TODAY’S TALK

- a research narrative / detective story
- a cautionary tale of media obsolescence & of data preservation gone awry
- a partial map of archival, forensic & technological resources for dealing with lost or damaged data & code
THE LONDON STAGE
1660-1800

A Calendar of PLAYS,
ENTERTAINMENTS & AFTERPIECES
Together with CASTS, BOX-RECEIPTS
and CONTEMPORARY COMMENT

Compiled from the
PLAYBILLS, NEWSPAPERS AND THEATRICAL DIARIES
of the period

Part 1: 1660-1700
Edited by
William Van Lennep

with a critical introduction by
Emmett L. Avery and Arthur H. Scouten

Southern Illinois University Press
Carbondale, Illinois, MCMLXV
The London Stage, 1660-1800

- 11 volumes
- 8000+ pages
- 75,000+ entries
- 21,000,000 characters
The Scornful Lady. Loveless – Wilks; Young Loveless – W. Mills; Welford – Bridgwater; Sir Roger – Cibber; Savil – Johnson; Captain – Harper; Lady – Mrs Heron; Martha – Mrs Cibber; Widow – Mrs Butler; Abigail – Mrs Willis. Also The Beggar’s Wedding. Cast not listed.

Dancing. A new Grand Ballad D’Amour, Compos’d by Monsieur Denoyer, Dancing-Master to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, perform’d by Denoyer, Mrs Booth, and others, being the first Time of his Dancing since his Arrival in England.

Comment. By Command of His Royal Highness. [The Prince and Duke present.]
November 1696


COMMENT: Rich’s Company. The date of the first performance is not known, but the fact that it was advertised in the Post Man 22-24 Dec. 1696, suggests that it was probably first given not later than November 1696. A song, “If Cellia you had youth and all,” the music possibly composed by Leveridge, was published in A New Book of Songs by Mr Leveridge (advertised in the London Gazette, No. 3593, 3 June 1697).

Gildon, English Dramatic Poets, p. 176: This Play was our Author’s first; and as it was written in a Month . . . . . so it had the Fate of those unimply births, as hasty a Death . . . . If the Voice of the Town had not been influenc’d by the Ill Representation, it must have met with a less rigorous Censure. A Comparison Between the Two Stages (1702): Damned’d.

ORONOOKO. [By Thomas Southerne.] See November 1695.

COMMENT: Rich’s Company. This performance was attended by Lady Morley. See Horden, Commonwealth and Restoration Stage, p. 377.

THE ANATOMIST; or, The Sham Doctor. [By Edward Ravenscroft.] Edition of 1697: DL. Prologue, Spoken by Mr Betterton, Written by Mr Motteux. Old Mr Gerald—Bright; Young Mr Gerald—Hudson; The Doctor—Underhill; Wife to the Doctor—Mrs Leigh; Mrs Angelica—Mrs Bowman; Beatrice—Mrs Lawson; Martin—T. Harris; Crespus—Bowen; Simon—Trott; Waiting Woman—Mrs Robinson. Prologue to Her Royal Highness by Mr Motteux. Epilogue by Mr Motteux. Also THE LOVES OF MARS AND VENUS. [By Peter Motteux.] Prologue or Induction. Set to Music by Mr Finger: Erato—Mrs Hodgson; Thalia—Mrs Perrin; Terpsichore—Mrs Ayloff; Mars—Bowman; Venus—Reade; Vulcan—Reading; Galatea—Cupid—Jemmy Larchoe; Minerva—Sherburn; Venus—Mrs Brandegilde; Agamemnon—Mrs Hodgson; Euphrosyne—Mrs Ayloff; Hora—Mrs Perrin; Jealousy—Mrs Hudson. Epilogue, Spoken by Mr Bowen.

COMMENT: Betterton’s Company. The date of the first performance is not certain, but the evidence points toward this day. On Thursday 19 Nov. 1696, Robert Jemins reported that the two pieces had been acted four or five days together. If that day saw the fifth performance, the premiere probably occurred on 14 Nov. 1696.

