

# Sarah Bernhardt:

## An Inventory of Her Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923
<b>Title:</b>	Sarah Bernhardt Collection
<b>Inclusive Dates:</b>	ca. 1860-1977
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	bulk 1880-1920
<b>Extent:</b>	8 document boxes, 1 scrapbook box, 2 oversize boxes, 3 oversize files (5.04 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The collection contains theatrical production materials, playscripts, translations, and theatrical performance photographs from over thirty of Bernhardt's productions, including <i>l'Aiglon</i> , <i>Camille</i> , and <i>Phedre</i> . Also present are personal photographs, postcards, clippings, a scrapbook, caricatures, advertisements, and artistic sketches of Bernhardt.
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Compiled by staff from Albert Davis, Robert Downing, and Messmore Kendall Collections
<b>Provenance</b>	The Sarah Bernhardt Collection was compiled from materials previously organized within the Theater Biography file and is now a discrete collection. A large portion of the materials are originally from the Albert Davis and Messmore Kendall Collections.
<b>Processed by:</b>	Nicolette Schneider, 2003
<b>Repository:</b>	Harry Ransom Center The University of Texas at Austin

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## Biographical Sketch

Sarah Bernhardt, "The Divine Sarah," was born Henriette-Rosine Bernard in Paris, France, in 1844. She spent her life gracing the theatrical stages of the world with her interpretations of both classic and modern French drama. Following her education at the drama school of the Paris Conservatoire, Bernhardt made her theatrical debut on stage in an 1862 production of Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide*. But it was not until her 1872 performance in Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas* that she was recognized and established as a great theatrical actress of her time.

In 1880, Bernhardt began her long series of tours throughout Europe and America. She delighted audiences with her interpretations of characters in productions such as *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *Frou Frou*, *Hernani*, *Jeanne D'Arc*, *Phedre*, and *Theodora*, to name just a few. Bernhardt also became one of the few female actors of the time to portray a lead male character. She did so in *Hamlet* and again as the Duc de Reichstadt in Rostand's *l'Aiglon*. She continued to tour America for the rest of her career, even announcing three separate "farewell" tours between the years 1905-1912. Despite all of the time she spent outside her home country, Bernhardt remained a loyal Frenchwoman. In 1914, she was presented the Legion of Honor award for her continued support of her country and its servicemen. After battling a threatening infection in 1915, Bernhardt lost a leg to amputation, but she still continued to pursue her love of acting and traveling. Her final tour through America lasted from the years 1916 to 1918 and then she returned home to France. Bernhardt continued to practice her craft until her death in 1923.

In addition to her traditional stage work, Bernhardt starred in several silent movies, including two of her better-known films, *Queen Elizabeth* and *Camille* in 1911. Aside from acting, Bernhardt was also known to be a gifted artist, sculptor, and writer. She edited and translated many of the plays in which she performed and wrote several novels. Her memoir, *Ma double vie (My Double Life)*, originally published in 1907, is still being reprinted today.

Sources:

Gold, Arthur. *Divine Sarah: A Life of Sarah Bernhardt*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

"Sarah Henriette Rosine Bernhardt" in *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Skinner, Cornelia Otis. *Madame Sarah*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966.

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## Scope and Contents

The Sarah Bernhardt Collection, ca. 1860-1977 (bulk 1880-1920), contains theatrical production photographs, personal photographs, publicity stills, postcards, theater programs and playbills, clippings, and a scrapbook. Also present are several prints, caricatures, advertisements, and artistic sketches of Bernhardt. The collection is arranged in three series: I. Theater Productions, 1872-1920, II. Clippings and Scrapbook, 1879-1977, and III. Other Materials, 1860-1920. Materials in Series I are arranged alphabetically by title of production and then chronologically within each production; materials in Series II and Series III are arranged chronologically where appropriate.

The Theater Production series comprises the bulk of the collection and contains production photographs and theater playbills and programs for over thirty Bernhardt productions. Although the bulk of the production photographs are portrait styled cabinet card photographs, this series contains several photographs of Bernhardt performing on stage. Bernhardt's famous productions of *l'Aiglon*, *Camille*, and *Phedre* are especially well represented. Among the playbills and programs, there are several playscripts, translations, and other versions of plays which are specific to Bernhardt and carry her identification as "the only correct version of my plays translated and printed from my own promptbooks." There are also souvenir programs which contain information on multiple productions.

