

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-44142-1 - The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth-Century France

F. W. J. Hemmings

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This is the first book to explore the history of French theatre in the nineteenth century through its special role as an organized popular amusement. In this fascinating study, F. W. J. Hemmings examines the transition of the theatre from an elite art form to its new role in post-revolutionary France as an industry like any other. During this period theatre became one of the few areas of employment where women were in demand as much as men, and a school of dramatic art, supported by generous government grants, was founded in Paris a century or more before similar training centres were established in London and elsewhere.

Through an examination of contemporary documents and records, Hemmings reveals the social and cultural environment surrounding the theatre in this period. The book is divided into three sections: audiences, actors, and playwrights, and covers such topics as the attempt of the *claque* to dictate audience reaction, the social ostracism suffered by actors and even more by actresses throughout the century, and the increasing stranglehold the powerful playwrights' union established over commercial managers. Written in a lively style, it will be of interest to students and scholars of theatre history, French history and culture, and social history.

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F. W. J. HEMMINGS

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- 1799 Consulate replaces Directory
Reconstitution of the Comédie-Française
- 1800 Dramatic censorship re-established
Pixérécourt, *Coelina*, at the Théâtre du Marais
- 1801 Picard, *La Petite Ville*, at the Odéon
- 1802 Duval, *Edouard en Ecosse*, at the Théâtre-Français
Birth of Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas
- 1803 Pixérécourt, *Tékéli* and *Les Mines de Pologne*, at the
Ambigu-Comique
- 1804 Carrion-Nisas, *Pierre le Grand*, at the Théâtre-Français
Napoleon crowned Emperor
- 1805 Raynouard, *Les Templiers*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1806 Ribié and Martainville, *Le Pied de mouton*, at the Gaîté
- 1807 Closure of all but four of the commercial theatres in Paris
- 1809 Pixérécourt, *La Citerne*, at the Gaîté
- 1810 Aignan, *Brunehaut*, at the Théâtre-Français
Désaugiers, *La Chatte merveilleuse*, at the Variétés
Birth of Alfred de Musset
- 1812 Napoleon signs Moscow Decree reorganizing the Co-
médie-Française
- 1814 Abdication of Napoleon and restoration to the throne of
Louis XVIII
Raynouard, *Les Etats de Blois*, at the Théâtre-Français
Pixérécourt, *Le Chien de Montargis*, at the Gaîté
- 1815 Return of Napoleon, followed by defeat at Waterloo and
exile to St Helena
Lemercier, *Christophe Colomb*, at the Gaîté
Birth of Labiche
- 1817 Arnault, *Germanicus*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1819 Delavigne, *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, at the Odéon

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- 1820 Inauguration of the Gymnase-Dramatique
Assassination of Duc de Berry, heir to the throne, on the steps of the Opera.
Nodier, *Le Vampire*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Birth of Augier and Rachel
- 1821 Death of Napoleon
Talma takes lead part in Jouy's *Sylla* at the Théâtre-Français
- 1822 Opera introduces gas-lighting on the stage for the first time
Inauguration of the Panorama-Dramatique
Visiting British actors booed and assaulted at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Birth of Edmond de Goncourt
- 1823 Birth of Théodore Barrière
- 1824 Charles X succeeds his brother Louis XVIII
Birth of Dumas *fils*
- 1825 Boieldieu, *La Dame blanche*, with libretto by Scribe, at the Opéra-Comique
- 1826 Death of Talma
- 1827 Scribe, *Le Mariage d'argent*, at the Théâtre-Français
Ducange, *Trente ans ou la Vie d'un joueur*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Start of the 'Shakespearian season' at the Odéon by a visiting company including Kean, Kemble, and Harriet Smithson
- 1828 Birth of Ibsen and Tolstoy. Death of Picard
- 1829 Dumas, *Henri III et sa cour* at the Théâtre-Français, with Mlle Mars and Joanny
- 1830 Hugo, *Hernani*, at the Théâtre-Français
July Revolution results in Louis-Philippe replacing Charles X on the throne. Suspension of dramatic censorship (until 1835)
Musset's first play, *La Nuit vénitienne*, fails at Odéon
- 1831 Dumas, *Antony* and *Richard Darlington*, Hugo, *Marion de Lorme*, all at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Meyerbeer, *Robert le Diable*, with libretto by Scribe, at the Opera
- 1832 Dumas, *La Tour de Nesle*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Hugo, *Le Roi s'amuse*, at the Théâtre-Français
Death of Goethe

