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European Drama and Performance Studies

Le document iconographique
dans son contexte : le hors-champ
des images du spectacle

Sous la direction d'Alice Folco
et Jean-Yves Vialleton



Images of *fin de siècle* mediated listening in Paris Iconography of the theatrophone and its articulation between cultures of theatre and technology

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[Le document iconographique dans son contexte : le hors-champ des images du spectacle](#)
- **Author:** Van Drie (Melissa)
- **Abstract:** This article addresses the varied iconographic sources of the theatrophone –a late nineteenth-century telephone media that offered live broadcasts of theatre and opera performances to listeners in both private and public Parisian spaces, from 1881 to 1936. This history has long been overlooked by Theatre Studies, and the images are important for analysing the intermedial relations constructed between cultures of theatre and early sound reproduction technologies at the time. The article centres on an early drawing of the listening device in which individuals listen through earphones to transduced sounds of a distant performance. Certain documents relating to the theatrophone do exist in theatre archives. The article argues, however, that it is only in placing these documents in a broader context, in a dialogue with numerous images found in non-theatrical sources and archives, that the full impact of the technology on theatrical creation and modes reception become apparent. Additionally, the article also indicates how the theoretical and methodological tools employed in histories of theatre are valuable for reconstructing the cultural history of this sound media.
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