Why Use Reference Sources?

These tools—encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks & guides, directories, etc. listed below—will acquaint you with the significant terms, ideas, and people in your topic. They are often used to answer quick questions efficiently or to provide background information about a topic. Recommended quick start: The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre & Performance or North American Theatre Online.

For a list of reference sources available for online searching in all subject areas see the UC Berkeley Library web page on Databases by Type.

Encyclopedias


Still the most comprehensive international performing arts encyclopedia.


Companions


The Continuum companion to twentieth century theatre, 2006.


The Oxford Companion to Theatre and Performance, 2010


The Oxford Companion to the American Musical, 2009

The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre, 3rd ed., 2011

Biographical Sources

This list contains some places to begin your research. Newspapers can be useful as can the Literature Research Center or the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (British) or the American National Biography (U.S.).

Biographical Index of English Drama Before 1660

“This index is a complete annotated list of all playwrights, actors, patrons, musicians, and miscellaneous other people active in English drama before 1660. Each entry contains basic information about the person’s dates and dramatic activities, along with a list of books and articles containing biographical information.”


Contemporary theatre, film, and television. Detroit: Gale Research, 1984- Doe Reference PN 2285 .C58 Biographies


Dissertations


*Theatre Journal.* Baltimore, Md. Published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in cooperation with the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Main Stack PN 3171 .E38

Annual compilation of dissertations in progress are reported in the May issue. Recent issues are available through Project Muse.


  Index and full text of graduate dissertations and theses from North American and European schools and universities, including the University of California. (Dissertations & Theses - Proquest Digital Dissertations and Theses (PQDT) - Dissertation Abstracts - ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global) [1861 - present]

  more...

Catalogs


### Dictionaries

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<td>The Routledge dictionary of performance and contemporary theatre</td>
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### Guides

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A composite photographic reproduction of the actual entries as they were originally printed in the 41 annual volumes of the Dramatic index, which first appeared as part II of Faxon's Annual magazine subject index.


Directories


SIMBAS international directory of performing arts collections and institutions. Paul S. Ulrich et al. Listing of over 7000 international institutions with collections relating to the performing arts.


History


The London Stage, 1660-1800; a Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces together with Casts, Box-receipts. 1st ed. 11 vols. Doe Reference PN 2592 .L6 A dataset derived from this publication is available at London Stage Database.


The most important starting point in finding such information is Backstage, which provides a single point of entry for finding and searching performing arts collections in the UK. Backstage provides a single point of entry for finding and searching performing arts collections in the UK. It is aimed at the research community, plus anyone with an interest in the performing arts. It contains a directory of institutions collection level descriptions selected item level records. Backstage is funded as part of the,esearch -upport ,ibraries (rogramme and replaces the printed version of the Theatre Museum's+irectory of (erforming 1rts ,esources0. .in%+ www.bac%stage.ac.u%. A digital library of the most studied, performed, and critically acclaimed plays from the last 2,500 years. Visit Drama Online to explore play texts and read “context & criticism.” Please note that our access privileges do not include all of the play texts; if access to a particular play is not available, please request a copy via interlibrary loan. Users can view the works of widely studied playwrights and theatre artists from around the globe, including many new performances from Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre collection (Opus Arte), Theatre Arts Films, the BBC, and TMW Media Group. [More details]. contains “a greater focus on contemporary and international productions.” Reference ebooks on the performing arts. [More details]. Gale Literary Sources.