

# Ada Rehan and Augustin Daly:

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

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Rehan, Ada, 1857-1916, and Daly, Augustin, 1838-1899
<b>Title:</b>	Ada Rehan and Augustin Daly Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1884-1914
<b>Extent:</b>	2.5 document boxes, 2 oversize boxes (1.26 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Ada Rehan and Augustin Daly Collection, 1884-1914, consists of promptbooks and actor's sides, photographs, clippings, correspondence, costume designs and other artworks, a scrapbook, and a souvenir playbill that document the professional and personal activities of Ada Rehan, American actress, and Augustin Daly, American theater manager and playwright.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Performing Arts Collection PA-00111
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research. Portrait of Ada Rehan on ivory is restricted due to its fragile condition and will not be paged. A digital reproduction is available.

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Purchase, 1983 (R10087)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Ancelyn Krivak, 2015
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

**Ada Rehan** (1857-1916) was one of the most popular and acclaimed American actresses of the late nineteenth century. Born Delia Crehan in Limerick, Ireland, in 1857, Rehan immigrated to the United States with her family in 1865, and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. She began acting on stage at sixteen, first appearing in plays with her sister, Kate Crehan and brother-in-law, Oliver Doud Byron, then acting in Mrs. John Drew's company in Philadelphia (where she was incorrectly billed as Ada C. Rehan, thereafter her professional name) and a variety of other repertory companies in Louisville, Kentucky, Albany, New York, and New York City. In 1879, she was engaged by theatrical manager Augustin Daly to appear in his arrangement of Émile Zola's *L'Assommoir* at the Olympic Theatre in New York, and from then on appeared as one of the leading actresses in Daly's company until his death in 1899. Rehan was most acclaimed for her comedic performances, particularly as the lead in Daly's arrangements of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. After Daly's death, Rehan continued to act, mainly in repertory versions of her most famous roles, until her final performance in a tribute to Polish actress Helena Modjeska at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1905. Following her retirement, she lived in New York City until her death in 1916 of arterial disease.

**Augustin Daly** (1838-1899) was an American theatre manager, stage director, playwright and adapter, and drama critic. Born in Plymouth, North Carolina, to an Irish-born sea captain and the Jamaican-born daughter of an Irish soldier, Daly was raised in Norfolk, Virginia and New York City, where as a teenager he developed an interest in attending plays and directing amateur theatrical performances. After attending public school and night school, Daly worked as an office clerk and as a general writer on the staff of New York's *Sunday Courier* newspaper. In 1859, Daly became the theatrical critic for the *Courier*, and for the next ten years he wrote reviews for various New York newspapers and composed several plays and adaptations. His most well-known play, *Under the Gaslight* (1867), was a sensational melodrama that originated the much-imitated plot device of a character tied to a railroad track and rescued just as the train reached the spot. In 1869, Daly became the manager of the Fifth Avenue Theatre. Within a year, Daly had built a successful business based on lavish productions of light comedies, sensational dramas, adaptations of novels by Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Wilkie Collins, and Mark Twain, and Daly's heavily redacted arrangements of Shakespeare and 18th-century comedies of manners. Daly's company of actors and actresses included many of the Broadway stage's most popular performers such as Fanny Davenport, James Lewis, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, John Drew, Jr., Maurice Barrymore, and, from 1879, Ada Rehan. Although the 1870s were a turbulent decade for Daly, as he opened and closed theaters, and struggled to maintain his financial backing during the period of the "Long Depression," by the 1880s he had consolidated his position as one of the leading theatrical managers of his era, with a company based at Daly's Theatre at 1221 Broadway, and frequent tours of the United States and Europe. A second Daly's Theatre opened in London in 1893. He continued to mount adaptations of classics as well as original plays, including one of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's last works, *The*

*Foresters, or Robin Hood and Maid Marian* (1892). Daly died of illness in 1899, attended by his wife, Mary, and Ada Rehan. His brother, Joseph Francis Daly, a New York City judge, retained his brother's personal papers after his death and composed a biography published in 1917.

