

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

RAD Archive Collections Development (acquisitions) Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to provide stakeholders and the general public with clear guidance on the purpose of the RAD Archives and Special Collections (hereinafter referred to as 'the archive') and the material that is collected, preserved and accessible.
- 1.2 The policy is supported by the Library & Archive Strategic Action Plan and provides a framework for developing a collections management plan and procedures to enable best-practice in the management and operations of the archive at all stages from acquisition through to preservation and use.
- 1.3 It will define the collecting remit of the archive and ensure that curatorial decisions on accession and disposal are guided by a recognised strategy.
- 1.4 The policy is intended as a public document for the information of RAD staff, RAD members, donors/potential donors, researchers, funding bodies, and any other interested parties.

2. History of the Archive

- 2.1 In 1956, the August issue of the *Dance Gazette* carried an editorial by Arnold Haskell patronising the development of 'The Margot Fonteyn Archives' at the Royal Academy of Dance. This marked the start of deliberate collecting and the remit was suggested to include "programmes of the Empire and Alhambra period, of Pavlova seasons, Diaghileff, de Basil, Festival, Rambert, Wells, International, Metropolitan and so on."
- 2.2 By 1968 plans for the new building in Knightsbridge included "a small museum where some of the many treasures in the way of costumes, programmes and photographs at present in the Academy's possession could be shown to advantage." In the same year Clement Crisp was engaged as the RAD's Librarian/Archivist and he made a fresh appeal for more material with a view to building an archive of prime national importance. The collecting remit at this time extended to "anything relevant to ballet and dancing in every part of the world."
- 2.3 The loss of the Knightsbridge property in 1970 and the move to Battersea in 1972 meant that the RAD no longer had the space for

the specialist storage facilities, museum or research room that would have befitted a national dance archive. The many costumes that had been acquired from Adeline Genée, Tamara Karsavina and the Ballet for All company were gifted to the V&A Museum and the remaining material was retained to be housed and managed alongside the significant library collections. Card catalogues were created for some of the material but no formal record of gifts or acquisitions was ever kept.

2.4 In recent years a number of factors have contributed to an increasing interest in the archive collections held at the RAD and the organisation's Centenary year (2020) in particular, provided an opportunity to showcase the range of material available and highlight the importance of the collections to the history of British ballet. The move to new purpose built facilities in 2022 has been an important step in improving the management and care of the collections, and this now needs to be underpinned with appropriate policies, plans and organisational support.

3. Scope and Purpose of the Archive

3.1 The archive collections at the RAD represent a rich source of material predominantly covering the development of British ballet teaching and performance from the 1920s onwards¹. They currently comprise the following three categories:

- The RAD Heritage Archive – records preserving the history and development of the RAD;
- Personal archives – collections acquired from individuals directly or indirectly related to the RAD;
- Special collections – materials artificially grouped by subject or material type.

Further details about each of the categories can be found in the [Guide to the Archives & Special Collections](#), and on the [RAD website](#).

3.2 The purpose of the archive is to collect, preserve and provide access to material, both internally to staff and externally to members of the public, documenting the history of the RAD and the wider cultural environment in which the organisation has grown and developed.

3.3 The archive complements and enhances the research value of the resources available in the Academy's Wolfson Library. Together the Library & Archive support the RAD in its charitable and

¹ Earlier materials may be found in some of the personal archives and special collections.

strategic objectives, underpinning its mission to 'Inspire the World to Dance'.

4. Collecting Priorities

4.1 RAD Heritage Archives

The archive collects records from the establishment of the RAD in 1920 to the present day. Records of particular interest are those which provide evidence of strategic decision-making, organisational health and structure, artistic and educational developments, new/special projects and relationships, regular events, activities and awards, marketing and community engagement. Regional and International developments are also of interest and identification of records held elsewhere may be necessary to complete the picture.

4.2 Personal Archives

Personal collections may vary in size from a single notebook or file of material to a large number of boxes containing a variety of formats including textual, visual and audio records. The archive wishes to acquire personal archives that relate directly or indirectly to the history of the RAD or provide evidence of the cultural environment in which the RAD operates both in the UK and overseas. The archive will prioritise acquiring original and unique material from individuals involved in the world of dance and in particular where there is a link with RAD activities, personalities or context.

4.2.1 The archive does not accept records of individual dance schools or teachers except where they provide additional context to a wider RAD project, activity or event.

4.2.2 Where a personal archive also includes large quantities of performance programmes, journals, books and other published material that duplicate collections already held, it may not be possible to accept or retain that part of the collection, except to fill gaps, and the archive will discuss this with the donor prior to acquisition. An additional statement on the acquisition of performance programmes can be found in Appendix I.

