

Drury Lane Theatre Promptbooks:

An Inventory of the Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Drury Lane (London, England)
Title:	Drury Lane Theatre Promptbooks Collection
Dates:	1718-1787
Extent:	1 box (0.42 linear feet)
Abstract:	The Drury Lane Theatre Promptbooks Collection consists of one box of nine printed scripts with extensive handwritten promptbook notations from productions at the Drury Lane Theatre from 1718 through 1787.
Call Number:	Performing Arts Collection PA-00356
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 1964
Processed by:	Eric Colleary, 2016
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Scope and Contents

The nine Drury Lane promptbooks in this collection were originally in the possession of H.C. Halliwell-Phillips, who transferred ownership to the Penzance Library in Cornwall. They, in turn, sold the promptbooks at auction in 1964. The promptbooks all use published scripts and include handwritten notations from at least five different prompters – John Stede, William Rufus Chetwood, William Hopkins, Richard Cross, and James Wrighten. Production dates for the promptbooks range from 1718 to 1787. It is believed that the promptbook for Dryden's *Oedipus* was also used at Covent Garden for their 1735 production.

Several of the promptbooks were studied in the 1980s by professors Leo Hughes and A.H. Scouten. Their research was included in Edward A. Langhans' *Eighteenth Century British and Irish Promptbooks: A Descriptive Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

Related Material

Two other Drury Lane promptbooks from the Penzance Library in Cornwall were sold to the University of Edinburgh in 1964 - Congreve's *The Old Bachelor* and *The Double Dealer*. See Hughes and Scouten's "Congreve at the Drury Lane: Two Eighteenth-Century Promptbooks" in *Modern Philology*, vol 79, no 2 (November, 1981), pp. 146-156.

The Ransom Center has an extensive collection of other promptbooks in the Playscripts and Promptbooks Collection, as well as early printed plays in the general library holdings. Playbills from the Drury Lane dating from 1703 to 1899 (bulk 1795-1840) are located in in the London Playbills Collection, and materials relating to the physical Drury Lane building are present in the Theater Buildings Collection. The Ransom Center has Drury Lane actor-manager David Garrick's 1751 travel diary to Paris. David Garrick and Eva Maria Violette Garrick correspondence, prints, and clippings are located in in the Center's Theater Arts Manuscripts collection and the Theater Biography Collection. The Book Collection has two volumes formerly belonging to the library of David Garrick – *Oeuvres de M. de Voltaire* (1775) and Aphra Behn's *Love-letters between a nobleman and his sister* (1708).

Index Terms

People

Baker, Thomas, active 1700-1709.

Beaumont, Francis, 1584-1616.
Chetwood, William Rufus, -1766.
Cibber, Colley, 1671-1757.
Cross, Richard, -1760.
Dryden, John, 1631-1700.
d'Urfey, Thomas, 1653-1723.
Fletcher, John, 1579-1625.
Garrick, David, 1717-1779.
Hopkins, William, -1780.
Lee, Nathaniel, 1653?-1692.
Massinger, Philip, 1583-1640.
Shadwell, Thomas, 1642-1692.
Southerne, Thomas, 1660-1746.
Stede, John, 1687-1768.
Wrighten, James, 1744 or 5-1793.

Organizations

Drury Lane (London, England).
Covent Garden Theatre.

The promptbooks described in this finding aid are also described individually in the University of Texas [Library Catalog](#).

Promptbooks, 1718-1787

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Baker, Thomas. Tunbridge Walks: or the Yeoman of Kent. London: Printed for Bernard Lintott, at the Middle Temple-Gate, Fleet Street, 1703. | Container
1.1 |
| Beaumont, Francis, John Fletcher and Philip Massinger. The Royal Merchant: or, Beggars Bush [no title page]. London: 1706. | Container
1.2 |
| Cibber, Colley and John Dryden. The Comical Lovers: A Comedy. London: Printed for Bernard Lintott at the Cross Keys, between the two Temple-Gates, in Fleet Street, 1707. | Container
1.3 |
| Dryden, John. Don Sebastian, King of Portugal [no title page]. London: 1690. | Container
1.4 |
| Dryden, John and Nathaniel Lee. Oedipus: A Tragedy. London: Printed for Richard Bentley in Russel-Street in Convent-Garden, 1682. | Container
1.5 |
| d'Urfey, Thomas. Love for Money, or, The Boarding School. London: Printed for A. Roper and E. Wilkinson at the Black-Boy in Fleet-Street, 1696. | Container
1.6 |
| Fletcher, John and John Dryden. The Pilgrim: A Comedy. London: Printed for Benjamin Took, near the Middle-Temple Gate, in Fleet-Street, 1700. | Container
1.7 |
| Shadwell, Thomas. The Squire of Alsatia: A Comedy. London: Printed for James Knapton at the Crown in St Pauls Church-yard, 1699. | Container
1.8 |
| Southerne, Thomas. Oroonoko: A Tragedy. London: Printed for H. Playford in the Temple-Change, B. Tooke at the Middle-Temple-Gate, and S. Buckley at the Dolphin against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-Street, 1696. | Container
1.9 |