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- 1833 Hugo, *Lucrèce Borgia*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Scribe, *Bertrand et Raton*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1834 Frédéric Lemaître, *Robert Macaire*, at the Folies-Dramatiques
- 1835 Attempted assassination of Louis-Philippe leads to re-establishment of dramatic censorship
Vigny, *Chatterton*, and Hugo, *Angelo*, both at the Théâtre-Français
- 1836 Frédéric takes lead part in Dumas's *Kean* at the Variétés
- 1837 Dumas, *Caligula*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1838 Sensational début of Rachel as tragédienne at the Théâtre-Français
Inauguration of the Théâtre de la Renaissance with Hugo's *Ruy Blas*
- 1839 Dumas, *Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1842 Scribe, *Le Verre d'eau*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1843 Failure of Hugo, *Les Burgraves*, and success of Ponsard, *Lucrèce*, both at the Théâtre-Français, mark the end of the vogue for Romantic drama
- 1844 Death of Pixérécourt
- 1845 Birth of Sarah Bernhardt
- 1847 Death of Mlle Mars
Dumas, *Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge*, at the Théâtre-Historique
Pyat, *Le Chiffonnier de Paris*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Musset's *Un caprice* (written in 1837) has a first successful performance at the Théâtre-Français, which is followed by the staging of several earlier plays by Musset, all produced between 1848 and 1850 at the same theatre
- 1848 February Revolution. Abdication of Louis-Philippe. Louis-Napoleon elected President of the (Second) Republic
Clairville and Cordier, *La Propriété c'est le vol*, at the Vaudeville
- 1849 Death of Marie Dorval
French expedition to crush republican rising in Rome
- 1850 Dramatic censorship (suspended at February Revolution) reintroduced
Ponsard, *Charlotte Corday*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1851 Labiche, *Un chapeau de paille d'Italie*, at the Palais-Royal

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- Louis-Napoleon effects *coup d'état* to prolong his presidency.
- Hugo goes into exile
- 1852 Dumas *fils*, *La Dame aux camélias*, at the Vaudeville
Proclamation of the (Second) Empire, with Napoleon III
Emperor
- 1853 Haussmann begins reconstruction of Paris
- Barrière, *Les Filles de marbre*, at the Vaudeville
- 1854 Crimean War (lasting till 1856)
- Augier and Sandeau, *Le Gendre de M. Poirier*, at the
Gymnase
- 1855 Dumas *fils*, *Le Demi-Monde*, at the Gymnase
- 1857 Death of A. de Musset
- 1858 Death of Rachel. Birth of Brioux and Courteline
- Offenbach, *Orphée aux enfers* (libretto by Crémieux and
Ludovic Halévy), at the Bouffes-Parisiens
- 1860 Labiche, *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*, at the Gymnase
By the Peace of Villafranca, Austria cedes Nice and Savoy
to France
- 1861 Sardou, *Les Pattes de mouche*, at the Gymnase
Death of Scribe
- 1862 Début of Sarah Bernhardt at the Comédie-Française
About, *Gaëtana*, at the Odéon
Birth of Georges Feydeau and Maurice Maeterlinck
- 1863 Death of A. de Vigny
- 1864 All government controls over theatres (except censoring of
plays) removed
- 1865 E. and J. de Goncourt, *Henriette Maréchal*, at the Théâtre-
Français
- 1866 Offenbach, *La Vie parisienne* (libretto by Meilhac and
Halévy), at the Palais-Royal
- 1867 International Exhibition at Paris
- 1868 Pailleron, *Le Monde où l'on s'amuse*, at the Gymnase
Birth of Edmond Rostand
- 1869 Coppée, *Le Passant*, at the Odéon
Claretie, *La Famille des Gueux*, at the Ambigu-Comique
Meilhac and Halévy, *Froufrou*, at the Gymnase
- 1870 France declares war on Prussia
Abdication of Napoleon III, proclamation of (Third)
Republic.

