Wish List of Elements*

The ECLAP Performing Arts schema appears to not have some elements that would be used in fully describing *Follow the Fringe*. These are elements that address Price, Performance Time, Notes, Honors/Awards, Patron/Sponsor, Website and Social Media, Reviews, Inscriptions/Marks. That said, it is possible that such information is being captured - just not in the schema titled Performing Arts metadata. The metadata universe is such that there are no bright lines separating all metadata types. Thus, Performing Arts metadata is itself up for description.

### A PERFORMANCE OF PACore

The Roundabout Theatre Company (RTC) and Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) took inspiration from PACore in designing their institutional schemas for use in CollectiveAccess. RTC is a theatre company. BAM is a multi-arts center, with programming in theatre, dance, music, opera, film, visual art and more. By comparison, GloPAC and ECLAP are global digital repositories. Examining the schemas of BAM and RTC will shed light on these different contexts – which drive the design and use of any schema. It will give a FUF (full up to finish)\* in theatre terms.

#### *A. Roundabout Theatre Company*

The RTC describes its archival materials as comprising images, documents, objects, video and oral history. This fairly describes the archival material comprising *Follow the Fringe*. I extracted, as useful for describing the Fringe collection, the following metadata elements:

Title, Alternate Title, Production Date, Production Time, Running Time, Description, Description Source, Dimensions, Item Type, Occurrence Type, Creator, Functions, Biography, Source of Biography, Contact Information, Related Titles and Credits, Rights & Restrictions.<sup>159</sup>

The RTC employs a controlled vocabulary of ‘Items’. This list reflected the items in *Follow the Fringe* fairly well. Such as Media, Publication, Marketing Document, Poster, Digital Video, and Photograph. There were many more listed items that would likely be implicated in a different Fringe collection. For example, a Theatre company

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\* FUF: Full Up to Finish. Increasing the intensity of light during the last few bars of a musical number to attract greater applause.

performing at the Edinburgh Fringe could assemble in their archive such items as Costume, Prop, Artistic Document, Script and Orchestration. Indeed, the CalArts Festival Theatre may have an archive assembled with such items.

The RTC is praised, for it captures not only *Production* dates, but also date ranges and times - perfectly matched for *Follow the Fringe* materials. The element *Running Time* was a welcome find, as these were not captured using GloPAC and ECLAP. The *Occurrence Type* element with the values 'Stage Production', 'Event', and 'Student Production' were useful to highlight CalArts participation at the Fringe. A single *Description* element offered flexibility in capturing whatever narrative I wished to provide for the performance, event, or object being described. In addition, a *Contact Information* element was available, but did not call for social media or websites.

The RTC configuration did not provide a place for all Fringe descriptions. Venue was not recorded. Understandable, as RTC is essentially a fixed venue(s). While *Related Places* could be used to record venue, it seems incorrect to refer to a performance location as a 'related' location.

There appeared to be a controlled vocabulary list of functions and other descriptive terms. I used this list to describe the function of *Creators*. The list includes terms such as actor, music, lyrics, lighting design, orchestra staff, dance captain, makeup/hair. Terms not on the list that were needed to describe *Follow the Fringe* are: Creator, Producer, Assistant Producer, Designer, Stage Manager, and Photographer.

In total, the RTC schema's essence is theatre. As such, it aligned well with several descriptive needs of Fringe. While the information captured may not be as

voluminous as that captured with GloPAC and ECLAP, what was captured was done so with ease and in some cases, more appropriately, as in the case of Production dates and times – always relevant in the context of theatrical festivals.

### *B. Brooklyn Academy of Music*

The BAM describes its collection as comprising documents, media, born-digital material, promotional items and memorabilia. I extracted, as useful, the following metadata elements:

Object Type and Sub-Type, Born Digital Type, Title, Production Date, Production Description, Work, Work Description, Performance Type, Genre, Premier, Venue, Production Language, Country of Origin, Ticket Price, Performance Timing (duration), Performance Schedule (date and time), Notes, Contact Information, Rights, Special Events, Principal Artists, Company, Participants and Performers.<sup>160</sup>

The BAM gets credit for the only schema to assign *Ticket Price*. It also defines *Performance Schedule*, which includes date and time. This element is tailor made for describing Fringe. As is the *Venue* element, apt for the Fringe festival setting.

