

Gerald W. Cloud
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Theater sammelband: 10 titles on the French stage including Shakespeare

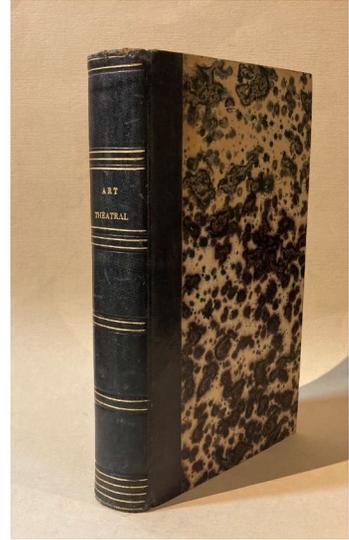
[THEATER CRITICISIM]. Paris, 1776-1848, 10 titles bound together.

Quarter goat over marbled paper boards, smooth back with gilt rules and title.

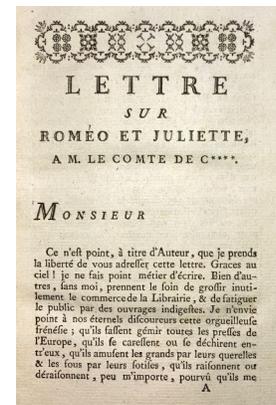
\$4,500

Valuable collection of texts, most of which are rare, on the French dramatic arts, especially the lives and roles of actors in the late 18th and early 19th century, with particular attention on Molière and a critique of Shakespeare productions on the Paris stage.

A lovely and well-preserved volume.



I. *LETTRE SUR ROMEO ET JULIETTE, à M. le comte de C*****. [S.l. n.d., n.d., but c. 1792]. 14 pp. Only a handful of copies in OCLC. – The letter has been attributed to Jean-François Ducis (1733-1816), but the content of the piece—which critiques production aspects of several of Shakespeare’s works—suggests that it is by one of his contemporaries commenting instead on Ducis’s versions of Shakespeare—Ducis was one of the earliest French promoters of Shakespeare and produced successful adaptations of *Hamlet*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Le Roi Lear*, and *Macbeth*, c. 1769-1792.



II. [LE FUEL DE MÉRICOURT (Jean-Pierre)]. *JOURNAL DE THEATRE, OU LE NOUVEAU SPECTATEUR, SERVANT DE REPERTOIRE UNIVERSEL DES SPECTACLES; par une Société d'amateurs et de gens de lettres*. S.l.n.d. [Paris, 1776], 64 pp., the title page and the table are lacking. Issue one of this critical periodical, edited and written entirely by Jean-Pierre Le Fuel de Méricourt (1748-1778), who did not keep control of the journal for very long: irritated by Le Fuel’s disrespect, the French actors succeeded in having Coqueley de Chaussepierre appointed as their counsel; Le Fuel’s privilege was then withdrawn and given to Le Vacher de Charnois.

III. *LETTRE DE Mlle SAINVAL CADETTE, A LA COMEDIE FRANÇOISE, DU 14 JANVIER 1784. - LETTRE DE MME VESTRIS A LA COMEDIE-FRANÇOISE, EN REPONSE A CELLE DE Mlle SAINVAL*. S.l.n.d. [Paris, 1784], 24 pp. A rare piece known in less than 6 copies (CCF: BnF, INHA, Lyon). Documentation of an argument between actresses revealing the circumstances of the 18th century stage: in the first letter, Mlle Sainval, the understudy of Madame Vestris, complained of never having been given enough advanced notice to prepare; in the second letter, Françoise-Marie-Rosette Gourgaud (Mme Vestris), answers Mlle Sainval point by point— Mme Vestris, the wife of the Italian ballet dancer Angiolo Vestris (1743-1804), joined the Comédie-Française in 1768, she retired in 1803.

IV. DURAND DE MAILLANE (Pierre-Toussaint). *RAPPORT SUR L'AFFAIRE DU SIEUR TALMA, comédien français*. Paris, Imprimerie nationale, s.d. [1791], 7 pp. This pamphlet treats the refusal by the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice to publish the marriage banns of the actor François-Joseph Talma with dancer and *salonnière* Julie Careau (who was eight and a half months pregnant).

V. [RIVAROL (Antoine de)]. *ÉPITRE DE VOLTAIRE A MADEMOISELLE RAUCOUR, actrice du Théâtre français*. Paris, 1790, 12 pp. Only 6 copies in OCLC. One of the apocryphal pieces attributed to Voltaire, but more likely the work of Rivarol or perhaps Champcenetz. The addressee of the epistle was Françoise Saucerotte (1756-1815), the celebrated tragedienne known as Mlle Raucourt. Bengesco, 2343.