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## Sources:

In addition to materials within the collection, the following sources were used:

"Daly, [John] Augustin." Bordman, Gerald and Hischak, John. *The Oxford Companion to the American Theatre*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Daly, Joseph Francis. *The Life of Augustin Daly*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917.

Herringshaw, Thomas William, ed. *Herringshaw's Encyclopedia of American Biography of the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago: American Publishers' Association, 1901.

Izard, Forrest. *Heroines of the Modern Stage*. New York: Sturgis & Walton Company, 1915.

"Rehan, Ada Delia". Plotnicki, Rita M. *Notable Women in the American Theatre: A Biographical Dictionary*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.

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## Scope and Contents

The Ada Rehan and Augustin Daly Collection, 1884-1914, consists of promptbooks and actor's sides, photographs, clippings, correspondence, costume designs and other artworks, a scrapbook, and a souvenir playbill that document the professional and personal activities of Ada Rehan and Augustin Daly. The collection is divided into two series: Series I. Promptbooks and Sides, 1884-1899, and Series II. Performance and Personal Materials, 1888-1914.

The promptbooks and actor's sides in Series I. make up the bulk of the collection and provide extensive documentation of how plays were staged by Augustin Daly's company. They are arranged alphabetically by play title, with the play's first date of production noted in parentheses after the play's title and author. The plays of William Shakespeare are well represented. Most of the promptbooks are bound in leather with Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms on the front cover, although some of the promptbooks that bear Ada Rehan's name contain annotations that may indicate that they were originally used by the chief prompter or another crew member rather than the actress. Additionally, a majority of the promptbooks consist of the privately printed "Daly edition" of the play's text bound with interleaves that contain annotations, ground plans, and sketches. A few of the sides used by Ada Rehan consist of typescript or manuscript leaves instead of the printed "Daly edition" of the play. Annotations made inside the promptbooks range from dialogue cuts, additions, and alterations to notations

for scenery changes, cues for lighting and sound effects, plans of the stage, scene sketches, choreography for dances, and lyrics for songs. Promptbooks for *The Country Girl*, *The Hunchback*, *The School for Scandal*, *Taming of the Shrew*, and *Twelfth Night* are particularly rich in annotations.

Series II. contains a variety of materials related to the performance history and personal activities of Augustin Daly and Ada Rehan. Notable items in this series include Augustin Daly's personal photograph album of cartes-de-visite photographs of American and European theatrical and literary personalities, some with inscriptions to Daly, most identified by name in Daly's hand; correspondence from Alfred, Lord Tennyson to Ada Rehan; cabinet card photographs of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) and William Tecumseh Sherman inscribed to Rehan; and costume designs for Daly's Theatre productions, some with annotations in Daly's hand.

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## Related Material

The Ransom Center holdings include numerous other materials related to Augustin Daly and Ada Rehan, including correspondence from Augustin Daly in the uncataloged portion of Theatre Arts Manuscripts and in the cataloged and uncataloged portions of the Little Alphabet, photographs of Rehan and Daly in the Theater Biography Collection, silk souvenir playbills from Daly's Theatre and numerous bound volumes of programs from Daly's Theatre and Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre in the Playbills and Programs Collections, and an acting edition of Daly's play *Under the Gaslight* in the Playscripts and Promptbooks Collection.

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## Index Terms

### People

Daly, Augustin, 1838-1899.

Rehan, Ada, 1857-1916.

### Subjects

Actresses--United States.

Daly's Theatre (New York, N.Y.:30th Street).

Theater--United States--19th century.

Theatrical managers.

Theatrical producers and directors--United States.

### Document Types

Albums.

Clippings.

Correspondence.

Costume design drawings.

Photographs.

Playbills.

Prompt books.

Scrapbooks.

