

French Theater Collections

Resource Guide



Primary sources for the study of French theater in Rare Books & Manuscripts

The Sheridan Libraries own an impressive collection of works related to the French theater, from the late 16th century to the 20th century. The **18th century** is particularly well-represented, with many editions of dramatic works, as well as a wealth of material about the theater, including folio books on machinery, costume, and spectacle. In addition, the justly famous **OmniSys collection** of early 19th century popular plays performed in Paris includes hundreds of printed plays in original paper covers, with music and illustrations.

This guide is in six parts:

1. Editions of French plays: individual works and collections
2. Encyclopedias, almanachs, and histories of French theater
3. Special *fonds* of French theater
4. Books on Costume, Theatrical Machinery, Fêtes and Spectacles
5. Artifacts and specialized teaching resources
6. Selected Bibliography of Secondary materials
7. Relevant Electronic Resources and Web sites

Note: All Call Numbers are in Rare Books & Manuscripts, unless otherwise noted.

Editions of French Plays

✚ The editions of **individual plays**, as well as the many anthologies or **collections**, are too numerous to list here. However, you can get an idea of the extent of the collection by doing the following **Advanced Keyword** search in the Libraries catalog:

General Keyword: theatre and paris
Limit Location to: Eisenhower Special Collections and Archives (and/or George Peabody Library and Garrett Library)
Limit Publication Date to: < 1801 (or whatever date range you want)

You can also search by an **author's name** with the same limits. For example:

Author Keyword: sartre
Publication Date: <1945

☒ **Noteworthy editions** of French plays:

Les tragedies de Robert Garnier, conseiller du Roi. 1605. A very early compilation of Garnier's works, in a small "pocketbook" (*Duodecimo*, a small format, easy to carry); with a limp vellum binding (vestiges of ties) and printed wastepaper used as stiffening for the vellum. Printed in a very tiny, italic type font. Garnier was the most prolific of the humanist playwrights (Etienne Jodelle, Théodore de Bèze, Nicolas de Montreux), whose subjects were taken from Greek epic, Roman history, and the Bible.

PH 3625 .G3 A1 1605

Editions of Pierre Corneille's works, published in his lifetime, include:

Bound in one volume, but separately printed: *PH 3760 .P6 1650*

Cinna. Paris, 1646. 2nd edition in quarto; with letter from Guez de Balzac to Corneille

Medée. Paris, 1646

La mort de Pompée. 1648

Rodogune. 1650

Polyeuctes. London, 1655. (English translation) *PH 3759.A4 L6 1655 C*

Andomède. Paris, 1663 *PH 3747 1663*

Agésilas, tragedie. Rouen, 1666 (1st edition: "*Imprimée à Rouen, aux dépens dudit Sieur Corneille. Et ledit sieur Corneille a cédé son Privilege à Thomas lolly, Guillaume de Luyne, & Louis Billaine, suivant l'accord fait entr'eux*"). *PQ 1746 .A4 1666*

1801 Pierre Didot edition of Racine's *Oeuvres*. Renowned as a masterpiece of typography ("*le jury d'exposition de 1806 proclama la plus parfaite production typographique de tous les pays et de tous les ages*").

Garrett Library

Beaumarchais:

Two copies of the **First printed edition** of *La folle journée; ou, Le mariagé de Figaro*.

- The one includes a 50 page *Preface* by Beaumarchais, *Caractères et Habillemens de la Pièce* (description of the characters' personalities and costumes), *Approbations*, and *Avis de l'Editeur*. Paris : Ruault, 1785

PH 3956 .M33 1785

- The 2nd is an "**unauthorized edition**", apparently based on a stenographic playhouse text, probably preceding Beaumarchais' first edition"—(NUC pre-1956 Imprints). Printed in Amsterdam.