The Clippings series, while comprehensive during the span of Bernhardt's career with reviews, is very extensive throughout 1923, the year of her death.

The Other Materials series chiefly comprises personal photographs, some family and ceremonial photographs and various portraits, caricatures, advertisements, prints, and artistic sketches. Personalities represented with Bernhardt in the photographs include actress Lillie Langtry, playwright Victorien Sardou, theater mogul Martin Beck, escape artist Harry Houdini, and her manager William Connors. Also in this series is an Alphonse Mucha sketch of Bernhardt as *Medea*, a copy of a letter from *Her Artistic Life*, and several advertisements in which Bernhardt used her notoriety to sell various products.

Elsewhere in the Performing Arts Collection, Bernhardt materials can be found in the Poster Collection (which includes several Alphonse Mucha posters of Bernhardt), the Jed Mace Collection, and the B.J. Simmons & Co. Records. Other materials on Sarah Bernhardt can be found in the Ransom Center's Photography Collection and the Manuscripts Collection. The University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library also offers a substantial collection of Sarah Bernhardt images in their Philip H. Ward Collection of Theatrical Images.

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## Arrangement

The finding aid for the Sarah Bernhardt Collection is a conflation of the original inventory created in 2003, and of a small addition that was catalogued in 2006. The addition is described only in the Folder List, continuing the box and folder numbering sequence. The Scope and Contents note does not make reference to the addition.

## **Index Terms**

### **People**

Nadar, Paul, 1856-1939.

Sarony, Napoleon, 1821-1896.

Mucha, Alphonse Marie, 1860-1939.

### **Subjects**

Actors--France.

Theater--France.

### **Document Types**

Cabinet photographs.

Cartoons.

Photographs.

Playbills.

Postcards.

Portraits.

Prints.

Scrapbooks.

Theatre programs.

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**Series I. Theater Productions, ca. 1872-1920**

A. Photographic Images, ca. 1872-1920

*Adrienne Lecouvreur*

2 photos ca. 1880, **Box 1 Folder 1**

ca. 1906, 1 photo, 1 sketch, 1 clipping **Folder 2**

*Agamemnon*, n.d., 1 photo **Folder 3**

*l'Aiglon*, ca. 1900

6 photos, 4 clippings **Box 1 Folder 4-5**

2 photos, 1 clipping **Box 8 Folder 1**

2 photos **Box ob 10 Folder 1-2**

*Athalie*, ca. 1920, 1 photo **Box 1 Folder 6**

*La Beffa*, ca. 1910, 1 photo **Folder 7**

*Camille (La Dame aux Camelias)*

ca. 1880, 15 photos, 1 postcard **Box 1 Folder 8-10**

ca. 1890, 2 clippings **Folder 11**

ca. 1906, 1 postcard **Folder 12**

ca. 1910, 2 photos **Folder 13**

ca. 1913, 1 print, 1 clipping **Box 8 Folder 2**

*Cleopatra*, ca. 1890

7 photos, 2 prints, 1 postcard, 1 clipping **Box 1 Folder 14-17**

Clarín, Georges, 3 prints **Folder 18**

*Cyrano de Bergerac*, ca. 1900

3 photos, 3 clippings **Box 1 Folder 19-20**

2 photos	<b>Box 8 Folder 3</b>
<i>La Dame de Challant</i> , 1 photo ca. 1892	<b>Box 1 Folder 21</b>
<i>l'Etrangere (The Stranger)</i> , ca. 1876	
2 clippings	<b>Box 1 Folder 22</b>
6 prints	<b>Box 8 Folder 4</b>
2 matted photos	<b>Box ob 10 Folder 3</b>
<i>Fedora</i> , 1 photo ca. 1882	<b>Box 1 Folder 23</b>
<i>Francesca da Rimini</i> , 1 clipping ca. 1902,	<b>Folder 24</b>
<i>Frou Frou</i> , 13 photos ca. 1880,	<b>Folder 25-28</b>
<i>Gismonda</i> , ca. 1894	
1 photo, 3 clippings	<b>Box 1 Folder 29</b>
Mucha, Alphonse, 1 mini-poster	<b>Box ob 10 Folder 4</b>
<i>Hamlet</i> , ca. 1900	
1 photo, 2 clippings	<b>Box 1 Folder 30</b>
3 photos	<b>Box ob 10 Folder 5</b>
Berger, Rene, 1 print	<b>Folder 6</b>
<i>Hernani</i>	
ca. 1877, 6 photos	<b>Box 2 Folder 1-2</b>
ca. 1887, 2 prints,	<b>Box 8 Folder 5</b>
n.d., 1 photo, 1 print, 1 clipping	<b>Box 2 Folder 3</b>
<i>Izyl</i> , ca. 1894	
3 photos; 7 clippings	<b>Box 2 Folder 4-5</b>

Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923

1 photo **Box 8 Folder 6**

1 clipping **Box ob 10 Folder 7**

*Jeanne d'Arc*, ca. 1890

7 photos **Box 2 Folder 6-7**

1 print **FlatFile 1**

*Leah*, ca. 1892

2 photos, 3 prints, 3 clippings **Box 2 Folder 8**

1 photo **Box 8 Folder 7**

*Macbeth*, ca. 1884

1 print **Box 2 Folder 9**

1 print **Box 8 Folder 8**

*Une Nuit de Noel sous la Terreur*

ca. 1912 10 photos, 1 photo with autograph, **Box 2 Folder 10-12**

ca. 1913, 1 clipping **Box ob 10 Folder 8**

*La Passant*, ca. 1868 2 photos, 1 clipping, **Box 2 Folder 13**

*Phedre*

ca. 1880, 30 photos **Box 2 Folder 14-18**

ca. 1880-1906, 4 clippings **Folder 19**

ca. 1906, 2 photos, 1 negative photo **Box 8 Folder 9**

ca. 1916-1918, 1 photo, 2 clippings **Box 2 Folder 20**

*La Princesse Lointaine*, ca. 1895

3 photos, 1 postcard, 2 clippings **Box 2 Folder 21**

Berthon, Paul, 1 print	<b>FlatFile 2</b>
<i>Ruy Blas</i> , ca. 1872, 8 photos, 1 clipping	<b>Box 2 Folder 22-23</b>
<i>Theodora</i> , ca. 1884	
10 photos, 2 clippings	<b>Box 3 Folder 1-2</b>
1 photo	<b>Box 8 Folder 10</b>
<i>Theroigne de Mericourt</i> , ca. 1902, 3 photos	<b>Box 3 Folder 3</b>
<i>La Tosca</i> , ca. 1887, 2 photos; 2 prints, 2 clippings	<b>Folder 4-5</b>
<i>Varennnes</i> , ca. 1904, 1 clipping	<b>Folder 6</b>
Multiple productions, 1 photo	<b>Folder 7</b>
Farewell American Tour, 1905-1906, 1 print	<b>FlatFile 3</b>
Miscellaneous, 1 postcard, 1 clipping	<b>Box 3 Folder 8</b>
<b>B. Playbills and Programs, ca. 1880-1918</b>	
<i>Adrienne Lecouvreur</i> , 1880-1896	<b>Box 3, 8 Folder 9-10, 11</b>
<i>l'Aiglon</i> , 1900-1901, 1910, n.d.	<b>Box 3 Folder 11-15</b>
<i>Angelo</i> , 1905	<b>Folder 16</b>
<i>Camille</i>	
1880-1887	<b>Box 8 Folder 12</b>
1881-1910	<b>Box 3 Folder 17-19</b>
<i>Cleopatra</i>	
1891, n.d.	<b>Box 3 Folder 20-21</b>
1892	<b>Box 8 Folder 13</b>



