

SELLING SHOCK AT THE SANS PAREIL: THE EARLY SHOWS OF JANE AND JOHN SCOTT

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Abstract: In November 1806, the Sans Pareil theatre, later renamed the Adelphi, staged its first evening of entertainment. This consisted of a performance by Jane Scott of her own songs, followed by a series of optical entertainments devised by her father John, proprietor and manager of the theatre. These included a shadow puppet display, a firework display, and a magic lantern show in the manner of a phantasmagoria. This article examines this magic lantern show in the context of John Scott's career – preexisting and concurrent with his management of the Sans Pareil – as a shopkeeper. The products sold in his establishment at 417 Strand had included magic lanterns since the beginning of the previous decade. I show how Scott's theatre, constructed next to his shop, was an extension of his commercial endeavours, his use of magic lanterns in the theatre providing both an advertisement for these products and an alternative, economically productive use of them. This commercial exploitation of stage machinery in the theatre's earliest shows continued to govern the plays which the Sans Pareil would go on to stage, such as the many works written by Jane Scott for the theatre, including her most successful melodrama, *The Old Oak Chest*, first performed in 1816.

Keywords: advertising, magic lantern, phantasmagoria, theatre management, minor theatres, melodrama.

In the *Oxberry's Dramatic Biography* entry on George Davidge, actor and early manager of London's Coburg Theatre, the author justifies the so-called "horrors displayed at minor theatres" by suggesting that "a theatrical manager is but a kind of shopkeeper, and will naturally deal in those goods for which he finds the readiest demand."¹ This comparison finds literal illustration in the person of John

¹ "Memoir of Mr. Davidge," *Oxberry's Dramatic Biography, and Histrionic Anecdotes* 6 (January 1826): 116.

Scott, the manager for whom Davidge first acted upon his arrival in London from the provincial theatres.² Scott was a shopkeeper prior to and during his theatrical career, selling artist's materials and magic lanterns, alongside other toys, at his business in the Strand, while also, from 1806, managing the Sans Pareil Theatre, where his daughter Jane was the star performer and main artistic force. The productions staged at this theatre were largely typical of the romantic spectacles which were a popular feature of the early nineteenth-century stage. As Christopher Baugh suggests, the scale and complexity of these productions were made possible by the technological developments which took place in the playhouses of the period, enabling the theatre to engage with the "explosion of visual interests" taking place across society.³ John Scott's career as both theatre manager and shopkeeper demonstrates the suitability of the reproducible spectacles offered by these technologies to the aims of the business-minded playhouse managers of the period.

Scott had, for decades prior to the establishment of his theatre, worked as a colourman, manufacturing and selling inks, dyes and watercolours both for artists and for domestic use. Scott advertised his wares extensively from 1782, initially operating from 419 Strand before relocating to n° 417 in 1788; almost from the beginning of his career, he offered his products internationally, his watercolours being sold in Paris as early as 1783.⁴ The popularity of these wares is suggested by the existence of counterfeit imitations, which were often referred to in Scott's advertisements. A listing advertising Scott's "Liquid True Blue" tells buyers that "there are numerous Counterfeits" and that "the only Genuine Liquid True Blue" is sold in sealed stone bottles marked with John Scott's name and address.⁵ This blue dye was the product for which Scott was best known and was intended to be used for applications from dyeing stockings and linen to writing and drawing.

² "Memoir of Mr. Davidge," 110.

³ Christopher Baugh, "Scenography and Technology," in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730-1830*, ed. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 55. For more on spectacle and theatrical technology, see Shearer West, "Manufacturing Spectacle," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre*, ed. Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 286-303.

⁴ Jacob Simon, "British Artists' Suppliers, 1650-1950," National Portrait Gallery, last updated August 2019, accessed 25 June 2025, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/research/programmes/directory-of-suppliers/>.

⁵ "J. Scott's Original Liquid True Blue," Soap 12 (33), John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, accessed 10 June 2025, <https://www.proquest.com/pamphlets-ephemeral-works/j-scotts-original-liquid-true-blue-shelfmark-soap/docview/2823557504/se-2>.