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**Series I. Promptbooks and Actor's Sides, 1884-1899**

- Countess Gucki, by Franz von Schönthan, translator unknown (1896), typescript side for Ada Rehan as Countess Hermance Trachau, with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover, no annotations, undated **Container**  
1.1
- The Country Girl, altered and adapted from William Wycherley's The Country Wife by David Garrick, and arranged by Augustin Daly (1884)
- Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1884, bound with Daly edition, no annotations, 1898 **Container**  
1.2
- Daly edition with Daly's name gilt on cover and annotations, 1898 **Container**  
1.3
- Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1898 **Container**  
1.4
- The Great Ruby, by Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton (1899), typescript side for Ada Rehan as Lady Garnett, with character name and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, undated **Container**  
1.5
- The Hunchback, by James Sheridan Knowles (1893), Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1893 **Container**  
1.6
- The Last Word, by Franz von Schönthan, translator unknown (1891), manuscript side for Ada Rehan as Vera, with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, undated **Container**  
1.7
- Madame Sans-Gêne, by Victorien Sardou and Émile Moreau, translator unknown (1899), typescript side for Ada Rehan as Catherine, with character name and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, undated **Container**  
1.8
- Much Ado about Nothing, by William Shakespeare, as arranged by Augustin Daly (1896), Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1897 **Container**  
1.9
- The Railroad of Love, by Franz von Schönthan and Gustav Kadelburg, translator unknown (1887), manuscript side for Ada Rehan as Valentine Osprey, with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, undated **Container**  
2.1
- The School for Scandal, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, as arranged by Augustin Daly (1891)
- Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1890 **Container**  
2.2
- Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1891 **Container**  
2.3

The Subtleties of Jealousy (also known as "Coming Events"), by Édouard Pailleron, adapted by Sidney Rosenfeld (1898)

Typescript promptbook with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, undated **Container**  
2.4

Typescript side for Ada Rehan as Nell, with title ("Coming Events") and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover, no annotations, undated **Container**  
2.5

Taming of the Shrew, by William Shakespeare, as arranged by Augustin Daly (1887)

Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations; typescript list of properties pasted in back, 1887 **Container**  
2.6

Daly edition with Daly's name gilt on cover and annotations; programs pasted in front, 1887-1888, undated **Container**  
2.7

Twelfth Night; or, What You Will, by William Shakespeare, as arranged by Augustin Daly (1893), Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1893 **Container**  
2.8

The Wonder!: A Woman Keeps a Secret, by Susanna Centlivre, as arranged by Augustin Daly (1897), Daly edition with title and Ada Rehan's name and coat of arms gilt on cover and annotations, 1897 **Container**  
3.1

**Series II. Performance and Personal Materials, 1888-1914**

Augustin Daly's photograph album of cabinet card and carte-de-visite portraits of American and European theatrical and literary personalities, most identified by name in Daly's hand, undated	<b>Container</b> 4
Review clippings of Daly's Theatre productions of <i>The Last Word</i> and <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , circa 1888-1891	<b>Container</b> 3.2
Correspondence, including letter from Alfred, Lord Tennyson to Ada Rehan and letters from Rehan to unidentified correspondents, 1892-1914, undated	<b>Container</b> 3.3
Costume designs for unidentified Daly's Theatre productions, some with annotations in Augustin Daly's hand, undated	<b>Container</b> 3.4
Photographs, including cabinet card portrait of Daly's Theatre troupe inscribed by Augustin Daly, cabinet card portraits of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) and William Tecumseh Sherman inscribed to Ada Rehan, and photograph of Ada Rehan and John Drew, Jr. in unidentified production, 1888-1889, undated	<b>Container</b> 3.5
Portrait of Ada Rehan as Lady Teazle in <i>The School for Scandal</i> painted on ivory, undated [RESTRICTED–DO NOT PAGE]	<b>Container</b> 5
Scrapbook of review clippings of Daly's Theatre London engagement, 1896, with earlier reviews of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> , and Augustin Daly obituary, 1888-1899	<b>Container</b> 3.6
Souvenir playbill printed on silk for <i>The Edwin Adams Testimonial</i> at Leland Opera House, Albany, NY, featuring Ada Rehan in <i>Our Oddities</i> , undated	<b>Container</b> 3.7
Oversize materials	<b>Container</b> 4-5