<i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i> , 1900	<b>Box ob 10 Folder 9</b>
<i>La Faux Modele</i> , n.d.	<b>Box 3 Folder 22</b>
<i>Fedora</i>	
1887, 1891	<b>Box 8 Folder 14</b>
1887, 1892	<b>Box 3 Folder 23</b>
n.d.	<b>Folder 24</b>
<i>Frou Frou</i>	
1880-1881	<b>Box 8 Folder 15</b>
1881	<b>Box 3 Folder 25</b>
<i>Gismonda</i> , n.d.	<b>Folder 26</b>
<i>Hamlet</i> , 1899-1900	<b>Folder 27</b>
<i>Hecube</i> , 1916-1917	<b>Folder 28-9</b>
<i>Hernani</i>	
1880	<b>Box 8 Folder 16</b>
1887	<b>Box 4 Folder 1</b>
<i>Izeyl</i> , 1896, n.d.	<b>Folder 2</b>
<i>Jeanne d'Arc</i> , n.d.	<b>Folder 3</b>
<i>Leah</i> , 1892	<b>Folder 4</b>
<i>Madame X</i> , 1910	<b>Folder 5</b>
<i>Phedre</i> , 1918	<b>Folder 6</b>
<i>La Princesse Georges</i> , 1881	<b>Box 8 Folder 17</b>
<i>Du Theatre au Champ d'Honour</i> , 1916	<b>Box 4 Folder 7</b>
<i>Theodora</i> , 1887	<b>Box 4, 8 Folder 8, 18</b>
<i>La Tosca</i>	

Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923

1892, 1896	<b>Box 8 Folder 19</b>
1905, n.d.	<b>Box 4 Folder 9-10</b>
n.d.	<b>Box ob 10 Folder 10</b>
Multiple productions	
1880	<b>Box 8 Folder 20</b>
1881-1906	<b>Box 4 Folder 11</b>
1910-1911	<b>Folder 12</b>
1912-1913	<b>Folder 13</b>
1916	<b>Box 8 Folder 20</b>
1916-1917	<b>Box 4 Folder 14</b>
n.d.	<b>Folder 15</b>
Miscellaneous	<b>Box ob 10 Folder 11</b>

**Series II. Clippings & Scrapbook, ca. 1879-1977, n.d.**

1879-1899	<b>Box 5 Folder 1</b>
1900-1913	<b>Folder 2</b>
1900-1915	<b>Box 8 Folder 21</b>
1914-1922	<b>Box 5 Folder 3</b>
1923	
March	<b>Box 5, 8 Folder 4, 22</b>
April	<b>Box 5 Folder 5</b>
May-June	<b>Folder 6</b>
July-September	<b>Folder 7</b>
1923-1924	<b>Box ob 11 Folder 1</b>
1924-1929	<b>Box 5 Folder 8</b>
1930-1977	<b>Folder 9</b>
1937	<b>Box ob 11 Folder 2</b>
1942, n.d.	<b>Box 8 Folder 23</b>
n.d.	<b>Box 5 Folder 10</b>
scrapbook, ca. 1900-1906	<b>Box 9</b>

**Series III. Other Materials, ca. 1860-1920, n.d.**

A. Personal Photographs, ca. 1860-1920

ca. 1860, 1 photo	<b>Box 6 Folder 1</b>
ca. 1870, 7 photos	<b>Folder 2</b>
ca. 1876, 3 photos, 2 prints	<b>Folder 3</b>
ca. 1880, 33 photos	<b>Folder 4-10</b>
ca. 1887, Bernhardt with Lillie Langtry, 3 photos, 1 clipping	<b>Folder 11</b>
ca. 1890, 13 photos, 1 clipping	<b>Folder 12-13</b>
ca. 1890, 1 photo	<b>Box 8 Folder 24</b>
ca. 1896, Bernhardt with Suzanne Seylor, 1 photo	<b>Box 6 Folder 14</b>
ca. 1900	
15 items (6 images, 9 duplicates)	<b>Box 6 Folder 15</b>
10 items (3 images, 7 duplicates)	<b>Folder 16</b>
40 items (1 image, 39 duplicates)	<b>Folder 17</b>
24 items (2 images, 22 duplicates)	<b>Box 7 Folder 1</b>
ca. 1903, Bernhardt with Victorien Sardou, 1 clipping	<b>Box 8 Folder 25</b>
ca. 1904, 1 photo	<b>Folder 26</b>
ca. 1906, Bernhardt in front of tent, 1 photo, 1 negative photo; 1 photo	<b>Box 7, ob 11 Folder 2, 3</b>

