

# CROWDSOURCING THEATER HISTORY METADATA FROM THE ARCHIVES

Lindsay King  
Peter Leonard

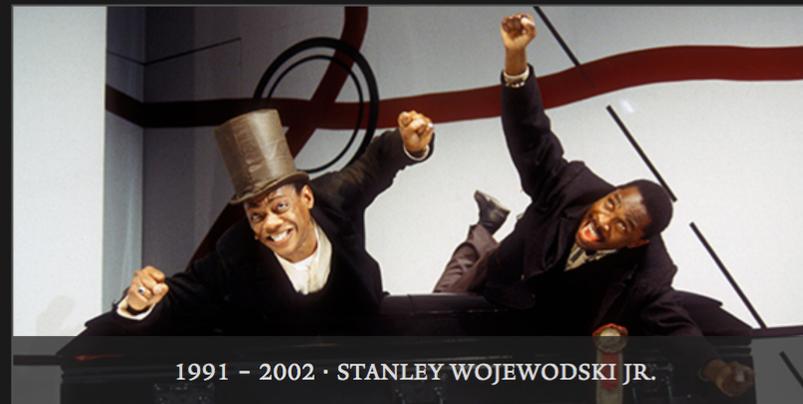
Yale University Library

## Help create a database of Yale theater history

Transcribe over 90 years of drama  
programs in the Yale University  
Library. Let's get started:

[MARK](#)[TRANSCRIBE](#)

2002 - 2016 · JAMES BUNDY



1991 - 2002 · STANLEY WOJEWODSKI JR.

## GOALS

- Increase access to minimally-processed archives
- Generate database of Yale theater history
- Answer reference questions:
  - “How many Shakespeare plays have been staged at the School of Drama?”
  - “Which plays did Meryl Streep appear in while she was a student?”
  - “Which actors have played Hamlet at Yale?”

# YALE THEATER HISTORY

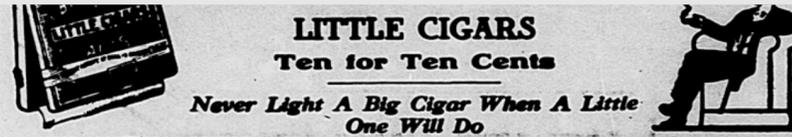
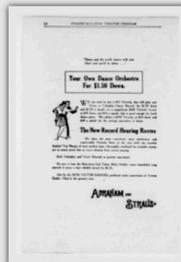
- Department / School of Drama dates to 1925
- Yale Repertory Theatre founded 1966
  - 100+ world premieres
- Famous alumni: Meryl Streep, Wendy Wasserstein, Angela Bassett, William Ivey Long, Liev Schreiber, Sigourney Weaver, Michael Yeagan, Frances McDormand, John Guare, Lupita Nyong'o...

# ENSEMBLE @NYPL (2013)

## ENSEMBLE

Help build an open database of the performing arts

[HOME](#) [BROWSE PROGRAMS](#) [ABOUT](#)



## TELLER'S BROADWAY THEATRE

LEO C. TELLER, OWNER AND MANAGER

Look around your seat. Do not try to

WELCOME!  
This is a program from a 1911 performance in New York City. We need your help identifying the essential information.

NEXT DONE

Nearest Exit to THAT Exit street. Commissioner.

WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 27, 1914.  
Matinees Wednesday and Saturday.

HENRY W. SAVAGE

—Offers—

## ALONG CAME RUTH

A COMEDY

By HOLMAN DAY.

From the French of Fonson and Wicheler.  
Staged by George Marion.

Cast of Characters:

ISRAEL PUTMAN HUBBARD..... JAMES BRADBURY  
MRS. I. P. HUBBARD..... LOUISE SYDMUTH

Show Title ?

Show Date ?

Theater Name ?

Location ?

Production Staff ?

Cast Members ?

Headliner ?

Advertisements ?