The Single Songs and Dialogues in Mars and Venus, set by John Eccles (Acts 1 and 11) and Godfrey Fincher (Act 111), was published separately in 1697. The pieces for whom a performer is indicated are as follows: Prologue. The first Song Sung by Mrs Hudson, set by Finger: “Come all, with moving songs!” (it is reproduced opposite page 100 in Wyles, Pure Prologues and Epilogues). “Love alone can here alarm thee,” sung by Mrs Ayloff. “Scorn tho’ Beauty knows to tremble,” sung by Mrs Hudson. “To double the sports,” sung by Mrs Ayloff. “To treble the pleasures with regular measures,” sung by Mrs Ayloff. “To meet her, May, the Queen of Love comes here,” set by John Eccles and sung by Mrs Hudson. “See Vulcan, Jealousie, Jealousie appears,” set by Fincher and sung by Mrs Hudson. “Yield, no, no!” sung by Mrs Brandegilde and Bowman.

Gildon, English Dramatic Poets, p. 173: This Play met with extraordinary Success having the Advantage of the excellent Music of Mars and Venus performed with it. Downes, Resuscitatus, pp. 44-45: The Anatomist, or Sham Doctor, had prosperous Success, and remains a living Play to this Day; it was done by Mr Ravenscroft. A Comparison Between the Two Stages (1702), p. 89: I remember the success of that was owing to the Music.
“If, for example, one wished to determine how many times actor X and actress Y performed in the same play together during their careers, it might be necessary to scan a period of fifteen or twenty years (possibly 800 to 1,000 pages) to exhaust all the possibilities of intersection.”

The London Stage Information Bank

- 1970-78
- Lawrence University in Appleton, WI
- Funding:
  - NEH, ACLS, Mellon, etc.
  - about $750,000 in today’s money
- Personnel:
  - advisory committee, including many editors of *The London Stage*
  - on-campus content experts
  - professional typists in Hong Kong
  - computer programmers
  - ~19 student editors
- Deliverables:
  - *Index to the London Stage*
  - Information Bank on tape for future queries
Computer theater

Professor Ben Ross Schneider indexed "The London Stage" on computer. Included in the book is any conceivable information concerning the stage from 1660-1800. This first edition completed, a second is in the plans. Looking at the volumes are, from left, Cathy Steiner, Cathy Boggs and Ruth Steiner. (Post-Crescent photo)
IBM 360 System
Computer History Museum

Image credit:
Niall Kennedy via Flickr
LU to house The London Stage data bank

A computerized information bank, apparently the first of its kind in the field of literary history, is being established at Lawrence through the efforts of Ben Schneider, professor of English.

Within three years, Project Director Schneider plans to have on computer tape the entire 11-volume, 8,000 page, three-million-word reference work entitled The London Stage 1660-1800.

The London Stage is an exhaustive calendar of plays and other stage activities from 1660-1800. Since its publication, scholars have been able to turn to its pages with the confidence that whatever is missing concerning the performance of plays in London during the period covered almost certainly does not exist.

One serious drawback

The magnitude of the reference work, ironically, has one serious drawback. Without mechanical methods, the search for information in its pages is sometimes so extensive that the researcher can't justify the investment of time required.

Once the reference work is put on tape, however, scholars will be able to obtain compilations of data that otherwise would take weeks or months to assemble by turning pages and filling out filing cards.

"Sorting, counting and tabulating in 83 plays from 1660-1730; a feat which would have been extremely difficult if attempted without mechanical help.

Schneider has received substantial financial support for the London Stage Data Bank project from several foundations, but the cost of the total project is still to be met. The largest anticipated expense, he said, will be the cost of transferring data from the printed page to magnetic tape. Estimating the cost of a number of available methods is a major task of the pilot project.

"In recent years, literary journals have published an increasing number of articles based on information gathered from The London Stage," he said.

Once established, Schneider is certain the information bank will be used.

He estimates that if all the scholars who used The London Stage for articles in 1969 had access to an information bank such as he is developing, there would have been about three inquiries per week.

"I'm sure that researchers in history, economics, and sociology would also find the information bank useful. It could, for example, answer questions about political trends, class mobility, availability of leisure time, and many other areas of interest as revealed in the tastes of theatre-goers of the period."

editor review project

THE CONTENTS OF THOSE 11 VOLUMES of The London Stage 1660-1800, drawing the attention of John Church, associate director of the Institute of Paper Chemistry's computer center, Will Daland computer programmer-analyst, and Ben Schneider, professor of English, will eventually be transferred to computer tape. Project Director Schneider is currently working on the pilot phase of the...
“At the point where a good computer printout of the repertoires of all the actors who played Shylock might reveal a great deal about the staging of *The Merchant of Venice*, it would never occur to a writer on that subject (or to his reader) that the question deserved further research in the form of a complete list of all the roles of all the actors of Shylock. The kind of thing you can do now by computer is not the kind of thing that anyone ever did, or felt the need to do.”

