

An unpublished vaudeville with street vendors on Boulevard du Temple near Madame Tussaud's wax museum

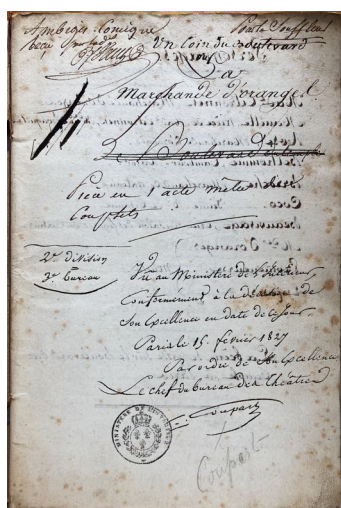
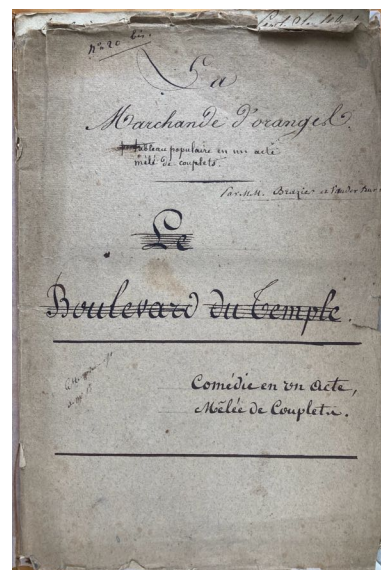
BRAZIER (Nicolas) & [Émile] Van der BURCH. *La Marchande d'oranges. Tableau populaire en un acte mêlé de couplets par MM. Brazier et Van der Burch.*
[Paris, 1827].

Manuscript, small folio. (29 x 19.5 cm). [2], 60 pp., sewn. Original paper wrapper with manuscript title. Wrapper worn with splits at the edges, some spotting to the text, but a very well-preserved manuscript written in a large and legible hand.

Manuscript of a vaudeville, the copy for the prompter [souffleur] at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique.

The cover (*at right*) bears a crossed-out title “Le Boulevard du Temple”, which also appears on the title page (*below*), crossed out, and replaced by: “Un coin du Boulevard ou La Marchande d’oranges / Pièce en un acte mêlé de couplets”, with a manuscript note: “Pour le souffleur.”

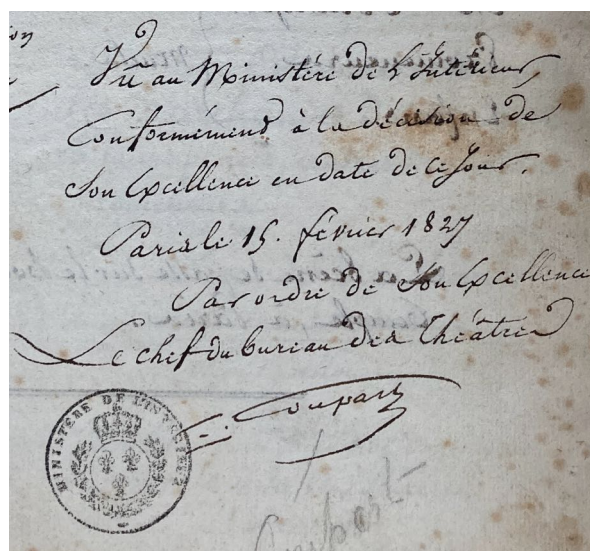
\$ 4,900



The title page also bears the censor’s authorization dated February 15, 1827, signed by Antoine-Marie Coupard, head of the Bureau des Théâtres, with the dry stamp “Ministère de l’Intérieur”.* It seems that this play was not printed, and perhaps not performed, perhaps due to the fire that destroyed the theatre that summer. (During the night of July 13-14, 1827, the Ambigu-Comique burnt to the ground. It was quickly decided to rebuild a new auditorium, which was built on boulevard Saint-Martin. Inaugurated on June 7, 1828, the new Ambigu-Comique thrived throughout the 19th century the dramatic tradition of pantomimes and bloody melodramas that earned the Boulevard du Temple the nickname “Boulevard du Crime”).