4 contributors added a total of 90 transcriptions to this program

[Where are others' transcriptions?](#)

Save

Next Program »

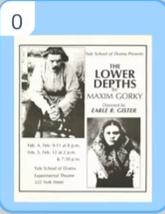
## IDEAS FROM NYPL LABS

- Projects
  - *Building Inspector*
  - *What's on the Menu?*
  - *Emigrant City*
- Limits of OCR and importance of human judgment
- Semantic relationships latent in print material
  - Hard for computers to see
  - Easy for humans to intuit

# SCRIBE AS PLATFORM

- Zooniverse + NYPL Labs + UMN + NEH ODH
- <http://scribeproject.github.io>
- Abstracted platform for crowdsourced transcription with customizable and extensible workflows:
  - **Mark** the area on a page that contains information
  - **Transcribe** the information in the mark
  - **[Verify conflicting transcriptions]**

# MARK



Yale School of Drama Presents

# THE LOWER DEPTHS

by  
MAXIM GORKY

Directed by  
**EARLE R. GISTER**



Feb. 4, Feb. 9-11 at 8 p.m.



Start by finding the program page that lists all or most of this information. Draw one rectangle around all of the text comprising the field you are selecting. Click the **DONE** box when you're finished, and then select another field to mark, or click the **X** to delete your selection and re-mark the same field.

Title (and Subtitle)

Playwright

Director

Dates

NEXT

BAD PLAYBILL

# TRANSCRIBE

Q&A Lab ENSEMBLE MARK TRANSCRIBE ABOUT LOGIN

Yale School of Drama Presents

**THE LOWER DEPTHS**  
by M...

Type the title of the play. ?

Title  
The Lower Depths

Subtitle (Optional)

BAD REGION ILLEGIBLE? NEXT ENTRY

Q&A Lab ENSEMBLE MARK TRANSCRIBE

NATASHA, her sister  
MEDVEDYEV, their uncle, a policeman  
PEPEL, a thief  
KLESHCH, a locksmith  
ANNA, his wife  
NASTYA, a streetwalker  
KVASHNYA, a meat pie peddler  
BUBNOV, a capmaker  
BARON

Tessie Hogan  
Patricia Clarkson  
Steven Blye  
Joseph Urla  
Don Harvey  
Susan MacDonald  
Melissa Weil  
Andi Chapman  
Dylan Baker  
Steven J. GeFroh  
Thomas Costello  
Christopher Noth  
Michael Rogers  
Allen Evans  
Robert Alford II  
Tim Whitby  
Oren Jacoby  
Evan Yionoulis

The time is early

sa on February 4th,  
. On February 5th  
n will perform the

Type the name of the actor and the name of the character. ?

Character  
Bubnov

Character Description (Optional)  
a capmaker

Actor  
Dylan Baker

BAD REGION ILLEGIBLE? RETURN TO MARKING

# DIGITIZATION

- One semester to digitize all of the programs with student scanners funded by Yale Rep
- Challenges:
  - What counts as a program?
  - Keeping track of filenames, spreadsheets, progress, QA
  - Orientation (shifts from page to page)
  - What about two-page spreads and inserts?
  - Certain seasons had standardized programs with minimal (yet important) variation

May 11, 2:00 and May 12, 10:00

# UNCLE VANYA by Anton Chekhov

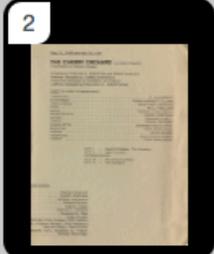
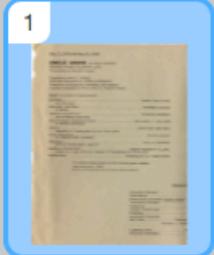
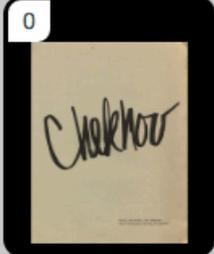
SCENES FROM COUNTRY LIFE  
Translated by Ronald Hingley

Directed by WALT JONES  
Settings Designed by LOREN SHERMAN  
Costumes Designed by ANDREW JACKNESS  
Lighting Designed by WILLIAM M. ARMSTRONG

### CAST (in order of appearance)

MARINA . . . . .	MARY VAN DYKE
an old nurse	
MIKHAIL ASTROV . . . . .	WARREN MANZI
a doctor	
VANYA VOYNITSKY . . . . .	THOMAS DERRAH
son of Marya Voynitsky	
ALEXANDER SEREBRYAKOV . . . . .	WILLIAM J. KELLER
a retired professor	
SONYA . . . . .	KRISTINE NIELSEN
daughter of Serebryakov by his first wife	
ILYA TELEGIN . . . . .	DAVID WILES
an impoverished landowner	
YELENA . . . . .	POLLY DRAPER
wife of Serebryakov, aged 27	
MARYA VOYNITSKY . . . . .	ROBIN MERRITT CLARK
widow of a high official, mother of Serebryakov's first wife	
WORKMAN . . . . .	RANDOLPH N. FOERSTER

