

Abstracts

'Sharing knowledge before Powerpoint ...'

William Hogarth, *Scholars at a Lecture*. (Henry Fisher, Registrar of Oxford University). Engraving and etching, dated 1736, first state published 1737. © **British Museum**, 1868,0822.1544

Honest Jo. Priest's School in Chelsea

Olive Baldwin & Thelma Wilson
Essex

In 1712 a letter was sent to the *Spectator* puffing the theatre benefit on 12 May of the actress Lucretia Bradshaw, but this letter had to wait for publication until 1725, when it was included in *Original and genuine letters sent to the Tatler and Spectator ... none of which have been before printed*. The puff comes towards the end of a detailed account of a wedding celebration to which the bride, 'a pretty blooming beauty, who having been bred at honest Jo. Priest's school in Chelsea, had invited a fine sample of her school fellows'. The party was a merry one with much dancing. The ladies, we are told, had not met together since they had performed in an opera at the school. They now praised the goodness of their mistress and were concerned about the recent problems of their poor master. This paper will look at what we know of Priest's career as a theatre dancer, at the school he ran with his wife Franck, and at the interesting questions raised by the 1712 letter.

Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson have written extensively on seventeenth and eighteenth-century singers and theatre performers for musical periodicals and for *New Grove* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Hunt the Slipper

**Jane Avril: Dancing at Contrasting Institutions of Madness and Hysteria in
Nineteenth-Century Paris**

Cara Gargano
Long Island University

The nineteenth century in France was a period of conflicting institutions. The breakdown of the monarchy as organizing institution led to a multiplicity of institutions, addressing the madness and social instability that continued to grip the country. The years between the 1789 Revolution and the Paris Commune uprising in 1871 were especially turbulent, manifesting either as a rigid conservatism, or conversely, as a reckless, almost nihilistic abandon.

In this paper I explore two institutions representing this opposition: the Salpêtrière hospital, a place of detention and the Moulin Rouge, a site of excessive freedom. Both locations were identified with madness, particularly as it related to women, and both were central to the performance of Paris' evolving identity in the latter quarter of the century. One critic wrote: "Of all the masked nar.10479.4either

The 26th Oxford Dance Symposium
'Dance and Institutions'
New College, Oxford, 16 & 17 April 2024

A Tale of Two Theaters in 1850s Philadelphia

Lynn Matluck Brooks
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In the 1850s, issues not only of race but also of class in the United States were hardening into the explosive confrontation that became the Civil War (1861– 1865). Not surprisingly, theatre in the nation reflected the tensions and hostilities of the social-political spheres. In this decade leading up to the outbreak of war, Philadelphia saw establishment of two theatres that appeared to cement into dedicated buildings the class differences in entertainment tastes reflecting hot-button political perspectives. Blackface minstrelsy, the working-man's entertainment, found its first dedicated Philadelphia home in Sanford's Opera House, opened in 1853, while upper-crust gentlemen steered their ambitious vision of an American Academy of Music to realization in 1857. The stages in both of these houses hosted much dancing: minstrel jiggling and ballet mockeries were featured at Sanford's, while the Academy brought European ballet troupes to its elegant stage. This essay reveals these two Philadelphia institutions as both contrasting and overlapping sites of antebellum urban entertainment reflecting the social-political stresses of the decade in which they were founded.

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The Grecian Saloon (1851-1867): Assembling Classical Myths and Popular Audiences with Clarissa Ann (Bennett) Conquest

Laura Monrós-Gaspar
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Bratton (1996) revises the term *femme couverte* figuratively when she uncovers the theatrical life of the actress and playwright Jane Scott, whose work for the illegitimate theatre had disappeared from the hegemonic discourse on nineteenth-century British theatre, occluded by the theatrical history of the noted men in her family. Forgotten histories of women dancers have been also commonly effaced from the history of dance when dance sagas dominated by male dancers and theatrical marriages *covered* their achievements. This is the case of Clarissa Ann (Bennett) Conquest and her work as an actress, dancer, *ballet mistress* and head of the dancing school at the Grecian Saloon between 1851 and 1867. In this paper, I aim to argue how the Grecian Saloon, as an institution, allowed Clarissa Bennett to participate in an 'enlarged public sphere', as defined by Orr (1995), that furthered women's agency in the transmission of the classics throughout the nineteenth century. For this purpose, I *uncover* Clarissa Ann (Bennett) Conquest's significant impact for the success of the Grecian from the viewpoint of classical reception studies by mapping the network of classically inspired ballets that she gathered for its popular audiences.

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Dancing on the Stage in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century

Alena Shmakova

The City of Edinburgh Council, Adult Education Programme

The history of theatre in Scotland has attracted scholarly attention before. However, dance, dancers, and their repertoire have been largely overlooked. The professional performing stage developed in Edinburgh significantly later than in London or Dublin due to limited patronage opportunities after 1603 and 1707 and strong resistance from the established church and town officials. The first purpose-built theatre was constructed in the Scottish capital in 1747, whereas the licensed Theatre Royal opened in 1769. The first references to the resident, rather than travelling, troop giving regular performances in Edinburgh are dated from the 1730s, with mentions of dance entries during the plays appearing around the same time, shortly after advertisements of specially invited dancers were published in newspapers.

This work will look at dancers recruited and performed in Edinburgh theatres and their repertoires in Scotland and outside based on newspaper reports, playbills, and archival materials to understand the role of dance and determine any specifics of the Edinburgh dance stage in the eighteenth century.

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