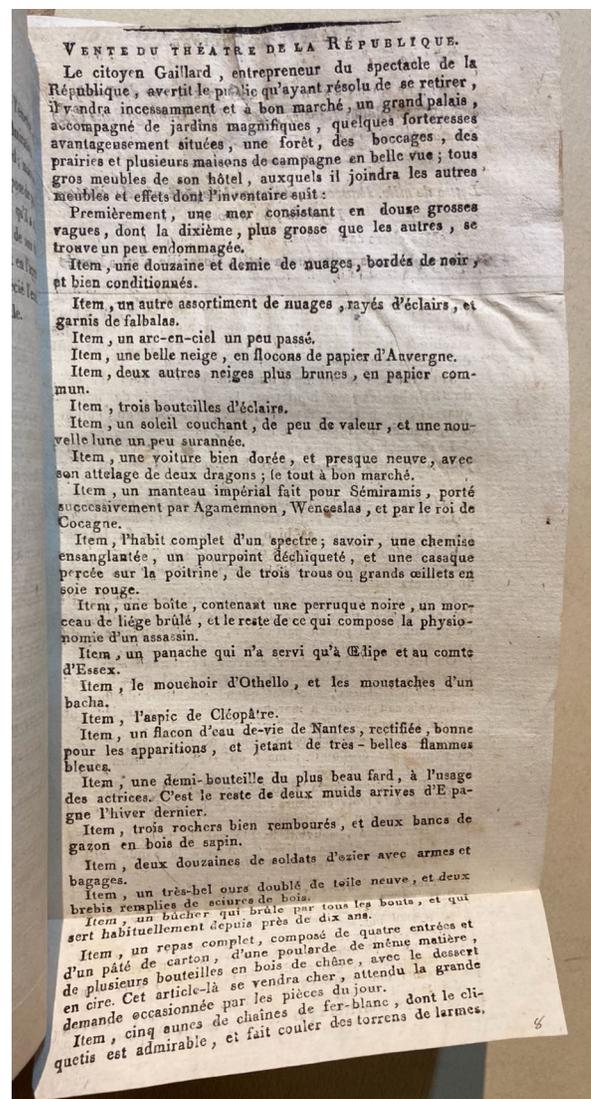
VI. DUPRÉ (Augustin). *MONUMENT DE MOLIÈRE*, poème. Saint-Calais, Peltier-Voisin, 1843. [1-4] 5-28 pp. OCLC & CCF (Yale, Harvard, BnF & Vendôme). Augustin Dupré (1802-1862) was a professor at the Collège de Vendôme, 1824-1833.

VII. LEROY (Aimé). *MOLIÈRE ET LES DEUX THALIES. Dialogue en vers*. Paris, Pillet, Delaunay, 1816, 16 pp. An amusing satire on the contemporary taste for stiff and stuffy drama. Aimé Leroy (1793-1848) was a lawyer at the Douai bar, then curator of the Valenciennes library.

The earliest appearance?

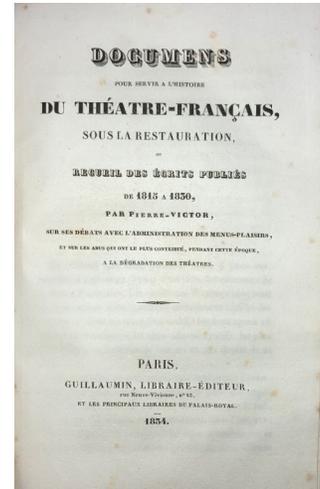
VIII. *VENTE DU THEATRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE*. S.l.n.d., Single page. Satirical handbill from a periodical, comprising two pieces of paper pasted together, featuring the fictitious sale of forests, castles, and other theatrical props, each item more clever than the previous, such as, one rainbow, a bit worn; Othello's handkerchief; Cleopatra's asp; "The complete wardrobe of a ghost; namely, a bloody shirt, a ragged doublet and a gown pierced through the chest with three holes or large red silk eyelets [*L'habit complet d'un spectre ; savoir, une chemise ensanglantée, un pourpoint déchiqueté et une casaque percée sur la poitrine, de trois trous ou grands oeillets en soie rouge*]").

Mentioned here is Citoyen [Félix] Gaillard who, with Pierre-Paul Gobet, called Dorfeuille, ran a competing theatre to the Comédie-Française starting in 1790, in the Palais-Royal, Variétés-Amusantes, which was shortly after named the Theatre de la République. The list of items for sale appeared in print variously at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. One



source indicates that the notice originally appeared in 1824 as a broadside posted in the streets of Paris (*Anecdotes, Historiques et Littéraires*, Kastner, 1878, p. 94), but the text also appears in *Porte-feuille français pour l'an IX (1801) ou Choix d'Epigrammes*, p. 61. The earliest appearance we can locate is in the journal *La Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique*, Volume 12, 1797, p. 162-63, **but none of these versions mention Gaillard, who predates all of them, making this example likely earlier.**

IX. [LEREBOURS (Pierre-Simon)]. *DOCUMENTS POUR SERVIR A L'HISTOIRE DU THEATRE-FRANÇAIS, SOUS LA RESTAURATION, ou Recueil des écrits publiés de 1815 à 1830, par Pierre-Victor, sur ses débats avec l'administration des menus-plaisirs, et sur les abus qui ont le plus contribué, pendant cette époque, à la dégradation des théâtres.* Paris, Guillaumin, 1834. [4], 173 pp. Unique edition of this uncommon work which treats the annoyances and difficulties of the theater world under the Restoration; it begins with the scandal of the funeral of Mlle Raucour, in 1815.



A Study on the influence of Manners on comedy and Comedy on manners:

X. PERLET (Adrien). *DE L'INFLUENCE DES MOEURS SUR LA COMEDIE. Discours suivi de deux études sur les rôles du Misanthrope et du Tartufe.* Paris, Dauvin et Fontaine, 1848, 2 leaves, 221 pp., one leaf with the table. Comic actor, Adrien Perlet (1795-1850) performed at the Comédie Française, the Théâtre du Gymnase, as well as in Province and London. According to the author's preface, the work "Investigates the influence that the public spirit and social customs in France have developed in various phases of comedy since Molière. [The work]... makes a literary and philosophical examination of the comic works which have appeared on [the French] stage with the most of success; it is an appreciation of the influence that manners have exercised at various times on comedy, and, incidentally, comedy on manners."