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- Hugo returns from exile in Guernsey
 Siege of Paris
 Death of Dumas *père*
- 1871 Armistice with Prussia
 Paris Commune
- 1873 Zola, *Thérèse Raquin*, at the Renaissance
 Birth of Alfred Jarry
- 1875 Début in Paris of Réjane
- 1876 Corvin, *Les Danicheff*, at the Odéon
 Death of Frédérick Lemaître
 Birth of Henri Bernstein
- 1877 Féval, *Le Bossu*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin
 Death of Théodore Barrière
- 1878 Début of Lucien Guitry at the Gymnase
 Paladilhe, *Suzanne*, at the Opéra-Comique
- 1879 Zola and Busnach, *L'Assommoir*, at the Ambigu-Comique
- 1880 Sardou, *Divorçons*, at the Palais-Royal, and *Daniel Rochat*,
 at the Théâtre-Français
 Death of Offenbach
- 1881 Pailleron, *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*, at the Théâtre-Français
 Zola and Busnach, *Nana*, at the Ambigu-Comique
 Dumas *fils*, *La Princesse de Bagdad*, at the Théâtre-Français
- 1882 Becque, *Les Corbeaux*, at the Théâtre-Français
 Sardou, *Fédora*, at the Vaudeville
- 1884 Legalization of trades unions and divorce in France
- 1885 Becque, *La Parisienne*, at the Renaissance
 Death of Victor Hugo
- 1887 Antoine founds the Théâtre-Libre
 Hundreds of spectators lose their lives in a fire at the
 Opéra-Comique
- 1888 Tolstoy's *Power of Darkness* first shown at the Théâtre-Libre
 Death of Labiche
- 1889 Attempted coup in Paris by Gen. Boulanger fails
 Death of Augier
- 1890 Ibsen, *Ghosts*, at the Théâtre-Libre
 Début of Marguerite Moreno at the Comédie-Française
- 1891 Sardou, *Thermidor*, shouted down at the Théâtre-Français
 Porto-Riche, *L'Amoureuse*, at the Odéon
- 1892 Panama scandal breaks in France
 Ibsen, *The Lady from the Sea*, at the Escholiers

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- 1893 Anarchist outrages in Paris
Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Hauptmann's *The Weavers* at the Théâtre-Libre
Sarah Bernhardt takes over management of the Théâtre de la Renaissance
- 1894 Antoine abandons management of the Théâtre-Libre
Réjane in Ibsen's *Doll's House* at the Vaudeville
Arrest and conviction of Dreyfus on treason charge.
- 1895 Death of Dumas *fils*
- 1896 Jarry, *Ubu-Roi*, at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre
Musset, *Lorenzaccio* (published 1834), given first performance at the Renaissance
Death of Edmond de Goncourt
- 1897 Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, with Coquelin in lead part, triumphs at the Porte-Saint-Martin
Guiches, *Snob*, at the Renaissance
Death of Alphonse Daudet
- 1898 Zola's *J'Accuse* reopens the Dreyfus Affair
Brieux, *Résultat des courses*, at the Théâtre-Antoine
Inauguration of the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt with the actress-manager playing Hamlet
- 1899 After a retrial, Dreyfus pardoned
Death of Henri Becque
Feydeau, *La Dame de chez Maxim's*, at the Nouveautés
- 1900 Rostand, *L'Aiglon*, at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt
Renard, *Poil-de-carotte*, at the Théâtre-Antoine