PQ 1956.A7 1785

Related to *Le Mariage de Figaro*, we also have:

- Le repentir de Figaro, : comédie en un acte et en prose; Par M. Parisau. : Représentée, pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le Théâtre de l'Ambigu Comique, le 28 juin 1784. "*Parodie de La folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro, de Beaumarchais.*"
In Process
- TESTAMENT du Père de Figaro. (c.1787). *Edition Originale de ce rare pamphlet sur Beaumarchais, dont l'auteur anonyme imaginait le testament et les remords en rappelant divers épisodes scandaleux de sa vie.*
PQ 1956 .T478 1787

Le barbier de Séville, ou La précaution inutile : comédie en quatre actes "*Représentée & tombée sur le théâtre de la Comédie française aux Tuileries le 23 de février 1775*".

George Peabody Library: 954 V935 DUODECIMO

First printed edition of Hugo's *Hernani*. 1830. Printed in Paris for *Mame et Delaunay-Vallée, Libraires*. In original paper covers, with a *Catalogue* of other works at Mame et Delaunay-Vallée for sale at the time, as well as 2 prospectuses for future publications. One of the most important French plays, *Hernani* marked the ascendance of Romanticism (*le mélange du sublime et du grotesque allié à la recherché du naturel*) on the French stage and unleashed a violent reaction in audiences and critics. (cf. En français dans le texte: dix siècles de lumières par le livre. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1990, p. 237)

LSC, use in Special Collections: PH 4285 .H2 1830

Early printed edition (2 volumes) of Hugo's Cromwell, with his Preface

LSC, use in Special Collections: PH 4285 .C8 1835

First printed edition of Jules Romains' *Knock; ou, Le triomphe de la médecine*; comédie en trois actes, représentée pour la première fois, à Paris, à la Comédie des Champs-Élysées, le 15 décembre 1923. Published in *La Petite Illustration Théâtrale*, January 24, 1925. (p, 321-3)

LSC, use in Special Collections: PH 4635 .R67 K7 1924 Q

Le soulier de satin, 1929. First printed edition of this play (*achevé d'imprimer le 25 novembre 1929*) The 4 *jours* in 2 volumes. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris has a 4 volume edition printed *le 30 décembre 1929*. (cf. En français dans le texte: dix siècles de lumières par le livre. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1990, p. 309)

LSC, use in Special Collections: PH 4605 .C435S7 1929

Giraudoux's *Intermezzo*; comédie en trois actes. 1933 (p. 333)

George Peabody Library: 074 I294 S.P.T n.s. no.321 QUARTO

1943 edition of Sartre's *Les mouches*, a rare, original copy. Last page indicates actual date of printing: *en décembre 1942*; and the Nazi censor's approval: *Autorisation No 12.807*

Goulemot purchase: PQ 2637.A82 M6

❖ **Collections** of French plays have been printed since the 17th century, and there are many in the Sheridan Libraries. Including:

Le théâtre de la foire, ou l'opéra-comique. Contenant les meilleures pièces qui ont été représentées aux foires de S. Germain & de S. Laurent. Enrichies d'estampes en taille-douce, avec une table de tous les vaudevilles & autres airs gravez. 10 volumes. 1724-1737.

PH 3221 .L62 1724

Le nouveau théâtre françois. 12 volumes. 1735. PH 3211 .N93

Petite bibliotheque des théâtres, contenant un recueil des meilleures pièces du théâtre françois, tragique, comique, lyrique et bouffon, depuis l'origine des spectacles en France, jusqu'à nos jours. 14 volumes. 1785.

PH 3211 .P48 1785

Théâtre francais. 33 volumes. 1732-1791. PH 3211 .T37

Recueil des comédies et ballets représentés sur le Théâtre des petits Appartements pendant l'hiver de 1747 à 1748. Versailles, 1748. "Privately printed at the command of Mme. de Pompadour for her intimates, this summarizes the plays and ballets performed in her private quarters. She acted or danced in nearly all the pieces. Moncrif wrote the prologue to this royal playbill, executed on exceptionally thick paper."