The element *Performance Timing* was used several times in describing *Follow the Fringe* performances. A note on time: The Fringe is a festival where time is defined with precision. Shows starting on the minute hand – such as 3:20, 11:40, and 6:10 are common. Performance duration is quite important because without strict adherence, the ‘all are welcome’ format that is the Fringe will not work. Thus, schemas that capture these details are facilitating not only rich, but also authentic descriptions of Fringe.

The *Object-Type* element draws on a list of Promotional Item formats. It mirrors some *Follow the Fringe* formats: Handbill, Poster, Postcard, and Program. The *Genre*

element uses a controlled vocabulary titled *Artsvision Genres*. The listed genres: Dance, Dance/Theatre, Film, Music, Music/Dance, Music/Film, Music/Theatre, Music Video, Opera, Theatre, Visual Art. These genres worked fine when applied to *Follow the Fringe*, with one exception: multi-programming items documenting performances from multiple genres. Fringe materials like *Made in Scotland (2013)* can be captured, but with the option of entering multiple genre values or repeating the Genre element.

Having a *Notes* element is much needed for describing Fringe. Examples of *Follow the Fringe* notes: "Fringe stand-out show: 2010, 2012," "As seen on BBC's 'Rhyme Rocket', Winner of New York's Nuyorican Poetry Café Slam and UK's Superhero's of Slam. Suitable for ages 5+," and "From award-nominated playwright Tim Foley." It is important to distinguish searchable *Notes*, from an *Internal Notes* element that was the only option in the RTC schema. Searchable *Notes* are critical for capturing the unique aspects of Fringe, and for capturing them over spans of time for a festival now staging its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

The *Performance Type* element has distinguishing values of 'Opening Performance' and 'Performance'. This element, expanded, would be useful for Fringe as it has not only these two performance types. Fringe also has such types as 'Preview Performance' and 'Rehearsal' performances that are documented and attended, as was the case with students tracking and documenting CalArts activities.

To capture production credits, *Participants and Performers* are restricted to seven types: actor, comedian, dancer, musician, performer, singer, and speaker. The challenge here was assigning one of these, where credit belongs to a theatre company on whole. In the *Company* element, 'performer' was used as a catchall. Credit types were restricted to



a vocabulary labeled *Production Credits*. The list was used to credit *Principle Artists*, *Participants* and *Performers*. Production credits needed to describe *Follow the Fringe* but not on the list: ‘venue’, ‘publisher’, and ‘producer’.

Overall, the BAM schema provided a nice snapshot of *Follow the Fringe* materials in a compact set of elements. Like the RTC schema, BAM’s schema is surprisingly well tuned to the descriptive needs of Fringe. Interestingly, BAM and RTC are regional, fixed operations in comparison to the Festival Fringe. Then again, whilst the Edinburgh Fringe is a whirlwind of movement, it is also a fixed operation whose performance stage and audience seat *is* the City of Edinburgh.

## *Epilogue*

The Renaissance had its 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century *Strolling Players*. An itinerant group of actors travelling from town to town and performing wherever an audience could be raised. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries had the *Burletta*. A musical play or light opera mounted to circumvent a law prohibiting performances of plays in unlicensed theatres (A play containing five or more songs was defined as a Burletta, and consequently unaffected by the law). The 20th century had its uninvited *Performers on the Fringe*.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe can be described in as many terms as in one's vocabulary. This highlights the key factor in modelling metadata: What is its purpose? Reviewing the schemas herein, GloPAC and ECLAP *are* like Thunder Sheets,\* whilst RTC and BAM are diminutive Rain Boxes.† Yet, all have proven to be valuable performing arts schemas. Hence, each offered descriptors that benefited the Fringe. Moreover, each offered something the others did not.