“For some reason, almost everyone would rather write software from scratch than get it at a fraction of the cost ready-made, thoroughly tested and debugged...It does not seem to occur to scholars embarked for the first time on computer projects that what they want to do has ever been done before.”

“Our system cannot become obsolete from advances in hardware, because our programs are written in BASIC and PL/1, assiduously supported by Digital Equipment Corporation and IBM, the two leading computer manufacturers: there is no chance that either will build computers that are incompatible with these programming languages, or that Lawrence would be so foolhardy as to buy computers incompatible with ten years programming work.”
The London stage, 1660-1800; a calendar of plays, entertainments & afterpieces, together with casts, box-receipts and contemporary comment. Compiled from the playbills, newspapers and theatrical diaries of the period.

Language(s): English
Edition: [1st ed.]
London (England) > History.
Physical Description: 5 v. in 11. illus., ports., facsims. 25 cm.
Locate a Print Version: Find in a library

Viewability:
- Limited (search only) pt.4 v.1 (original from Cornell University)
- Limited (search only) pt.3 v.2 (original from Cornell University)
- Full view pt.1 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.2 v.1 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.2 v.2 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.3 v.1 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.3 v.2 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.4 v.1 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.4 v.2 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.5 v.1 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.5 v.2 (original from University of Michigan)
- Full view pt.5 v.3 (original from University of Michigan)
*pEd The Conscious Lovers. Young Devil-Harvey: Humphrey-Simon; Myrtle-Blake; Isabella-Martha Yates; Cameron-Shutter; Sealand-Berry; Tom-Woodward; Daniel-Vaughan; Sir Indiana-Mrs Pickard; Mrs Sealand-Mrs Cross. *pEd The Devil to Pay. Sir John Lowther-Beard; Jackson-Berry; Lady Lowther-Mrs Harvey; Neil-Mrs Clive. *pEd II: *pEd The Devil to Pay. Sir John Lowther-Beard; Jackson-Berry; Lady Lowther-Mrs Harvey; Neil-Mrs Clive. *pEd VII: "To open on Saturday, the seventh, what will be the last of the season, a new production, and the first day of September, H.S. occasioned by the publication of the Stoke, and continued the two following days, to uit the 19th and 20th and no longer. And whereas the said Eliza it is thought fit and needful to give this Publick notice that if any persons dare to keep open any Boot, Shoe, or other Building to give further any Stale the said 18th, 19th, and 20th days of September NS, with intent to prolong said Fair, and put to sale there goods and wares, or shall act and exhibit any Doll or Show, DWelling house any Droll, or other Entertainment of any Droll, or shall play at, or encourage any sort of gaming contrary to the Laws and Statutes of his realm and punished according to the Law (General Advertiser: 16, 18, 19, 20, Sept. 1791). *pEd The Beggar's Opera. Macneath-Lover; Peacham-Hawkins; Lockyer-Dunstall; Mrs B. [To conclude with a *Country Dances—the characters of the Opera. *pEd The Mock Doctor. Mock Doctor-Dunstall; Doctor-Mrs Pickard. *pEd VII: *pEd of Places for Boxes to be taken First Gallery 2a. Upper Gallery 1b. To begin exactly at 6 o'clock. [Customary notices repeated throughout the season.] Mrs W. Giffard—& Mrs Bland—From the Theatrical performances at Covent Garden. (General Advertiser: 14 Sept.). *pEd Art The Rake Reformed; or, The Happy Lovers. [A new production with several curious Scarcely perceptible he plays a violin, shea's a trumpet, shea's a drum and balances a wheel on the wire likewise puts a straw on his left foot, tomes it the face to his own hand, and shea's it in balance the whole time; shea's on his head and quits it with his hands, the wire in full swing. *pEd VII: *pEd Southwark. To begin during the time of the fair each day at 12 noon. Boxes 2a. 6d. Pit 1a. 6d. Gallery 1a. Upper Gallery 6d. *pEd VII: *pEd The Merchant of Venice. Drastic Barbauld-Harvey; Tubal-Taylor; Sciall-Jackson; Ballina-Simon; Lorenzo-Beard (with *Sonata in Character: Duke-Hawkins; Galileo-Shears; Morville-Burton; Old Cobbe-Mrs Clive. *pEd VII: *pEd The Anatomist. Old Gerald-Sharp; Beauregard-Mrs Bennett; M Le Medicin-Blake: Crispin-Yates. *pEd VII: *pEd A Punch Dance—Morris; IV: A Comic (1890). *pEd VII: *pEd The Rake Reformed. As 18 Sept., but slack wire aree batt—Steward. *pEd VII: *pEd Art The Great Titled Booth; Bowling Green; *pEd VII: *pEd Southwark. An excellent Irishman. Leaue-Barrington—Careless-Ryan; Blunt-Spark; Day-Colins; Abel—Cushing; Lt Story-Anderson; Bookseller-Dunstall; Mrs Chat-Mrs Cambridge—Obadiah-Archer; Mr Barrington. *pEd VII: *pEd The Conspiracies. Roswell-Lover; Argus-Williams; Hearty—Brady; Robin-Dunstall; Betsy-Miss Fin; Archibald-Mrs Chambers. *pEd VII: *pEd The Rake Reformed. *pEd VII: *pEd Bowling Green; *pEd VII: *pEd Southwark. *pEd VII: *pEd The Revenge. Zanga-Mossop; Alvarez-Burton; Don Carlos—Rose; Don Manuel—Mossop; Don Alonso—Mayor; Isabella—Mrs Mills; Leonora-Miss Gayles—Blake; Melissa-Mrs Bennett; Kitty—Miss Minor. *pEd VII: *pEd Receipts: $100 (1890). *pEd VII: *pEd The Rake Reformed. 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London Stage Information Bank