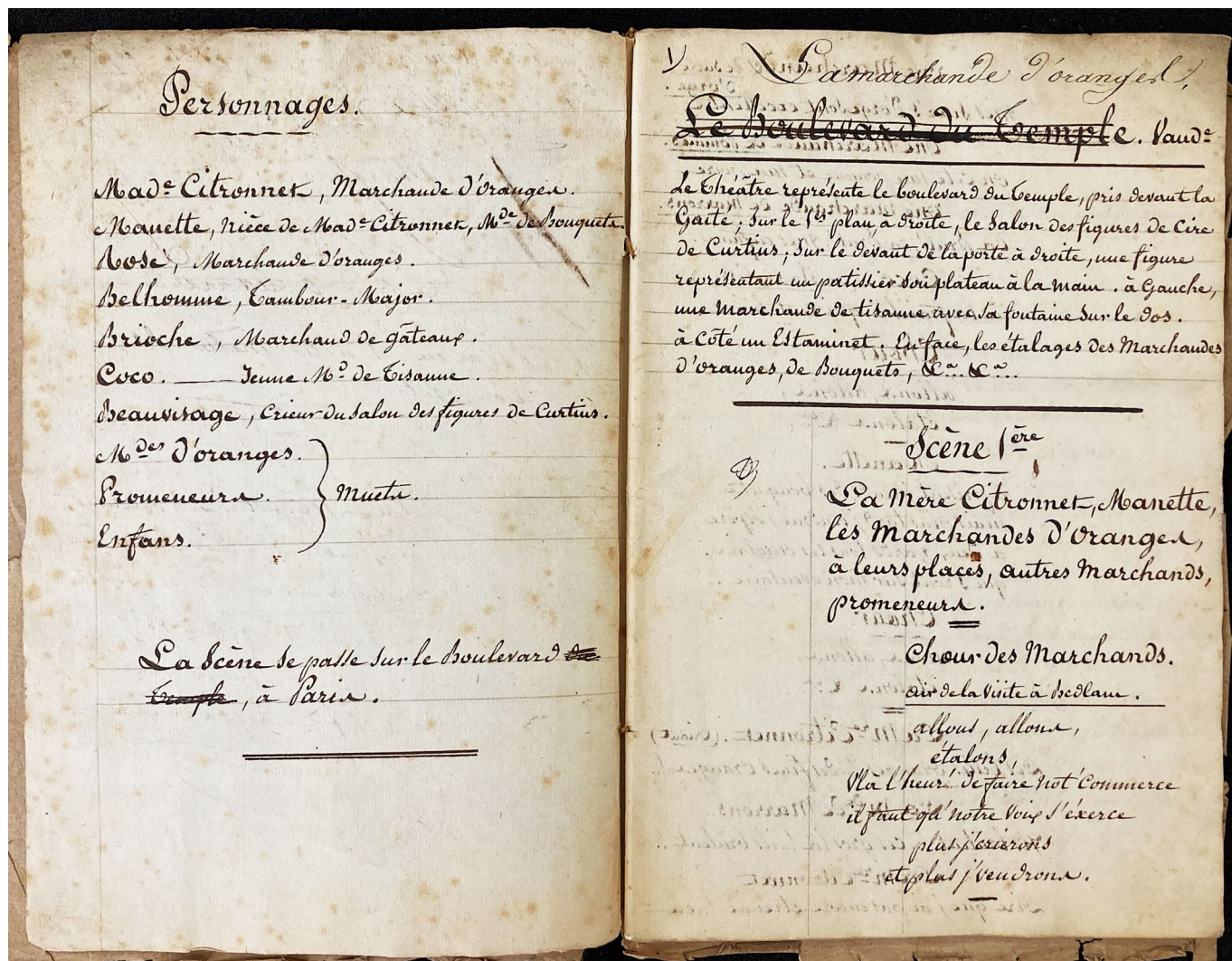
*“Coupard had been chef du Bureau des Théâtres since 1799, and would take over as régisseur at the Palais-Royal in 1831, where he would remain until 1864. While a censor he also produced plays and collaborated on the *Almanach des Spectacles*” (Everist, 2002).

Right: Coupard’s note and signature appear above the official stamp of approval for performance.