Scott was accustomed to exploiting romantic tropes in his advertising, as is made clear by the purported origins of his famous blue dye, which he claimed to have discovered by accident while travelling in Europe: the location of this discovery varied between advertisements from a “rude hut” in Russia to Germany’s Black Forest.⁶ Scott’s customers included the artist Thomas Gainsborough, and he advertised his status as watercolour-preparer to the royal family from as early as 1788.⁷ As well as the inks and dyes which were manufactured on site at 417 Strand, Scott also imported artist’s products from abroad, including crayons from Switzerland and coloured pencils from Italy.⁸

These imported goods would come to include magic lanterns. Scott advertised between 1791 and 1801 that he was importing large quantities of lanterns from Germany, which could be purchased in boxes alongside 12 slides, on which were painted about 60 grotesque miniatures, which could be – as described in Scott’s advertisements – projected, “by reflection,” to be “as large as nature.”⁹ These advertisements continued into the nineteenth century with few changes to their text. Notices from 1792 and 1808 both characterized the magic lantern as “a pleasing family amusement” suitable for “all ages and sexes,” while insisting on the novelty of the accompanying slides. The inclusion of instructions alongside the package emphasized the ease with which the lantern could be used.¹⁰ From the late 1790s, Scott’s notices stated that the magic lantern, when “humorously displayed,” could “entertain 20 persons or more at the same time.” Scott was thus already conceiving of the larger-scale entertainments made possible by the lanterns, something he would come to exploit at his own theatre.¹¹ In January 1802, Scott added to his lantern package, offering “30 Magic, magnetic and fanciful entertainments for the fireside, with instruments for their use, being upon an entirely new principle such as has not been seen in this country, being just received from a manufactory in Saxony.”¹²

This insistence on the novelty of his products was likely a response to the popularity of magic lantern shows elsewhere in London. Mervyn Heard speculates

⁶ A.V. Campbell, “Forty Years’ Recollections of a London Actor,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 27 (January 1850), 482; H. Barton Baker, *History of the London Stage and its Famous Players (1776-1903)* (London: Routledge, 1904), 413.

⁷ Simon, “British Artists’ Suppliers.”

⁸ Simon, “British Artists’ Suppliers.”

⁹ Deac Rossell, “Some Thoughts on the Bull’s-Eye Magic Lantern,” *The New Magic Lantern Journal* 9, no. 5 (2003): 72; *The Observer* (19 February 1792).

¹⁰ *The Observer* (19 February 1792); *The Observer* (3 January 1808).

¹¹ *The Observer* (15 December 1799).

¹² Mervyn Heard, “Paul de Philipsthal and the Phantasmagoria in England, Scotland and Ireland, Part Three: Phew!” *The New Magic Lantern Journal* 8, no. 4 (1999): 8.

that Scott's lanterns may have been purchased by audience members returning home from Paul de Philipsthal's phantasmagoria shows, which took place from October 1801 at the Lyceum Theatre, a short distance along the Strand from Scott's shop.¹³ A phantasmagoria consisted of a magic lantern used alongside other visual and aural effects. For example, early playbills for Philipsthal's Lyceum show stated that "to render these Apparitions more interesting" they would be introduced "during the Progress of a tremendous Thunder storm, accompanied with vivid Lightning, Hail, Wind, etc."¹⁴ Philipsthal had been, under the name Philidor, performing *phantasmagorie* shows in Paris since 1792; indeed, he possibly was the originator of such entertainments in the city.¹⁵ Philipsthal's London show was an immediate hit, Richard Altick attributing his success to the "popular relish for spectral visitations" which had also made Gothic novels bestsellers.¹⁶ Philipsthal insisted on his identity as originator of such spectacles in an early playbill for his Lyceum show in which he responded to "the advertisement of various Exhibitions" under the title of Phantasmagoria, suggesting that these would "mislead the unsuspecting part of the public [...] in their Opinion of the ORIGINAL PHANTASMAGORIA," namely Philipsthal's own.¹⁷

This exhibition, as was made clear on playbills, was broken up into an "optical part" – which was the phantasmagoria itself – and a "mechanical" section, during which a number of automatons, including a mechanical peacock and an "INGENIOUS SELF-DEFENDING CHEST," were displayed.¹⁸ This playbill's distinction between the optical and the mechanical seems meant to raise the phantasmagoria above simple exhibitions of stage machinery, perhaps in an attempt to preserve an illusion of the supernatural. This illusion was maintained by keeping the audience in total darkness and thereby hiding the transparent screen on which Philipsthal's ghostly images were projected.¹⁹ These attempts to disguise the machinery by which it was operated belie the fact that the phantasmagoria was entirely dependent on the materials of the theatre, its affective power coming from a control and exploitation of various forms of stage technology, including magic lanterns themselves.