PQ 1221 .R44 1748

Théâtre français, ou Recueil de toutes les pièces françaises restées au théâtre. Avec les vies des auteurs, des anecdotes sur celles des plus célèbres acteurs & actrices, & quelques dissertations historiques sur le théâtre. 14 volumes. 1767-1769.

PH 3211 .T38

Nouveau théâtre de la Haye, ou, Choix des meilleures pièces, représentées depuis peu : contenant des pièces mêlées d'ariettes, dans le goût italien, avec la musique. 6 volumes. 1759.

PQ 1221 .N68 1759.

Théâtre de l'Opera-Comique, ou, Recueil des pièces restées a ce théâtre : pour faire suite aux Théâtres des auteurs du premier ordre et du second ordre : avec des notices sur chaque auteur, la liste de leurs pièces, et la date des premières representations. 8 volumes. 1811.

PQ 1221 .T38 1811

Le Magasin théâtral : choix de pièces nouvelles, jouées sur les théâtres de Paris. 42 volumes. 42 volumes. 1834-1846.

PH 3215 .M18 (LSC)

Encyclopedias, Almanachs, and Histories (a selection)

Rousseau's Lettre sur les spectacles. One copy has Rousseau's printed text, followed by *Catalogue des Livres du Fond de M.M. Rey, Libraire à Amsterdam*. After the printed text is bound in: *Observations sur la Lettre de M. Rousseau, par M. De Marmontel, tirées des Mercurus des mois de Novembre et Décembre 1758 et janvier 1 et 2 1759*, copied out in manuscript hand.

PN 2051 .R7 1758

A 2nd copy bound in blue pasteboard, untrimmed paper. The *Catalogue* is missing, although the catchword on the last page indicates that it was part of the book before it was bound.

PH 4040 .L61 1758c

Almanach des spectacles. ou, Calendrier historique et chronologique des théâtres.

1752-1815: PH 2516 .A2A3

1818-1825: PH 2541 .A44

1822-1837: PH 2541 .A45

Brazier, M. Nicholas. Histoire des petits théâtres de Paris, depuis leurs origines. Paris : Allardin, 1838.

P 4636 .P2 B7 1838

Léris, Antoine de. Dictionnaire portatif des théâtres: contenant l'origine des différens théâtres de Paris: le nom de toutes les pièces qui y ont été représentées depuis leur établissement.... Paris : C.A. Jombert, 1754.

A very interesting reference work that lists all the titles of plays performed, a chronology of plays and operas, anecdotes on actors and musicians, and more. A 2nd edition was printed in 1763.

PH 2510 .L61 1754

Dictionnaire dramatique, contenant l'histoire des théâtres, les règles du genre dramatique, les observations des maîtres les plus célèbres, & des réflexions nouvelles sur les spectacles, sur le génie & la conduite de tous les genres, avec les notices des meilleures pièces, le catalogue de tous les drames, & celui des auteurs dramatiques. 3 volumes. 1776.

PH 2510 .L31 1776

Anecdotes dramatiques. Includes plays, anecdotes, names of authors, actors, musicians, poets. 3 volumes. 1775

PH 2510 .C623 1775

Mouhy, Charles de Fieux, chevalier de. Tablettes dramatiques, contenant l'abrégé de l'histoire du théâtre françois, l'établissement des théâtres à Paris, un dictionnaire des pièces, et l'abrégé de l'histoire des auteurs et des acteurs. Paris : S. Jorry, 1752.

PH 2510 .M92 1752

_____. Abrégé de l'histoire du théâtre françois : depuis son origine jusqu'au premier juin de l'année 1780 ; précédé du dictionnaire de toutes les piéces de théâtre jouées & imprimées ; du dictionnaire des auteurs dramatiques, & du dictionnaire des acteurs & actrices. 4 volumes. Paris, 1780.