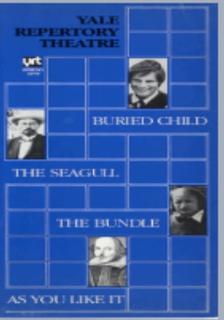
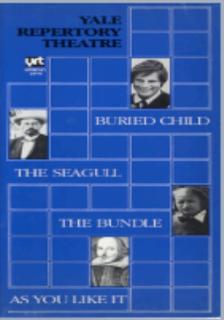
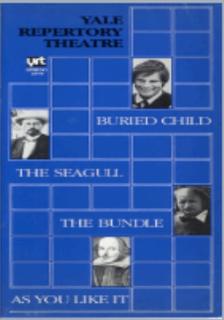
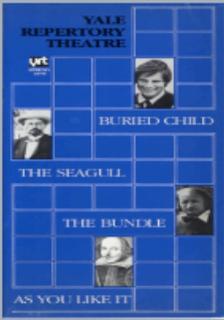
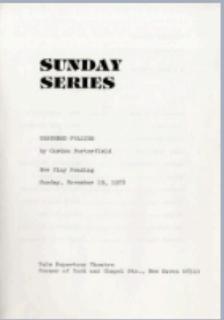
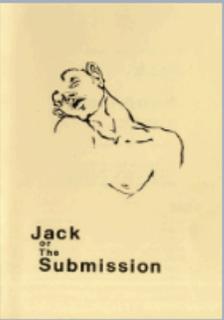
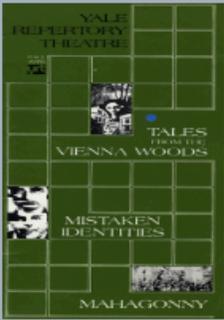
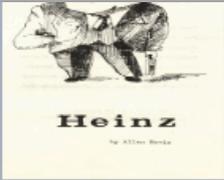
The action takes place on the Serebryakov estate.  
Late summer, 1897.  
There will be one ten-minute intermission.



< BACK    NEXT >

### PRODUCT

Company Manager . . . . .	
Dramaturg . . . . .	
Production Assistant (Uncle Vanya) . . . . .	
Technical Director . . . . .	
Costumer . . . . .	
Master Electrician . . . . .	
Publicity . . . . .	
Wardrobe Mistress . . . . .	
Set Crew . . . . .	Thomas William J. Keller
Lighting Crew . . . . .	D
Publicity Assistant . . . . .	

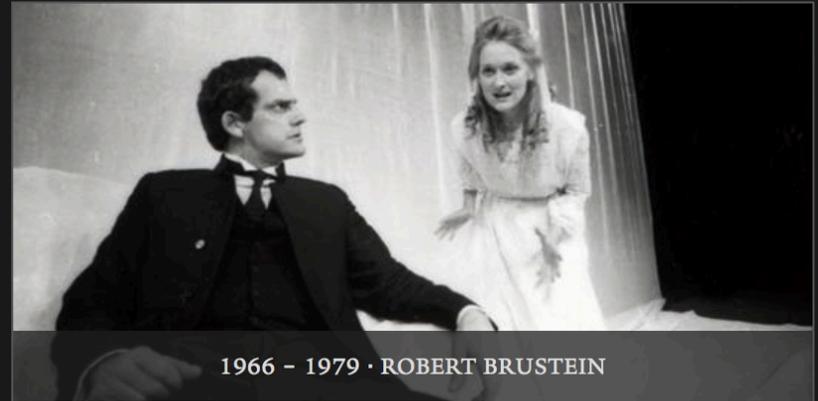
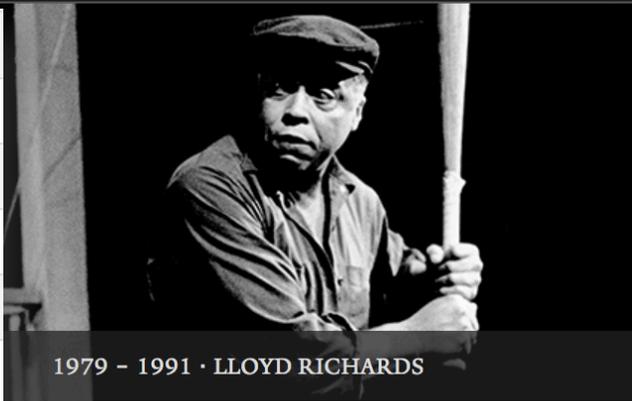