¹³ Heard, "Paul de Philipsthal... Part Three," 8.

¹⁴ "Phantasmagoria" playbill, probably early 1802, Folio 74 OL1 v. 2, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, Farmington, CT, accessed 25 June 2025, <https://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:5002658>.

¹⁵ Mervyn Heard, "Paul de Philipsthal and the Phantasmagoria in England, Scotland and Ireland, Part One: Boo!" *The New Magic Lantern Journal* 8, no. 1 (1996): 2.

¹⁶ Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1978), 217.

¹⁷ Heard, "Paul de Philipsthal... Part One," 4.

¹⁸ "Phantasmagoria" playbill.

¹⁹ Altick, *Shows of London*, 217-18.

Before describing the lantern show eventually exhibited at the Sans Pareil, I will introduce the playhouse's most important creative force, John Scott's daughter Jane. Jane, who had received a musical education in childhood, worked in the years prior to the establishment of the Sans Pareil as a piano and singing teacher, as well as writing songs.²⁰ Jane's singing lessons were advertised in the same newspapers as her father's products; an 1804 listing in the *Observer* addressed "the Nobility, Gentry, and Ladies in general, who design Music as a profession or an accomplishment," stressing the "great advantage" of Jane's having "studied professionally," while giving the same address – 417 Strand – as was associated with her father's business.²¹ John Scott would manufacture many of his products on site at n° 417, and the earliest performances put on by him and his daughter took place amongst these commercial endeavours, since he had repurposed the largest room in his warehouse – in which the colours for his dyes were ground – and gutted this part of the manufactory in order to fit it up as a makeshift theatre.²² It was in this venue that Jane first performed her songs and entertainments, assisted by a class of her own pupils, to a subscribing audience made up mostly of friends.²³ The *Theatrical Observer*, in December 1844, characterized John's construction of the theatre as an indulgence of his daughter's "predilection for the stage," a suggestion that some historians have followed: Jacob Simon, for instance, writes in the National Portrait Gallery's directory of artists' suppliers that John Scott built the theatre "for his daughter."²⁴ However, R.J. Broadbent asserts that John had also trodden the boards, performing at London's Pantheon Theatre. This possibility, taken alongside John's close involvement in the management of the Sans Pareil's stage, suggests the construction of a playhouse was of personal interest to father as well as daughter.²⁵

The case of John Scott's transition from businessperson to theatre owner and manager provides a clear example of the commercial possibilities of the stage, especially of the machinery-dependent spectacles which were the Sans Pareil's usual fare. Scott, for instance, would reference the theatre in advertisements for his

²⁰ Jacky Bratton, "Scott [married name Middleton], Jane Margaret (bap. 1779, d. 1839), theatre manager and actress," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 24 June 2025, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/search?q=Scott+%5Bmarried+name+Middleton%5D%2C+Jane+Margaret+&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true>.

²¹ *The Observer* (5 February 1804).

²² Walter Thornbury, "London Theatres and London Actors," *Belgravia: A London Magazine* 9 (October 1869): 477.

²³ *Theatrical Observer* (11 December 1844).

²⁴ Simon, "British Artists' Suppliers."

²⁵ R.J. Broadbent, *The Annals of the Liverpool Stage* (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1908), 207.