4.3 Special Collections

Material for special collections relating to individuals will be acquired and considered in the same way as for Personal Archives above, whether the material is to be added to an existing collection or if it may result in a new collection. Published material will only be accepted to fill gaps in existing collections and this will be discussed with the donor prior to acquisition.

5. Formats

The archive collects and holds records in paper, analogue and digital² formats encompassing textual, visual and audio material. Artworks, artefacts, costumes and footwear will only be considered if there is a strong link to RAD Heritage or significant individuals such as RAD founders or presidents.

6. Acquisitions Process

6.1 The Archives & Records Manager will work closely with RAD departments to identify the internal records that should be considered for transfer to the RAD Heritage Archive. The organisation's retention schedules should indicate where records have been designated for permanent preservation and other material may also be accepted if it conforms to the 'Guidelines for Archival Selection Criteria'.

6.2 Personal archives and material for the special collections may be acquired through gifts or bequests and a 'Transfer of Ownership' form will be issued to formalise the donation once accepted and agreed by both parties. The archive does not have a budget for acquisitions so ordinarily accepts donations only.

6.3 Long-term loans or copies of original documents held elsewhere, while they have historically been acquired on occasion, will not normally be accepted in the future.

7. Terms & Conditions

7.1 Ownership

7.1.1 Items received by gift or bequest become the legal property and responsibility of the archive from the point of transfer. Ownership of records on loan, if accepted (see 6.3 above), remain with the depositor.

7.1.2 Donations may not be accepted if any restrictions are placed on their use or disposal.

7.2 Access

7.2.1 Items accepted into the archive will be made available for educational and personal research purposes within the usual operations of the archive and subject to restrictions of copyright or GDPR regulations.

7.2.2 Items may also be used for display, exhibition or publication purposes, subject to the same regulations.

7.3 Cataloguing

² The RAD does not currently have a digital archive or digital preservation strategy but recognises the need to develop this area as soon as possible.

- 7.3.1 Descriptions of items accepted into the archive will be included in the relevant finding aids which may be available to the public for reference.
- 7.3.2 Donor/depositor information will be recorded for internal use only unless otherwise agreed at the time of deposit.
- 7.4 Disposal
 - 7.4.1 The Library & Archive reserves the right to dispose of any material that falls outside the scope of our existing collections or collecting priorities.
 - 7.4.2 Duplicate materials, badly damaged items and non-archival documents or material identified as having low informational value may also be disposed of following the appropriate retrospective or reappraisal process.
 - 7.4.3 Items may be offered back to the original owner in the first instance, or transferred to a more suitable repository³ where possible.

8. Responsibilities and Decision-making

- 8.1 Decisions on smaller acquisitions, additions to existing collections or disposals will be the responsibility of the Archives & Records Manager with reference to this collecting policy and the additional selection criteria.
- 8.2 Major acquisitions or disposals which may need to be supported by additional funding or legal advice will be referred to the Executive Board for further discussion and approval.
- 8.3 Where an offer of material is made direct to any individual member of RAD staff, including the Executive Board and Board of Trustees, decisions to acquire material will only be made with reference to this policy and/or the Archives & Records Manager.
- 8.4 Advice and recommendations may be sought from other individuals (internal or external) where appropriate but no acquisition or disposal decisions should be made without reference to this policy and/or the Archives & Records Manager.

9. Sign-off & Review

- 9.1 Policy originated by the Archives & Records Manager
Jan 2023

³ The RAD will liaise with other dance or performing arts archives where similar or related material may be housed.

9.2 Approved by the Executive Board
2023

01 Mar

9.3 Date for Review (every 3 years)

Jan 2026

Appendix I

RAD Library & Archive

Policy statement on Performance Programmes

Currently performance programmes are classed as a 'special collection' although some may also exist within the RAD Heritage Archive, Personal Archive collections (such as Adeline Genée and Phyllis Bedells) as well as special collections relating to individuals such as Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina and Serge Diaghilev.

Performance programmes are an important resource which provide evidence of the wider professional dance environment in which the RAD operates. Although it is not our objective to actively collect performance programmes on a regular basis, we are happy to receive donations which enhance and update our existing collections.

Donations will usually be added to the main run of performance programmes which are organised by country and company/artist. This means individual donations will not be kept together as a discrete collection but a note will be added to the catalogue entry for each programme to include the name of the donor and year of acquisition. The only exceptions to this would be where programmes are received as part of a larger archive and there is additional material relating to the programmes which mean they should be kept together. Or, if the programmes provide evidence of the individual's professional dance activities. Donors should be aware that we will dispose of duplicates or badly damaged material.

Programmes which date from the first half of the twentieth century⁴, or earlier, will be stored in the archive with more recent material available on open access shelving in the Library's group study room.

⁴ Pre-1950 or later if there is an appropriate date (e.g. 1957 for Royal Ballet)