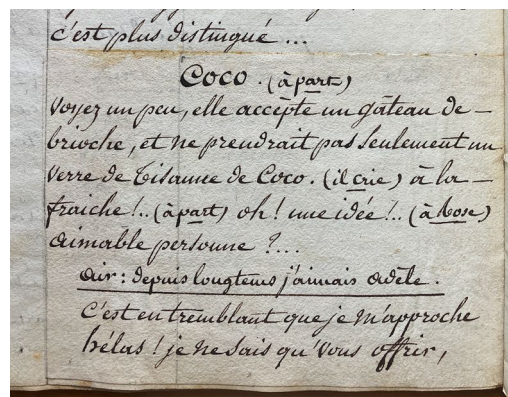


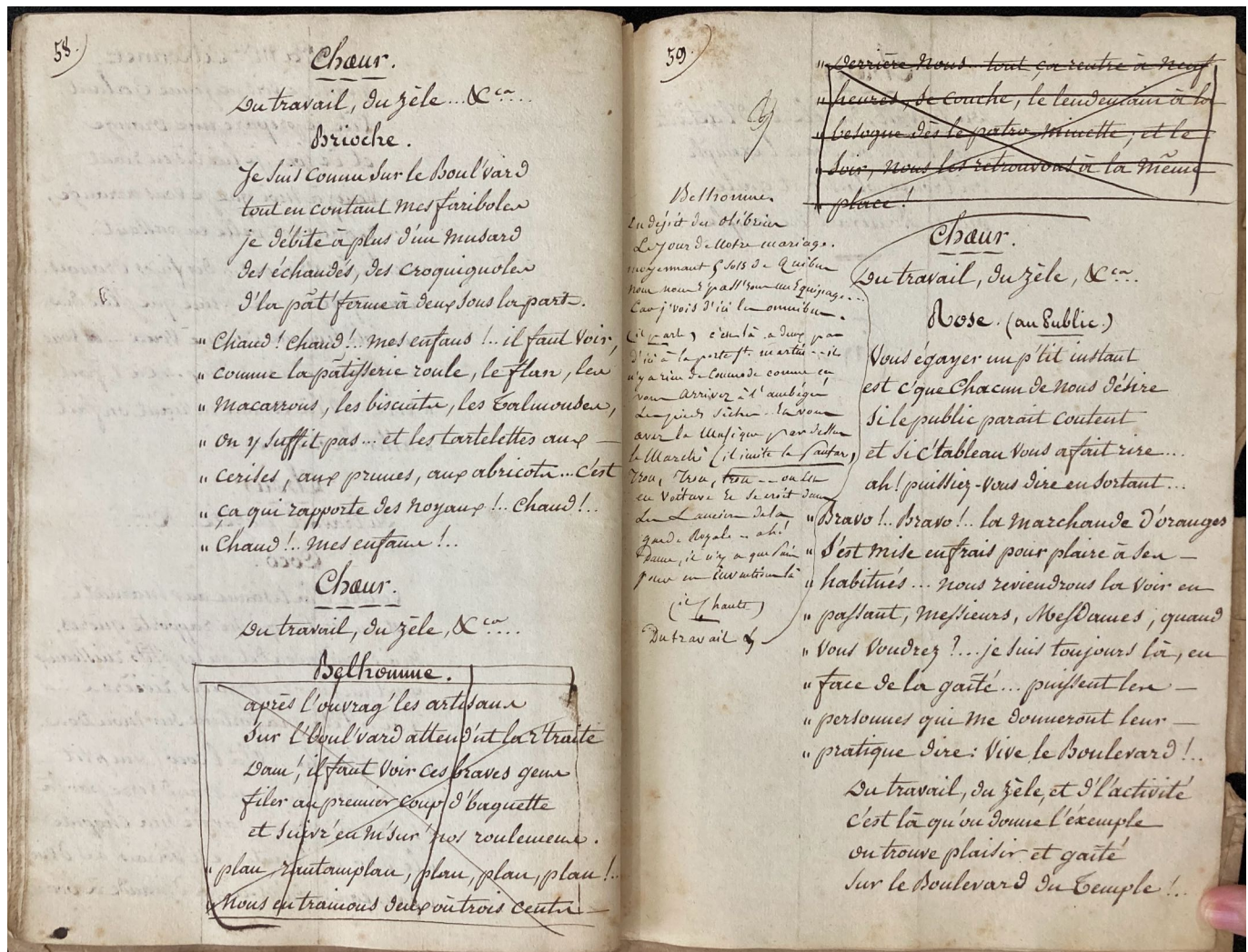
The action of this musical vaudeville takes place on Boulevard du Temple, between the Wax Museum, a bar and the Théâtre de l'Ambigu, to the sound of Parisian street hawkers, recounting in song the amorous misadventures of these itinerant merchants.

The figure of the orange seller (or merchant) has appeared over time in the theatre, often to represent poverty, or a figure of aspirations, whether historical or social figures, such as Nell Gwyn, an orange seller during the Restoration, who became a celebrated actress and then mistress of the king Charles II, illustrating the link between the theatre and the street at the time. In early 19th century Paris, the street criers were part of the fabric of the boulevards and quotidian public life.



The list of characters includes orange and bouquet sellers, cake and herbal tea vendors, a drum major named Belhomme, a man named Beauvisage, "crieur du salon des figures de Curtius" [the wax museum then owned by Marie Tussaud, a disciple of Dr. Curtius who had bequeathed his collection to her] and a few other characters, flaneurs and children. The text shows a few inserted lies and neat corrections, two pasted on emendations (one *at right*) and one inserted speech by another hand (shown below).





Nicolas Brazier (1783-1838), poet, and popular song-writer (chansonnier), composed some two hundred vaudevilles and comedies! He also wrote *Chroniques des petits théâtres de Paris*, in which he describes, among many other theaters, the Ambigu-Comique, founded in 1769, and at that time located on Boulevard du Temple.

The playwright Émile Vanderburch (1794-1862), like Brazier, was one of the many authors who animated the Parisian stage from the Restoration to the end of the July Monarchy (i.e., 1815-1830). He wrote or co-wrote (with Bayard, Brazier, Dartois, Paul de Kock and Leuven) more than a hundred plays, vaudevilles, comedies, historical dramas or fairy tales, most of which were performed at the Palais-Royal, the Théâtre du Vaudeville or the Gaité-lyrique. Three of them were performed at the Théâtre-Français.

Brazier and Vanderburch collaborated on many plays of a similar genre, such as: *Le marchand de la rue Saint-Denis* (1830), *Le Baron d'Hildburghausen, ou, Le bal diplomatique* (1831), and *Le fils adoptif: vaudeville en un acte* (1834).