



Images of *fin de siècle* mediatised listening in Paris

Iconography of the theatrophone and its articulation between cultures of theatre and technology

Publication type: Journal article

Journal: [European Drama and Performance Studies](#)

[2014 - 2, n° 3. Le document iconographique dans son contexte : le hors-champ des images du spectacle](#)

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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.

Pages: 171 to 190

Journal: [European Drama and Performance Studies](#)

CLIL theme: 4028 -- SCIENCES HUMAINES ET SOCIALES, LETTRES -- Lettres et Sciences du langage --
Lettres -- Etudes de littérature comparée

EAN: 9782812432705

ISBN: 978-2-8124-3270-5

ISSN: 2045-8541

DOI: 10.15122/isbn.978-2-8124-3270-5.p.0171

Publisher: Classiques Garnier

Online publication: 10-23-2014

Periodicity: Biannual

Language: English

[Display online](#)