

## A History of Czech Theatre Bibliography

The Arts and Theatre Institute's (ATI) bibliographic collections originated in 1948, when the Czechoslovak Theatre and Literary Agency (ČDLJ/Československé divadelní a literární jednatelství – later DILIA) was established in the place of previously private agencies. Bibliographic work was assigned to the agency's 3rd department, which managed the collection of theatre texts that had been acquired from the private theatre agencies that were shut down after 1948.

In 1949 Vladimír Müller became the head of this department and the first publications presenting the department's work were published in 1950: *Czech Thalia a Century Ago 1850–1851 (Česká Thalie před sto lety. 1850–1851)* and *The Lives of Czech Actors at the Estates Theatre: Insight from Official Documents (Osudy českých herců Stavovského divadla ve světle úředních dokumentů)*. From 1953 the bibliography of theatre articles was supposed to become part of the Bibliography Catalogue of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic – Articles in Czech Periodicals (Bibliografický katalog ČSR – Články v českých časopisech). This idea was however abandoned because theatre was only selectively tracked in the national bibliography.

### Bibliographic Work at Theatre Institute

On 31 August 1959 the Czechoslovak Theatre Institute (Divadelní ústav československý) was established. It had de facto been operating, however, since the autumn of 1957, when it took over the collections of the 3rd department at DILIA.

The library and the bibliographies were from the outset among the new institute's foundational and continuously developed collections. The idea behind the bibliographic card catalogue was to track all articles about theatre published in selected newspapers and periodicals published in the Czech lands since 1858. One of the first outcomes was produced in 1967 with the publication of an inventory of theatre periodicals and programmes (Miroslav Laiske: *Divadelní periodika v Čechách a na Moravě 1772–1963/Theatre Periodicals in Bohemia and Moravia*).

From 1969 the bibliography of theatre literature was supposed to be compiled into yearbooks. Unfortunately, not a single volume was ever published in print, but records of materials published in the years 1969–1976 were stored in card format.

In 1945–1965 the State Library in Olomouc produced a book containing a bibliography of theatre literature. In 1966 the Theatre Institute took over the work on

compiling these bibliographies, but it was not possible to publish this bibliographic book, *Literatura o divadle a Divadelní hry 1966–1970* (Literature on the Theatre and Theatre Plays 1966–1970), until 1990. Lists of book publications released over the ensuing fifteen-year period were published under the titles *Knihy o divadle 1971–1980* (Books on the Theatre 1971–1980) (1986) and *Knihy o divadle 1981–1985* (Books on the Theatre 1981–1985) (1989). There was also a publication series called *Drama – divadlo – dokumentace* (Drama – Theatre – Documentation) that published, for example, the personal bibliographies of J. J. Kolár, G. Preissová, the Mrštík brothers, J. Čapek, A. Dvořák, V. Dyk, J. Mahen, and V. Nezval.

From 1959 to 1974 the Theatre Institute put together a selected, annotated bibliography of articles in foreign periodicals and published this material in different ways (e.g. in the Bulletin Divadelního ústavu/Bulletin of the Theatre Institute, Zprávy Divadelního ústavu/Theatre Institute News, Divadlo ve světě/Theatre in the World).

### **The creation of an independent bibliography department**

The Bibliography Department was established as a separate department in September 1996 and was headed at that time by Miroslava Přikrylová (prior to that it had been part of the library). The department's electronic database was initially developed using the ISIS system and was based on original card catalogues dating from 1851–1990 containing approximately 352,000 entries, which were preserved.

The ISIS system proved unsuitable and was replaced a year later with the KP-SYS automated library system, and the originally specialised offline database intended for the internal use of Theatre Institute staff was made accessible online in 2002. Cooperative ties with the National Theatre, stricter adherence to standards for constructing bibliographic entries and creating authority records, and the transition to the new KP WIN program in 2004 led in 2005 to an extensive revision of authority records and of the collection as a whole. That year the bibliography began tracking relevant materials published in the online regional supplements of the daily newspapers *Mladá fronta Dnes* and *Právo*, but the very first electronic title in the database was the magazine *Yorick*, which was already being published in 1999 by theatre studies students (the magazine did not last long and the Bibliography Department probably possesses the only surviving copy of any of its issues). Efforts to improve the linking of bibliographic entries to full texts led to an ever stronger focus on electronic sources and electronically accessible titles. The majority of processed materials (since 2009) were also scanned. Access to full texts is only provided under the terms of the Copyright Act and outside the reading rooms of the ATI only

references to publicly accessible electronic sources can be freely accessed. The process of facilitating access to full texts was aided enormously by the digitisation of titles published by the Theatre Institute (most notably *Divadelní revue/Theatre Review*).

In 2008 the library system was converted again, this time to KP WIN SQL, and there was a switch in formats from UNIMARC to MARC 21. Work began that year and continued the next on integrating the bibliographic and documentation databases in the Premiere section (the beginnings of the future Virtual Study).

In 2010, as a result of government austerity measures the Bibliography Department lost a 0.75 FTE from its staff resources and narrowed the list of titles it tracks by approximately 20%.

Over the next three years the Bibliography Department focused on expanding access to and publishing its collections online. The Bibliography Department had inherited five catalogues from the past. In 2011 the catalogues *Divadelní bibliografie 1970–1976* at the Institute for Czech Literature were scanned (totalling 36,539 cards) and the catalogue of the National Theatre (and its predecessor the Provisional Theatre) was copied into an electronic database (just under 10,000 cards, over 32,000 entries). There followed in 2012–2013 a revision and scanning of both parts of the main catalogue (355,000 cards). A year later the authority records were revised. As part of a grant project titled ‘Checking for Duplicates in the National Authority Records of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and the Local Individual Authority Records in the Bibliography Database of the Theatre Institute’, more than 40,000 authority records were controlled. The completion of revisions in 2014 was by that time performed in the new library system – VERBIS.

## Today

In 2015 the Bibliography Department adopted new cataloguing rules – known as RDA – and its many years of work to optimise and integrate the individual databases and computer systems of the ATI bore fruit when access to the Virtual Study was opened.

The Bibliography Department currently has four employees (3.25 FTE) and one external worker. The department’s electronic database has more than 330,000 entries, with a further 10,000–12,000 new entries added each year. The list of titles the department tracks in its bibliographic work contains approximately 130 Czech titles and around 65 foreign titles (thanks to collaboration with the Slovak Theatre

Institute in Bratislava since 1998, Czech subject matter is also tracked in a large part of the Slovak press and Slovak websites). As well as the tracking current titles, the department also works on tracking titles retrospectively, focusing primarily on filling in the 'gaps' in the list of titles tracked in the historical catalogue. This is how, for example, the periodical *Amatérská scéna* (*The Amateur Scene*) was processed in recent years, as well as most of the specialised press since 1990. The database also contains the complete archive of press reactions to the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space.

Many of the publications produced by the Theatre Institute have benefited from the work of the Bibliography Department (e.g. the encyclopaedias and dictionaries the ATI has published: A Dictionary of Czech Dance/Český taneční slovník, Czech Theatres/Česká divadla etc.). An important undertaking was the publication of a bibliography for the periodical *Theatre/Divadlo*.

As well as developing its bibliographies, the department is also participating in the work to develop a national database of authority records and it contributes to the ANL bibliographic database of articles that is administered by the National Library of the Czech Republic.