P 4621 .M68 1780

Les spectacles de la foire; théâtres, acteurs, ... depuis 1595 jusqu'à 1791; documents inédits recueillis aux archives nationales. 2 volumes. Paris, Berger-Levrault et cie., 1877

George Peabody Library: 842.09 C186

Archives de la Comédie-française. Registre de La Grange (1658-1685) Paris : J. Claye [1876].

PN 2636 .P4 C49 1876

Foyers et coulisses: histoire anecdotique des théâtres de Paris. 1873-75. Henry Buguet. Photos of actresses. GPL, 5th floor opposite elevator

Naissance et vie de la Comédie-française; histoire anecdotique et critique du théâtre français, 1402-1945. Paris, Floury, 1945.

PN 2636 .P3 V3 1945

Le théâtre françois, divisé en trois livres, où il est traité: De l'usage de la comédie, Des auteurs qui soutiennent le théâtre, De la conduite des comédiens. Samuel Chappuzeau. Facsimile of the 1674 edition.

LSC, use in Special Collections: PH 2516 .C46

Special Fonds of French Theater

French Play Collection. 54 boxes of individual plays printed between 1700 and 1900. This collection of 736 plays is part of a repertory that amused all classes of Paris society during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Included are the most successful types of plays produced at the time, such as:

- *Mélodrame*: (plays combining tragic, often historic, events with comic interludes, using song and dance)
- *Comédie-vaudeville*: (plays drawing subjects from ordinary life and using familiar tunes with new words)
- *Féerie*: (escapist fairy-tale plays which used all of the theater's resources and were considered "grand spectacles")

All of the plays in this collection were performed at the *Porte-Saint-Martin*, *Gâté* and *Ambigu-Comique* theaters. The theaters, which specialized in purely popular entertainment, were located within the Boulevard du Temple region of Paris.

Goulemot Collection: A large collection of French literature that was purchased from a private collector in Paris. The material is very diverse, including books, periodicals, engravings, drawings, posters, and medals; and ranges from the 18th to the 20th century. Much of the collection is oriented toward the avant-garde, so even in the 18th century material, it tends to be literature of the margins. It is especially strong in

19th and 20th century avant-garde material (Symbolisme, Cabaret literature, political and social satire, Surrealism). **The collection includes many volumes of French theater, especially 18th century; individual plays, anthologies, and collected works of a particular writer.**

Pierre Lafon Manuscript Collection: The collection consists of contracts, theatre bills, marriage documents, and letters, dated 1797-1838. Of interest are Lafon's letters to Lucien Bonaparte and to Mahâerault, manager of the Comédie Française.

Pierre Lafon or Lafond was born in Lalinde in the Dordogne on September 1, 1773, the son of Jean Lafond and Marie Gertrude Dretchene. By March 1797 he was under contract to play for a year in the troupe of the Théâtre de Nice. In May 1800 he made his debut in Paris at the reorganized Comédie Française playing in Racine's "*Iphigénie*." He had lessons in acting from Dugazon, won the protection of Lucien Bonaparte, and enjoyed such success that he received an invitation from Napoleon to dine at the Tuileries. In September 1800 he was notified of his right to membership in the troupe of the Comédie Française. However, in order to secure the roles which he considered appropriate for himself it was necessary that he constantly seek patronage from those in positions of power and influence. Lafon became an important actor, playing many major roles.

Ms. 41

Costume, Machinery, Fêtes, and Spectacles

Machines de théâtre ... Dessinées & expliquées par m. Radel, pensionnaire du roi & architecte-expert. 1772.

Garrett Library, Fowler: P 4091 .S8 M3 1772 FOLIO

Essai sur l'architecture théâtrale; ou, De l'ordonnance la plus avantageuse à une salle de spectacles, relativement aux principes de l'optique & de l'acoustique. Avec une examen des principaux théâtres de l'Europe, & une analyse des écrits les plus importants sur cette matière.

