

CALL FOR PAPERS

Performing Arts in the Digital Age: Research, Archives, and Innovation

Collective work resulting from the research conducted within the DARIAH-ERIC Working Group Theatralia and the ESNA Research Program, École du Spectateur de Nouvelle-Aquitaine.

The digital transition has profoundly reshaped the working methods of cultural and artistic institutions – both public and private – along with professionals in the sector, including artists, technicians, and administrators. This transformation has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Quillet 2022), which imposed health restrictions and social distancing measures, leading to the temporary closure of cultural venues and prompting a shift toward digital platforms. In the arts sector, digital transformation is not limited to the administrative and promotional aspects of institutions and individual artists. It also impacts artistic creation itself – whether through digital tools that contribute to the production of artworks or through works that are natively digital in their form (Baroni 2020). Furthermore, this shift raises critical challenges for the management and preservation of digital archives, as an increasing number of artistic productions now generate born-digital records (Ciciliato 2020).

Recognizing these challenges, the DARIAH-EU Working Group Theatralia and the research project *The Spectator's School* (La Rochelle Université, France) organized two conferences: *Performing Arts: Transitioning to the Digital Age* in March 2023 in Zagreb, Croatia, and *The Spectator's School: Digitizing Research in Performing Arts* in November 2024 in Lille, France. These events served as key initiatives to bring together theatre scholars, GLAM professionals, and performing artists to explore the impact of digital technologies on all aspects of the performing arts, including documentation and archiving. Discussions at the conferences highlighted the need for an open-access publication on a digital platform, aligned with the principles of the DARIAH consortium, within which Theatralia operates. This volume aims to consolidate international perspectives and recent advancements, providing a comprehensive overview of the relationship between performing arts, digital technologies, and digital humanities.

Performing arts, including live and stage performances, face distinct challenges in adapting to this digital shift. Their inherent territoriality – producing works for a specific audience in a specific location (Dubatti 2021) – and reliance on material components (sets, costumes, lighting) make full digitalization particularly complex. Additionally, the ontological nature of performing arts (Dubatti 2012), recognized by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage, complicates their integration into digital workflows: performances are inherently unique, ephemeral, and non-reproducible. The increasing use of digital technologies therefore marks a radical transformation in the communication and production of performing arts. It necessitates not only the adaptation of established knowledge and skills but also the acquisition of new competencies, often unrelated to the traditional domains of the arts and humanities.

This ontological and technological complexity may partly explain why research on performing arts has been slower to adopt digital methods compared to other disciplines in the humanities. While early efforts in digital humanities applied computational methods primarily to textual sources (such as encoding theatre texts in XML-TEI), performing arts generate a far more heterogeneous and abundant set of materials – videos, sound recordings, photographs, set designs, and costumes. The digitization, indexing, and analysis of these diverse artifacts remain open research challenges, requiring the development of specialized metadata schemas and computational models (Bardiot 2021). Likewise, the use of digital instruments to study performance conditions – including creative processes, staging, and audience reception – represents an emerging field of interdisciplinary research at the intersection of humanities, computer science, and cognitive sciences (Chantraine Braillon, Willard 2024).

Themes and Topics

We welcome contributions addressing one or both of the following themes:

1. Digital Humanities and Performing Arts
 - Interdisciplinary collaboration in theatre and performance studies
 - Digital tools and methodologies in performing arts research
 - The role of digital humanities in theatre and performance studies curricula
2. Digital Archiving and Preservation in Performing Arts
 - Metadata models and classification systems for performing arts archives
 - Networking and upgrading existing digital archives and databases at national and international levels
 - Challenges in digitizing and preserving ephemeral and multimodal performance artifacts

Submission Guidelines

Papers should be written in English and should not exceed 5,000 words, including references. Submissions must be in a word-processing file format (e.g., .docx), using Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and 1.5 line spacing, formatted according to the Chicago (Author-Date) citation style.

On the first page, please include:

- Title of the paper
- Author's full name
- Academic title and affiliation
- ORCID (if available)
- Abstract (max. 250 words)
- Keywords (3–5)

Authors are invited to submit a short biographical note (max. 150 words) to be included in the publication.

Authors can find more detailed guidelines on the Chicago (Author-Date) citation style at the following link: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html.

Authors are encouraged to structure their papers clearly, with logical divisions between sections to enhance readability (we recommend using bold, 16 pt for main headings and italic, 14 pt for subheadings).

Authors should submit visual materials as separate files and clearly indicate their placement within the text. Please use placeholders such as [Figure 1 here] in the manuscript to mark the intended position of each image. For a digital publication, standard resolution files (e.g., JPEG, PNG, or TIFF) are sufficient, but ensure that the images are clear and appropriately labeled.

By submitting their work, authors confirm that they hold the necessary rights to publish all included content and that the submission has not been previously published or is under consideration elsewhere. Accepted papers will be published in a digital, open-access edition (EAC : Editions des Archives Contemporaines) ensuring broad accessibility and visibility.

Submissions will undergo a double-blind peer review process. Authors are requested to remove any identifying information from the manuscript to ensure anonymity during the review. Furthermore, authors will receive feedback and may be asked to make revisions before final acceptance.

Papers must be submitted no later than **31 May 2025** to both editors, Anamarija Žugić Borić (zugicboric@ief.hr) and Cécile Chantraine Braillon (cecile.chantraine_braillon@univ-lr.fr), co-chairs of the DARIAH-EU working group Theatralia.

Bibliography

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