

DRURY LANE UNDER SHERIDAN

1776-1812

Manuscript Plays and
Managerial Correspondence
from the British Library,
London



An Imprint of PRIMARY SOURCE *Media*

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Drury Lane Under Sheridan, 1776-1812:

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Harvester Microform's initiative to make available key resources for the study of the theater and Rada history, continues with the publication of this collection of material from the era of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's proprietorship at Drury Lane.

Drury Lane was the nation's leading play house, and with the Theatre Royal at Covent Garden, enjoyed a monopoly on the performance of 'legitimate' drama. This source, comprising over 130 manuscripts submitted to Sheridan, reveals in detail the diversity of material viewed by theatre-goers of the time. These manuscripts illustrate the range of theatre available in London, melodramas, spectacles, operas and burlettas, ballet, pantomimes and farce are all in evidence as are such theatrical oddities as a musical 'whim' and a tragico-pantomime ballet.

Amongst works of particular significance are autographs by Sheridan and his son Thomas whose work 'The Strolling Company' is included here. Mrs. Frances Sheridan is represented by her comedy 'A Journey to Bath' which has a direct influence upon the writing of Sheridan's first play 'The Rivals'. Also here are works by Elizabeth Inchbald, - 'The Wedding Day', and 'The Absentee', by Charles Lamb - 'An' Opera without Title', and under the pseudonym John Patershull, 'Dissolution of the Roman Republic'. Notable foreign playwrights featured include the celebrated German pioneer of gothic melodrama, Kotzebue.

To support the plays and dramatic pieces the publication incorporates a series of volumes of Papers and Correspondence, chiefly of Thomas Sheridan but also Sheridan himself. These include legal documents and letters regarding the rights of the theatre's patentees, certain claims to profits by the Lord Chancellor, and other items relating to the business affairs of the theatre and the Sheridan family.

The volumes of plays are Add. Mss. 25906-25914 and 25916-26036 and many carry bibliographical notes by the author Peter George Patmore (1786-1855). Add. Mss. 25915, containing receipts and managerial correspondence, has been included in Part One of Harvester Microform's companion publication 'The English Stage After the Restoration: Archives of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century British Theatres Royal from the British Library, London.

The Papers and Correspondence are to be found in Add. Mss. 35118 and 42720-42723, and Egerton Mss. 1975 and 1976.

The full volume descriptions from the Catalogues of both the Additional and Egerton Manuscripts are reproduced on each reel.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Harvester Microform has set itself the highest standards in the field of archivally-permanent library microfilming. Our microform publications has been prepared and produced in accordance with recommended established guide-lines for the production of microform of superior quality. These conform to the recommendations of the standard guides to good microforming and micropublishing practice.

Attention should be drawn to the nature of the original material. Manuscript documents within the British Library sometimes consist of faintly legible correspondence and records written with a variety of inks and pens and on paper which has become severely discoloured or stained, or which is so thin that there is show-through that renders the original document difficult to read.

Occasionally volumes has been tightly bound and documents are obscured in the inner margin. These original characteristics present difficulties of image and contrast which stringent test and camera alterations cannot entirely overcome. Every effort has been made to minimise these difficulties thought there are some few pages or documents which have proved impossible to reproduce satisfactorily. Conscious of this we have chosen to include these pages in order to make available the complete volume. The British Library has exercised the most responsible care in the filming of this unique collection and this microfilm publication meets the standards established by the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

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