"Flesh-Colour Dye," an example from 1798 stressing that the colour is "fashionable," thanks in part to the fact that it is "now rapidly appearing on the stage."²⁶ This makes very clear the usefulness of managing a theatre as a form of advertising for someone selling products related to textiles and costuming. The nature of John's existing business made the opening of a theatre relatively straightforward. As Alfred Nelson suggests, John "had the ingredients for a theatre: the magic lantern, his knowledge of fabrics such as those used in curtains, drapes, and screens; his skill as a dyer and colourer; and a talented daughter who could sing and play."²⁷

In 1804, having achieved some notoriety for private theatricals, Scott turned the makeshift theatre in his warehouse into a small private playhouse, before finally constructing the first Sans Pareil proper in 1806.²⁸ In order to build the playhouse, Scott invested profits from his shop by purchasing 12 properties on an adjoining alley, Bailey's Court, and demolished these to provide space for the theatre building.²⁹ Advertisements in advance of the Sans Pareil's opening make clear the small size of the theatre, offering for sale pit and box seats, while stating that there is no gallery (the upper balcony found in most playhouses).³⁰ Potential audience members are informed that the theatre is "perfectly dry, having been finished upwards of two years," that "Artists of the first abilities have been engaged in the Decorative, as well as the Optical and Mechanical Part," and that "the comfort and accommodation of the Audience have been most particularly attended to."³¹

These early advertisements also lay out the show which audiences could expect to see on their first visit to the Sans Pareil. The opening section of this show was "The Rout," a 45-minute performance by Jane of a number of her own songs. Jane's authorship of these songs was made clear in advertising, which often emphasized her identity as a "young lady" making her "first appearance on any stage."³² The novelty of Jane, as a previously unseen artistic force, and – in particular – as a young woman, was undoubtedly a selling point in the theatre's

²⁶ *The Caledonian Mercury* (7 June 1798).

²⁷ "Calendar for 1806-1807," ed. John W. Brokaw, *The Adelphi Theatre Calendar Project*, gen. eds. Alfred L. Nelson and Gilbert B. Cross, updated 2016, accessed 25 June 2025, <https://www.umass.edu/AdelphiTheatreCalendar/m06d.htm>.

²⁸ Charles Smith Cheltnam, "History of the London Theatres," in *The Dramatic Year Book for the Year Ending December 31st, 1891*, ed. Charles Smith Cheltnam (London: Trischler, 1892), 1.

²⁹ Jacky Bratton, "Scott [married name Middleton], Jane Margaret."

³⁰ *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

³¹ *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

³² *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

early history. Jane's mode of performance most closely resembled that of Charles Dibdin, the *Monthly Mirror* describing her in 1807 as a "Dibdin in petticoats," while Richard Klepac lists Jane amongst London's "solo entertainers" of the period, alongside performers like Jack Bannister and Charles Matthews.³³ On Saturday, 4 April 1807, the closing night of the theatre's first season, Jane made an address to the audience that highlighted, with much self-deprecation, her lack of previous theatre experience, saying: "A little spark, a stranger here I came, / Uncheer'd by patronage, scarce known by name [...] Yet some kind friends, to Genius dear, / Ofttimes the fading spark to cheer; / And doubly all my poor attempts rewarding, / Have kept themselves from sleeping, by applauding."³⁴

This season-closing address also refers to the other parts of the Sans Pareil's early shows. Jane says of her father: "Our manager, not like him of whom 'twas said, / Failing to raise the living tried to raise the dead; / Our's by the dead, the living tried to raise, / And fain would frighten you to death, to merit praise."³⁵ This characterization of John Scott's magic lantern show highlights its affective power, suggesting that the success of the show came from its ability to inspire fear in audiences. This affective intention is not made immediately clear in early listings for the theatre, where Scott's show is described in terms of its technological construction, characterized as an "optical exhibition of visionary objects [...] something in the manner of that admired exhibition the Phantasmagorie, but varying materially in the effect." Here, Scott demonstrates again his business-minded concern with originality.³⁶

The images displayed in this exhibition were, as Jane's audience address suggests, for the most part of a romantic and supernatural character. The show began with an exhibition of spectres "after the manner of" Johann Georg Schröpfer, who had performed purportedly real seances, using his own system of magic lanterns, across Germany in the 1770s. Scott's magic lantern performance thus opened with an intentionally shocking performance of supernatural fear.³⁷

³³ *The Monthly Mirror*, Volume 1 (1807), 73; Richard L. Klepac, *Mr Mathews at Home* (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1979), 10-11. For the theatrical song culture of this period, see Oskar Jensen, David Kennerley and Ian Newman, eds., *Charles Dibdin and Late Georgian Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁴ Jane Scott, "Address, Written and Spoken by Miss Scott, on the Closing of the Sans Pareil Theatre for the Season, on Saturday, April 4," *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* (May 1807): 451.

