

An Inventory of the Collection in the Performing Arts Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Harry Ransom Center

Title: *The Two Orphans* Collection

Dates: 1874-1926

Extent: 1 document box, 1 oversize box (0.57 linear feet)

Abstract: *The Two Orphans* Collection is comprised of programs, clippings, scrapbooks, and photographs from various productions of *The Two Orphans*, one of the greatest theatrical successes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States.

RLIN Record #: TXRC04-A1

Language: English

Access: Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition: Compiled by Theatre Arts staff from the William H. Crain and Albert Davis Collections

Processed by: Antonio Alfau, 2004

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Scope and Contents

The Two Orphans was one of the greatest theatrical successes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States. *Les deux orphelines* was written by the French dramatists Adolphe d'Ennery and Eugène Cormon, and its first presentation was at the Théâtre Porte St. Martin, Paris, in January 1874. Due to a previous misunderstanding, D'Ennery felt indebted to A. M. Palmer and Jackson N. Hart of the Union Square Theatre and by way of compensation granted them the U. S. production rights of the play. Translated into English and adapted by Jackson N. Hart, it was produced for the first time in that New York theatre, on December 21, 1874, where it enjoyed a tremendously successful run of 180 performances. In 1881 at the Booth's Theatre in New York, the net profits of the play for just one week were \$11,400. In the early twentieth century the popularity of the play declined.

The Two Orphans Collection is chiefly comprised of programs and photographs. The collection is organized in three series: I. Photographs, 1874, II. Programs and Clippings, 1874-1926, nd, and III. Scrapbook, 1904. The twelve photographs, in carte-de-visite format, are of the original cast of the first United States production of the play at the Union Square Theatre in 1874. Among them are photos of McKee Rankin, Kitty Blanchard, and Kate Claxton, famous actors of that epoch. There are sixty programs from different productions in several United States theatres. Notable among the programs are those for the first production at the Union Square Theatre, in 1874, and the tragic production of the play at the Brooklyn Theatre, in 1876, where nearly 300 people lost their lives in a fire, including two of the actors. Kate Claxton miraculously survived although most of her clothing was burned off. The scrapbook contains twelve large photographs of different scenes of the production of the play at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, in 1904.

Related Material

Elsewhere in the Performing Arts Collection, researchers can find additional materials related to *The Two Orphans* in the Production Photographs Collection, the Prints Collection, and the Souvenir Programs Collection.

Index Terms

People

Blanchard, Kitty, 1847-1911.

Claxton, Kate, 1848-1924.

Cogswell, W. J.
Granger, Maude.
Mackay, F. F. (Frank Findley), 1832-1923.
Morant, Fanny.
Parselle, John, 1820-1885.
Rankin, McKee, 1844-1914.
Robson, Stuart, 1836-1903.
Thorne, Charles R., Jr.
Vernon, Ida.
Wilkins, Marie.

Organizations

New Amsterdam Theatre (New York, N.Y.)
Brooklyn Theatre (New York, N.Y.)
Union Square Theatre (New York, N.Y.)

Subjects

Cormon, Eugène, 1810-1903.
Ennery, Adolphe d', 1811-1899.
Actors--United States--19th century.
Theater--France--History--19th century.
Theater--United States--History--19th century.

Document Types

Clippings.
Photographs.
Programs.
Scrapbooks.

Series I. Photographs, 1874

Box 1 Folder 1

Blanchard, Kitty, as Henriette

Claxton, Kate, as Louise

Cogswell, W. J., as Marquis de Presles

Granger, Maude, as Marianne

Mackay, F. F., as Pierre

Morant, Fanny, as Countess Diane de Linieres

Parselle, John, as Count de Linieres

Rankin, McKee, as Jacques

Robson, Stuart, as Picard, Valet of the Chevalier

Thorne, Charles R., Jr., as Chevalier Maurice de Vaudrey

Vernon, Ida, as Sister Genevieve

Wilkins, Marie, as La Frochard

Series II. Programs and Clippings, 1874-1926, nd

Programs, 1874-1898, 48 items [*23 oversize items removed to oversize, Box/Folder 2.2]

**Box 1
Folder
2***

Programs, 1904-1926, nd, 12 items; clippings, 1912-1926, nd, 4 items

Folder 3

Series III. Scrapbook, 1904

Scrapbook of the production of *The Two Orphans* at the New Amsterdam Theatre, 1904 **Box 2**
Folder 1

Oversize materials **Folder 2**