Garrett Library, Fowler: NA 6820 .P3 1782

Galerie théâtrale : collection de 144 portraits en pied des principaux acteurs et actrices qui ont illustré la scène française depuis 1552 jusqu'à nos jours ... Paris : Chez A. Barraud ... , 1873.

Garrett library, Library Room: P 4637.G3 1873 QUARTO

Représentation des fêtes données par la ville de Strasbourg : pour la convalescence du Roi ; à l'arrivée et pendant le séjour de Sa Majesté en cette ville / inventé, dessiné et dirigé par J.M. Weis ... Paris] : Imprimé par Laurent Aubert à Paris, [1745?].

Garrett library, Library Room: DC 134 .W4 1745 FOLIO

Description des festes données par la ville de Paris : a l'occasion du mariage de Madame Louise-Elisabeth de France, & de Dom Philippe, infant & grand amiral d'Espagne, les vingt-neuvième & trentième Août mil sept cent trente-neuf. A Paris : de l'imprimerie de P.G. Le Mercier ... , 1740.

Special Collections (Eisenhower): 914 X5 FOLIO

Garrett library, Library Room: DC 729 .A5 1740 FOLIO

Artifacts and specialized teaching resources

Acteurs et actrices célèbres qui se sont illustrés sur les trois grands théâtres de Paris; ouvrage orné de trent portraits coloriés. Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur. Plain brown wrappers, hand-letters paper label. 29 hand-colored oval portraits of contemporary French actors, uncut. Paris: Chez Latour, 1808.

Newly acquired

Diderot's Encyclopédie, Tome 10 of the *Planches* volumes, has 38 engravings illustrating various 18th century theaters, and 40 engravings illustrating theatrical machinery.

AE 25 .E53 1772 FC

L'esprit de L'encyclopédie, ou, Choix des articles les plus agréables, les plus curieux et les plus piquans de ce grand dictionnaire. A set of 12 volumes from 1798, all in **original paper wrappers**, with paper spine labels. A striking illustration of the physical state of books as they were sold and bought before the 19th century.

AE 4 .E56 1799

Copper engraved plates.

Examples of how most book illustrations were made in the 16th to the 18th centuries:

- John Knox's house, early c20. Line-engraved.
- Reliquary of St Martha/Holy family, French, c18. Line-engraved.

Cage: with teaching materials

Type and Composing Sticks / Galley tray and Furniture

Artifacts from hand-press printing, illustrating how books were printed before the mid-19th century.

Cage: with teaching materials

Handmade Paper in full sheets

Ordonnance concernant la censure & police des livres. Dec. 1768. Full sheet of handmade laid paper, showing deckle edge, watermark (no countermark), and vatman's tears. Imposed in folio.

MS 479

Prompt Book (Actor's copy)

Shakespeare. *Hamlet* (London 1676). Prompt book of the actor John Ward containing copious marginal and textual manuscript annotations. (cf. J. G. McManaway, "The two earliest prompt books of Hamlet," PBSA, v. 3, 3rd quarter, 1949, p. 288-320).

Garrett Library: PO 2807 .A2 1676

Selected bibliography of secondary materials

Subject Headings: French drama--History and criticism
Theater-- France—History
Theater--France--Paris

Also, do an Alphabetical search in the catalog on *Call Numbers—Lib. of Congress*, and scan the titles between **PN 2620 and PN 2638**

Histoire de l'édition française, tome II, "Le livre triomphant, 1660-1830." Paris : Promodis, 1984.
Z 8 .F8 H57 1983 - GEN REF and D Level Stacks

Le théâtre en France des origines à nos jours. ed. Alain Viala. Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1997.
Blue Labels: PN 2621 .T49 1997

Le Théâtre français de l'âge classique. Tome I: Le premier XVII^e siècle. Charles Mazouer. Paris : Champion, 2002.
Blue Labels: PQ 521 .M39 2002

Comédie française. Notice historique sur les anciens bâtiments. Jules Bonnassies. Paris : Aug. Aubry, 1868.
LSC, use in Special Collections: PH 2526 .B7