³⁵ Scott, "Address, Written and Spoken by Miss Scott," 452.

³⁶ *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

³⁷ Heard, "Paul de Philipsthal... Part Three," 9. For more information on Schröpfer, see Renko Geffarth, "The Masonic Necromancer: Shifting Identities in the Lives of Johann

This was followed by images of historical figures, presumably alongside the “historical remarks” mentioned in the playbill, who were particularly associated with death, or at least the grotesque: such figures had been widely depicted in drama and visual art of the previous century.³⁸ The figures included the Man with the Iron Mask; Siward, the medieval earl who, according to myth, insisted on wearing his armour while dying of dysentery; Elfrida, a medieval queen of England who was long associated with female evil and had been the subject of a 1751 tragedy by William Mason; and Jane Shore, another medieval woman who had been the subject of multiple stage works including Nicholas Rowe’s 1714 tragedy, in which Sarah Siddons had starred in the final decades of the eighteenth century.³⁹ The exhibition ended with a depiction of the gruesome classical story of Ixion being tortured on the wheel.⁴⁰ These historical subjects would remain of wider cultural interest in the following century: Siward, for example, was the subject of works by the Pre-Raphaelite painters Valentine Cameron Prinsep and James Smetham.⁴¹ Clearly, a significant part of the affective power of Scott’s phantasmagoric show came from the cultural interest already present in these subjects. The magic lantern as a technology enhanced the shock effect of his subject matter, allowing Scott to harness its commercial potential in the form of romantic entertainment.

This engagement with the cultural life of the city would remain a notable feature of the Scotts’ shows. In *The Animated Effigy*, a farce written by Jane in 1811, a wealthy older woman feigns her death and poses as her own waxwork in order to monitor her relatives’ reaction to her passing. One of these relatives, commenting on the grotesque appearance of the supposed statue, suggests that it should be exhibited at “Salmon’s waxwork,” on Fleet Street.⁴² This was a reference to Mrs.

Georg Schrepfer,” in *Polemical Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and its Others*, ed. Olav Hammer and Kocku von Stuckrad (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 181-97.

³⁸ *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

³⁹ Heard, “Paul de Philipsthal... Part Three,” 9; Henry of Huntingdon, *The History of the English People, 1000-1154*, trans. Diana E. Greenaway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22; William Mason, *Elfrida: A Dramatic Poem* (London: J. and P. Knapton, 1752); Richard Helgerson, “Weeping for Jane Shore,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 98, no. 3 (1999): 451.

⁴⁰ Heard, “Paul de Philipsthal... Part Three,” 9.

⁴¹ Valentine Cameron Prinsep, *The Death of Siward the Strong*, painting, before 1882, GA0926, Southwark Art Collection, Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library, London, accessed 20 June 2025, <https://heritage.southwark.gov.uk/objects/1109/death-of-siward-the-strong>; Susan P. Casteras, *James Smetham: Artist, Author, Pre-Raphaelite Associate* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 20.

⁴² Jane Scott, Manuscript of “The Animated Effigy,” 28 January 1811, LA1660, John Larpent Plays, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, accessed 10 June 2025, <https://0-www->

Salmon's waxwork museum, which was in operation at this location from as early as 1787.⁴³ Again, this relationship between the Scotts' work and the cultural and commercial landscape of the city as a whole situates the theatre amongst the visual entertainments on offer in London, especially with the Sans Pareil's focus on technology-driven, romantic and affective spectacles. In particular, the aforementioned device in which Scott has a character imitate a statue – something which Jane had also employed in 1808's *The Red Robber; or, The Statue in the Wood* – allows for a comparison between the work of actors and that of the machinery they perform alongside.⁴⁴ This device of Jane's required actors to employ their basic function as part of the stage apparatus, taking their place amongst the sensory technologies upon which London's culture of entertainment depended. The commercial aims of the theatre were equivalent to those of a business such as Salmon's Waxwork.⁴⁵