File(s):
- Code Scans PDF (99.95MB PDF)
- Code Scans ZIP (371.8MB ZIP file)
- Concatenated (18.2MB Text file)
- Documentation Scans PDF (205.8MB PDF)
- Documentation Scans ZIP (194.8MB ZIP file)
- LSP_data.zip (5.692MB ZIP file)
- README file (12.55KB Text file)

Author(s)  Burkert, Mattie
Date  Apr 14, 2015
Abstract  The data files were retrieved from the Lawrance University Archives in Appleton, WI on September 15, 2014 by Mattie Burkert, with the assistance of University Archivist Erin Dix. The code pages were scanned and emailed to Mattie by programmer Will Daland over the course of several months in 2015. The files contained here represent a database constructed at Lawrence University between 1970 and 1978, under the direction of Professor Ben Ross Schneider, Jr. That database was titled The London Stage Information Bank. It was in turn based on an 11-volume, 8000-page reference series published by Southern Illinois University Press between 1960 and 1968, which was called The London Stage, 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces, Together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment. Compiled From the Playbills, Newspapers and Theatrical Diaries of the Period. In 1970, Schneider was approached to create a computer index of the entire reference series. After 9 years, he produced The Index to The London Stage (SIU Press, 1979). In the process, he and an extensive team of typists, editors, and programmers produced the Information Bank, a version of which is represented in these files.

Permanent link  http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/71768
Export  Export to RefWorks
Subject: But having happily obtain'd a Copy of the

cegirdle; Cassandra-Mrs Barry; Epilogue-Mrs Bracegirdle; Cassand.
Disk Image: /media/1659NPK/1659NPK_vol0/1659.NPK

Image Info

>>> No image information found

Messages

>>> Generating DFXML file:
/home/bcadmin/.bcfa/1659.NPK_dfxml.xml

>>> Success!!! Fiwalk created DFXML file

>>> Generating directory tree ...

>>> Done
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editor's choice project

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/*
//SCANCOMP JOB 99999211, WCD, MSGLEVEL=(1,1)
//C EXEC LSPUGEN, DSSP=OLD, SSP=20, MEM=ICISCAN
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SERR(0 .. 1) CHAR(3) STATIC INIT(' E=', ' M=1'),
/* FOR ERR/NOERR SECTION DUMP HEADER MSG SWITCH. */
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CAPCHK CHAR(80), /* FOR COUNTING UPPERCASE CHARs. */
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NCAPS STATIC FIXED BIN(31,0) INIT(0), /* STATISTICS - */
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/* TYPIST ENTRIES, AND INCLUDING EXTRA BLANKS. EXCEPT */
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M INIT(0) STATIC /* STRUCTURED OUTPUT RECORD COUNTER */
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INDXS STATIC INIT(0) FIXED BIN(31,0), /* STATISTICS - */
Questions?
Suggestions?
Thank you.