A Field of honor : writers, court culture and public theater in French literary life from Racine to the Revolution. Gregory S. Brown. New York : Columbia University Press, 2005.
Blue Labels: PQ 538 .B75 2005
Online at: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/brg01/index.html>

Théâtre du XVIII^e siècle : jeux, écritures, regards : essai sur les spectacles en France des 1700 à 1790. David Trott. Montpellier : Editions Espaces 34, 2000.
Blue Labels: PN 2633 .T762 2000

Auteurs et comédiens au XVIII^e siècle. Jacques Boncompain. Paris : Perrin, 1976.
LSC: PH 4633 .B6 1976

A bibliographical list of plays in the French language, 1700-1789. Clarence Brenner.
More than 11,600 plays of the 18th century listed, with date and place of first performance, first appearance in print. Includes translations into French, anonymous works, and unpublished plays.
D level: Z 2174 .D7 B7 1947 Quarto

Ecrits sur l'art théâtral : (1753-1801). textes édités par Sabine Chaouche. Paris : Champion, 2005.
D Level Blue Labels: PQ 501 .E27 2005

The melodrama in France from the revolution to the beginning of romantic drama 1791-1830.
James Fredrick Mason. *JHU Thesis, 1911.*

Theater and revolution : the culture of the French stage . Frederick Brown. New York : Vintage Books, 1989.
D Level Stacks: P 4631 .B7 1989

The Parisian stage. (1800-1900) C.B. Wicks.
5 volume index to nearly 32,000 plays presented in Paris, based on information in contemporary newspapers. Each volume has an alphabetical list by title, plus an author index, with a cumulative author index in volume 5. Includes titles, sub-titles, number of acts, date and theater of Paris premiere.
D Level: Blue Labels PN 2636 .P3 W5 1950

Impressions de théâtre. Jules Le Maître, Paris, Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1898-1920.
PH 2518 .L5 (11 volumes)

Relevant Electronic Resources and Web sites

Encyclopédie, ou, Dictionnaire raisonnée des sciences, des arts et des métiers: par une société de gens de letters. M. Diderot et M. d'Alembert. Several editions in Special Collections. There are many *Planches* and text articles on the theater. Available from the online Encyclopédie:
<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/encyc/>

Théâtre du Grand Siècle. Fulltext (searchable) of 80 French plays from the 17th century, including Racine, Molière, and Corneille.
Access from the Libraries HomePage under **Online Resources, By Subject.**
<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/databases/bibliopolis/tgs/>

CESAR: Calendrier Electronique des Spectacles sous l'Ancien Régime. Details of the plays, people and performance spaces that graced the French theatre during the 17th and 18th centuries
<http://www.cesar.org.uk/cesar2/>

Théâtrales: une collection de textes et d'hypertextes en français sur le théâtre.
<http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/c2545/>

Théâtre de Femmes de l' Ancien Régime. Excerpts from plays, biographical information, links to other resources, and more, on women writers.

<http://www.theatrefemmes-ancienregime.org/>

Medieval Drama Links

<http://www.the-camerino-players.com/medievaldrama/index.html>

Early printed collections: publishing drama in early modern Europe. The 1998 Panizzi Lectures at The British Library. Roger Chartier, 1998

<http://www.bl.uk/collections/epc/panizzi.html>

Enlightened Discourse: 18th-Century French Writings. A huge list of links on 18th century French literature.

<http://globegate.utm.edu/french/lit/century.18.html>

Eighteenth Century Resources. A large list of all sorts of resources, some French, some not.

<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/18th/>

Theatre History on the Web

<http://www.videoccasions-nw.com/history/jack.html>

Other Resource Guides available:

Avant-garde

17th and 18th Century Encyclopedism

Samuel Johnson and his Dictionary

The Scholar's Bookshelf : The Middle Ages

Italian Theater

Early Modern Women

Manuscript Books in the Sheridan Libraries

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