ca. 1910, Bernhardt with Harry Houdini, 15 items (3 images, 12 duplicates)	<b>Box 7</b> <b>Folder</b> 3
ca. 1910-1920, 6 photos, 1 postcard, 3 clippings	<b>Folder 4-5</b>
ca. 1911, Bernhardt with manager, William Connors, 1 photo	<b>Box 8</b> <b>Folder</b> 27
ca. 1913, Bernhardt with Martin Beck, 2 photos	<b>Folder 28</b>
ca. 1916, Bernhardt with company, 1 clipping	<b>Box 7</b> <b>Folder 6</b>
ca. 1918, Bernhardt with family, 2 photos	<b>Folder 7</b>
n.d., Bernhardt on tour train, 1 photo	<b>Box ob 11</b> <b>Folder 4</b>
<b>B. Family and Other, n.d.</b>	
Bernard, Royal, 2 photos	<b>Box 7 Folder 8</b>
Bernhardt, Jeanne, 6 photos, 1 clipping	<b>Folder</b> 9
Damala, Jacques, 1 photo	<b>Folder 10</b>
Other people, 2 clippings	<b>Folder 11</b>
Bernhardt tent, 2 photos	<b>Folder 12</b>
Belle Ile en Mer, 4 postcards	<b>Folder 13</b>
<b>C. Ceremonies, ca. 1913-1914</b>	
ca. 1913, Wreath presentation, 12 photos	<b>Box 8 Folder</b> 29-31
ca. 1913, Award in New York, 3 photos	<b>Folder 32</b>
ca. 1914, Legion of Honor presentation, 1 clipping	<b>Box 7</b> <b>Folder 14</b>

D. Miscellaneous, ca. 1903, n.d.

Advertisements, 2 clippings; 3 clippings **Box 7, ob 11**  
**Folder 15, 5**

Autograph, ca. 1903 **Box 7 Folder 16**

Bautier, Marguerite, sketch and mat **Box ob 11**  
**Folder 6-7**

Berger, Rene, print (Bernhardt as Tosca?) **Folder**  
**8**

Caricatures, 4 prints, 1 clipping **Box 7 Folder 17**

*Her Artistic Life* 6 page copy of letter **Folder**  
**18**

Mucha, Alphonse

Sketch of Bernhardt as Medea **Box 8 Folder 33**

3 clippings of posters **Box 7 Folder 19**

Portraits

5 prints, 4 clippings **Box 7 Folder 20**

9 prints, 1 clipping **Box 8 Folder 34**

3 prints **Box ob 11 Folder 9-10**

Sculptures, 4 photos **Box 7 Folder 21**

Miscellaneous

2 items **Box 7 Folder 22**

1 print, 3 clippings **Box 8 Folder 35**

## 2006 Addition to the Sarah Bernhardt Collection

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Camille in *La Dame aux Camelias at the Théâtre de la Renaissance*, undated Poster, 13.5 × 5.25" (1 item) **oversize-box**  
osb 12.1

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as the Duc de Reichstadt in *L'Aiglon*, 1900 Poster, 80.25 × 30" (2 items) **folder**  
7A:  
Oversize  
Portfolio  
A

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Gismonda (American tour under the direction of Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau), undated Poster, 39.5 × 30", 40.25 × 30" (2 items) **folder**  
ff 6

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Gismonda, undated Poster, 77.75 × 28.5" (1 item) **folder**  
7A:  
Oversize  
Portfolio  
A

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Hamlet at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, 1899 Poster, 82.75 × 28.5" (1 item)

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Hamlet at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, 1899 Poster, 82.25 × 29.75" (1 item)

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Lorenzaccio at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, undated Poster, 41.75 × 14.75" (1 item) **flat-file**  
ff 4

Berthaud, H./Helios Studio. Bernhardt as Mariette in *François le Champi*, undated Photograph, 11.5 × 9" (1 item) **oversize-box**  
osb 12.2

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Medee, 1898 Poster, 85 × 34.5" (1 item) **folder** 7A:  
Oversize  
Portfolio  
A

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Photine in *La samaritaine* at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, undated Poster, 69.5 × 23.5" (1 item)

Clairin, Georges. Bernhardt as Theodora, undated Poster, 81 × 30.25" (1 item)

Orazi, Manuel. Bernhardt as Theodora, undated Poster, 47.5 × 33" (1 item)

Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923

Orazi, Manuel. Bernhardt as Theodora at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, **oversize-box**  
undated Print, 16 × 11.5" (1 item) osb 1.3

Mucha, Alfonse. Bernhardt as Tosca at the Théâtre Sarah Berhardt, 1899 Poster, 41.5 × **flat-file**  
15" (1 item) ff 5