The fact that theatre jargon of old can describe the new is proof that performance and the desire to witness it will continue ever on. This comfort should carry into the

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\* Thunder sheet: Large sheet of metal, suspended in the Fly Gallery, shaken by one corner to produce the sound of a sudden clap of thunder. It was first used in 1709 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, in *Appius and Virginia*, a play by John Dennis (1657-1734). The play, however, was not a success, and shortly afterwards, hearing his thunder sheet being used in a Production of Macbeth, Dennis rose from his seat and explained: 'How the rascals use me! They will not let my play run, and yet they steal my thunder!'

† Rain box: Shallow box or tray containing dried peas, used to produce the sound effect of falling rain when rocked from side to side.

digital realms. While information science enjoys the notion of perfect schemas, information arts is at ease without an Über-marionette (super-puppet) \* of metadata.

To capture the festival culture that is Fringe, the metadata elements that would serve the purpose of describing its uniqueness are as follows:

1. An element to capture the official Edinburgh Fringe categories of performing arts.
2. A *Venue* element, with free-text narrative and image upload.
3. A *Logo* element, with free-text narrative and image upload.
4. A *Performance Date* element that captures multiple single dates and multiple date ranges.
5. A *Performance Time* element to reflect the unusual minute-hand scheduling of the Fringe.
6. An element to record *Social Media and Websites*.
7. An *Awards and Distinctions* element, which includes a sub-element for Fringe Awards.
8. A *Street Performance/Street Scenes* element to document street scenes not identifiable as related to an official Fringe show.

The *Follow the Fringe* collection has photographs of street performances, scenes, and city landscapes that offer excellent context. This aspect of Fringe culture should not become hidden behind formally staged shows. Particularly when Edinburgh itself has a performing role in the festival. In addition, one can envision an expandable controlled vocabulary for Fringe Performance Category and Venue (due in part to Edinburgh's longstanding architectural legacy). Lastly, The *Follow the Fringe* collection captured

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\* Über-marionette: Term coined by designer Edward Gordon Craig (1872 – 1966) to describe his ideal actor, performing in a strongly stylized manner, totally under the director's control, with no emotional involvement.

well the CalArts performances. The item I look forward to seeing in future Fringe collections is video of Fringe performances across the spectrum.

The Edinburgh Fringe, like all theatrical traditions, can be a challenge to describe. If for no other reason, that it is ephemeral. Even turning from theatrical jargon to formal literary and artistic inheritance, the hope of description well-settled is for want. To illustrate, Composer Richard Wagner believed,

The greatest art form that mankind ever had was Greek Tragedy. Not because of the nature of Greece or the nature of tragedy. But because Greek Tragedy encompassed all arts: acting, verse, music, dance, costume, spectacle, chorus. <sup>161</sup>

This one genre is a quintessential complexity of Drama. Drama is but one tradition amongst the plethora of performance traditions and styles at the Fringe. Staging performances within the context of a festival event, enhances this complexity. For all that, this complexity is the byproduct of creativity. And creativity is an opportunity to explore, experience, and preserve the heritage of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

It is hoped this project's findings will be a departure point, to further investigate the documentation, description and sharing of the Fringe. Both the Edinburgh Fringe and the hundreds of fringe festivals worldwide. In addition, the festival is a performance unit unto itself – beyond the individual performance components that comprise it - and thus an aspect for further study. Finally, the Fringe sits among an array of festival types, which also seek metadata standards to facilitate their description.

Performing Arts metadata delivers an encore performance. Pianist Yuja Wang states, “An encore is something that is both ephemeral and truthful, a temporary mood reciprocated by the audience.”<sup>162</sup> Descriptive metadata must be thoughtfully and creatively designed, so as to evolve along with the performance traditions it seeks to describe. Otherwise, a truthful encore cannot be shared.

Returning to the Lectures of August Wilhelm Schlegel, we can be confident of the drive to create anew. In speaking of the charms of theatre, he articulates:

With the great poets and artists, it was quite otherwise. However strong their enthusiasm for the ancients, and however determined their purpose of entering into competition with them, they were compelled by their independence and originality of mind, to strike out a path of their own, and to impress upon their productions the stamp of their own genius.<sup>163</sup>

In this case, Edinburgh might be the poet, the Festival Fringe the artists. Their combined efforts will continue to present us the magic of the theatre ... the magic of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

## NOTES

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