## ORGANIZATION & PRESENTATION

- Yale School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre ephemera collection has a box / folder organization
- Roughly chronological, but with exceptions for format
- Modified “Dean/Artistic Director” structure simplifies interface and allows browsing
- Structure doesn’t apply to other theatrical archives at Yale (Cabaret, Dramatic Association, etc.)



1	start_year	name	key	end_year
2	1925	Department of Drama	department_of_drama	1955
3	1955	Founding Era	founding_era	1966
4	1966	Robert Brustein	robert_brustein	1979
5	1979	Lloyd Richards	lloyd_richards	1991
6	1991	Stanley Wojewodski Jr.	stan_wojewodski	2002
7	2002	James Bundy	james_bundy	2016



## TRANSCRIPTION USER EXPERIENCE

- Users transcribe diplomatically and we store that
- No type-ahead or auto-fill affordances
- Accurately reflects their interpretation
- Does not require domain-specific knowledge
- Avoids false precision
  - Is this “Jos. Smith” *Joseph* or *Josiah*?

# DATA NORMALIZATION

- Will take place “backstage”
- Can use IMDB, Playbill Vault, LoC Name Authority, etc. as research tools
- We will probably extend the existing Admin views of Scribe, or build our own tools

# NORMALIZATION: PRODUCTION STAFF ROLES

Functions
Name (35)
<a href="#">Accompanist</a>
<a href="#">Acrobat</a>
<a href="#">Actor</a>
<a href="#">Actor and Singer</a>
<a href="#">Actor-manager</a>
<a href="#">Adaptor</a>
<a href="#">Adjudicator</a>
<a href="#">Administrator</a>
<a href="#">Aerialist</a>
<a href="#">Animal and Bird Imitator</a>

- Our diplomatic transcription system captures shift from ‘scenery’ to ‘settings’ to ‘set design’
- For researchers, we need an authority file to bring together the underlying production staff function these names represent
- AusStage provides [such a list](#): “Set Designer”

## LOOKING AHEAD: COMMUNITY & CONTENT

- Engage Yale's sizable theater community
  - Current students, faculty, alumni/æ
  - 2016-17 is 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season of Yale Rep
- Adding new collections
  - Yale Cabaret & Summer Cabaret
  - Dramat (Yale Dramatic Association)
  - Yale Drama Coalition

## LOOKING AHEAD: OPEN DATA + VISUALIZATIONS

- Towards an interoperable database of theater history
- Institutional data sharing
  - New York Public Library
  - British Library
- Visualization of 'big theatrical data'
  - Network graph demo



THANK YOU +  
QUESTIONS?

## Acknowledgments

Doug Duhaime (Dev)

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Maria Zapata

Danielle Reay

Alexandra Provo

The screenshot shows the top of the Ensemble website. At the top left is the 'Yale' logo. To its right is the word 'ENSEMBLE' in a large, white, serif font. Further right are four navigation links: 'MARK', 'TRANSCRIBE', 'ABOUT', and 'LOG IN', all in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below the navigation bar is a large hero image of a theater stage set. Overlaid on the left side of this image is a white text box with the following content: 'Help create a database of Yale theater history', 'Transcribe over 90 years of drama programs in the Yale University Library. Let's get started:', a blue button labeled 'MARK', and another blue button labeled 'TRANSCRIBE'. Below the hero image is a grid of six smaller thumbnail images, each representing a different theater production. Each thumbnail has a caption at the bottom: '2002 - 2016 · JAMES BUNDY', '1991 - 2002 · STANLEY WOJEWODSKI JR.', '1979 - 1991 · LLOYD RICHARDS', '1966 - 1979 · ROBERT BRUSTEIN', '1955 - 1966 · FOUNDING ERA', and '1925 - 1955 · DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA'.