The most striking example of this is the relationship between John Scott's theatrical work and his own business. Scott continued to sell colours and lanterns during the existence of his theatre, the Sans Pareil's phantasmagoria show functioning in part as an advertisement for his magic lanterns. Besides this use of the stage as a showroom for his products, John's use of his own lanterns for theatrical effect suggests the economic motivations behind this kind of technology-dependent stage spectacle. An easily replicable stage production represented a profit-generating use for his unsold stock. The remainder of the Sans Pareil's first show also made use of lantern technology, part three of the playbill echoing Philipsthal's language of the immaterial by promising a spectacle "representing apparently in the Air, An Ancient Grand Battle in Shadow," depicting a vision of the first crusade.⁴⁶ The show concluded with an "artificial Firework" display, which was – according to performer A.V. Campbell – "invented" and "worked" by John, and he would go on to produce mechanical effects for a number of shows in the Sans Pareil's history.⁴⁷ These included more "mechanical fireworks" for *Ulthona the Sorceress*, first performed in November 1807, and a "mechanical fall of

eighteenthcenturydrama-amdigital-co-uk.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/Documents/SearchDetails/HL_LA_mssLA1660.

⁴³ William Harvey, *London Scenes and London People* (London: W.H. Collingridge, 1863), 58-62. For more on Salmon's Waxwork, see Altick, *The Shows of London*, 52-53.

⁴⁴ For other examples of theatrical performers imitating sculptures, see Sophie Thomas's essay in this special issue.

⁴⁵ *Theatre: or, Dramatic and Literary Mirror* 1, no. 3 (6 March 1819): 42.

⁴⁶ *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

⁴⁷ *The Observer* (21 December 1806); A.V. Campbell, "Forty Years' Recollections of a London Actor," 483.

snow" in *The Magic Pipe; or, Dancing Mad*, in December 1810; he was, besides, credited with general machinery, or as "Artistic Supervisor," for many further productions.⁴⁸ In light of his earliest efforts as a stage machinist, John's transition from shopkeeping to managing theatre technology further suggests the commercial logic governing his stage spectacles, a logic that may have contributed to the whole wave of spectacular, romantic productions which were so popular at the time.

Jane Scott, in her later career as a dramatist, would become a significant figure in the popularity of romantic drama, her work being typical of early nineteenth-century melodrama. The Sans Pareil's early shows, and their dependence on John Scott's "visionary objects," suggest the economic factors which would continue to shape Jane's later dramatic writings.⁴⁹ The most celebrated and financially successful of these was *The Old Oak Chest*, a melodrama which was first performed in 1816 and would continue to be popular both on stage and in toy theatre editions throughout much of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ This play, like many of Scott's, features elements common in romantic literature of the time, including bands of robbers and smugglers, a scheming, villainous governor, and some faux-supernatural intrigue, as some of the play's antagonists disguise themselves as spirits.⁵¹ The central device in the play – which is advertised in its title – is a piece of stage machinery, namely, the old oak chest. This was placed over a trap, which served as a secret passageway between Roda's cottage and the dungeon of the governor's castle. The chest is mined for all its sensory capacities as a prop, the robber's emergence being preceded by a loud sound as its lid is made to suddenly fall closed, while the whole scene takes place as a "storm is heard howling without."⁵² The chest, alongside the gloomy subterranean passages, which were represented on stage by use of lighting and dark stagings, while also being mapped spatially by the movement of actors through traps, shows that Jane was still fundamentally concerned with deriving affective power from the manipulation of the materials of the stage. Her vision of romantic spectacle thus continues the Sans Pareil's focus on the commercial potential of staging spectacular objects, which had been at the heart of the theatre's productions since its inception.

⁴⁸ "Calendar for 1807-1808," "Calendar for 1810-1811," ed. Frank McHugh, *The Adelphi Theatre Calendar Project*, updated 2016, accessed 25 June 2025, <https://www.umass.edu/AdelphiTheatreCalendar/m10d.htm>.

⁴⁹ *The Observer* (21 December 1806).

⁵⁰ John Franceschina, "The Old Oak Chest: Introduction," in *Sisters of Gore: Seven Gothic Melodramas by British Women, 1790-1843*, ed. John Franceschina (New York: Garland, 1997), 125-28.

⁵¹ Jane Scott, "The Old Oak Chest," in *Sisters of Gore*, ed. Franceschina, 130-72.

⁵² Jane Scott, "The Old Oak Chest (published version)," in *Sisters of Gore*, ed. Franceschina, 436-37.

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