The second Canterbury Hall and giant Supper Room in Lambeth which opened in 1854; later a variety theatre, demolished after bombing (from Earl).

GAS LIGHTING
From contemporary illustrations

BRIAN ROBERTS
Gas lighting backstage at the Theatre Royal, Leicester 1836.
(The Development of the English Playhouse).
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS
LONDON 1837-1901

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GENERAL INFORMATION
This listing is indicative only. Names of theatres and music halls often changed. Buildings were often reconstructed and the interior redesigned by a different architect (listed in brackets). The dates shown are those attributed to the illustrations.

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Astley's Amphitheatre, near Westminster Bridge: 1841, 1854
Canterbury Music Hall, Lambeth: 1854, 1855
Covent Garden Theatre, (Sir Edward Barry): 1846, 1858
Evans Music & Supper Rooms, Covent Garden: 1856
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Her Majesty's Theatre, (C J Phipps): 1843, 1863
Lyceum Theatre: 1847
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Tivoli Theatre and Restaurant, Strand: (Walter Emden): 1888
Toole's Theatre, Charing Cross (J J Thompson): 1882

PART FOUR: POSTERS & PICTURES, BIBLIOGRAPHY

BMR, Budleigh Salterton, 2021.
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS
LONDON 1837-1901

Victorian family in a box at the pantomime, undated (Earl).

GAS LIGHTING

The EIGHTEEN FORTIES & FIFTIES
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

Astley's Amphitheatre in 1843 (From Victorian Entertainment by Alan Delgado).

Revamping the Covent Garden auditorium in 1846. (From Victorian & Edwardian Theatres by Victor Glasstone).
The Covent Garden reopening in 1847 after the rebuilt interior "which seated over 3000 people" (Glasstone).

"Enthusiastic after the opening night, The Illustrated London News wished that we could add the effect of colour, as presented on the grand chandelier being lighted up suddenly before the overture, an effect so electrical* that it was followed by an immense burst of cheering from all parts of the house........"

*A strange description of gas light, some thirty-five years before the first complete theatre electric lighting was in London's Savoy in 1881.
Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket in 1843 (Glasstone).
"Gaslighting was introduced in 1818, a year after Drury Lane and Covent Garden but it was found that the gas imparted a deadly hue to the ladies complexions, and in 1821 the sconces on the tier fronts were again filled with wax candles, though the central gas chandelier remained".

"The lighting of the house is to be mainly from the large central chandelier, assisted by branches in front of the grand tier only. This will be effective and economical".
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

Lyceum Theatre, Wellington Street in 1847 before removal of the gas chandeliers from the balcony fronts after complaints of noxious fumes (Glasstone).

Olympic Theatre, Newcastle Street rebuilt after being burned down in 1847 (Glasstone). The former theatre had gas lighting installed by a new owner after 1826.
The Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street 1841.
(from Lost Theatres of London by Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson).
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The Great Foyer at Covent Garden with "brilliant gas chandeliers" (Southern).

Covent Garden's "immense new auditorium with its six tiers of boxes" 1847 (Southern).
The Canterbury at Lambeth in 1856, the Hall capable of holding 1000 people an evening (Delgado).

After the building was destroyed by fire:
"The New Opera House (Covent Garden) which followed in 1857.... and which-- with some modifications-- remains as the building we know today" (Southern).
The new "far grander and more spacious" Adelphi in 1858 (Glasstone).

The rebuilt Covent Garden opened in 1858 with a giant gas chandelier in the auditorium (Glasstone).
Astley's Amphitheatre in 1854 "a terrific spectacle doubtless slightly exaggerated by the artist, but one hopes not." (Delgado).

The opening of St Martin's Hall, The Queen's Theatre in Long Acre, 1850. *(The Illustrated London News and Lost Theatres).*
Evan’s in Covent Garden. "A brilliant scene in 1856 when it was reconstructed in part. The Lighting was gas." (Delgado).
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The Olympic Theatre, Wych Street 1850 (Southern).

The New Adelphi Theatre in the Strand 1858 (Southern).
Backstage at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton (Weightman).

GAS LIGHTING

The EIGHTEEN SIXTIES & SEVENTIES
The Globe 1868 with ceiling sunburner (Glasstone).
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The Globe 1869 (Lost Theatres).

The Royal Amphitheatre Holborn 1867 (Lost Theatres).
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square 1871 (Southern).
"By the mid-1860s, open balconies projecting well over the pit had become usual practice, and the forestage had completely disappeared. Ventilation was improved, with openings in the most convenient positions to avoid draughts, while the heated atmosphere is allowed to escape into the roof by perforations in the ceiling." (Glasstone)

"Ventilation is promoted by an immense air-shaft, which runs through the entire structure, and the lighting has been entrusted to Messrs. Dumfries and Co. A crystal sunlight, 9ft in diameter, and containing 900 burners, will illuminate the whole of the auditorium."

The Holborn Theatre designed in 1860.
The Royal Pavilion Theatre in the Whitechapel Road "1850s into 1860" (Glasstone).
The Alhambra Music Hall and Supper Club, Leicester Square converted from the Panopticon, shown in the mid 1860s: demolished in 1937 and replaced by the Odeon Cinema. (from British Theatres and Music Hall by John Earl). Elaborate gas lighting clearly visible.
The famous Old Vic in 1871 (top) taken over by Emma Cross having become a "sink of iniquity." Becoming the gaslit renamed Royal Victoria Hall and Coffee Tavern (Glasstone).

"There is no central chandelier, the principal lighting being effected by means of a row of gaslights of thirty-four feet diameter, external measurement, let into a channel lined with white enameled iron."
St James's with external gas lamps on the facade 1878 (Lost Theatres).

"The chandelier is a most striking object. It is formed of gilt copper and is elaborately carved. It is for splendour of appearance, and curious elegance of design, the handsomest thing...... It throws forth an immense flood of light, and, aided by the girandoles which are placed round the dress circle, creates a mimic day".
Poster showing audience emergency exits at Morton's Theatre in Greenwich, undated (Earl).
Queuing for the cheap unreserved pit benches in 1897 (Earl).

GAS LIGHTING

The EIGHTEEN EIGHTIES & NINETIES
and the start of the Twentieth Century
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The Criterion Theatre 1894 (Earl).

The Empire Theatre, Leicester Square 1884 (Glasstone).
An unusual feature was the very large "Continental style" foyer.
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The audience at the Empire (Weightman).
The Royalty with gas street lamps either side of the entrance 1882 (Lost Theatres).
Terry's Theatre 1887 (V&A Museum from Lost Theatres).

"All the gas and electric fittings for the theatre have been supplied by Messrs. Vaughan and Brown".
The Tivoli Theatre and Restaurant in the Strand 1890 (Glasstone).
The Strand elevation is of the Restaurant; the Theatre is hidden behind (see inset plans).
The theatre went on to become one of London's most famous Music Halls.
The Apollo in 1901 (Earl).
The Globe Theatre, Newcastle Street, Strand opened 1868. Photograph taken shortly before demolition in 1903, showing the gas lighting over the entrance canopy (Glasstone).
At the pantomime: a comfortably-off Victorian family in a box, undated (Earl).

GAS LIGHTING

POSTERS & PICTURES, BIBLIOGRAPHY
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS
NOTICE!

WHEREAS, ACCIDENTS BY FIRE, of an alarming nature, having lately occurred at several of the London Theatres, owing to the indiscretion and want of proper precaution on the part of its different Members, particularly as regards THE BALLET; Mr. CAVE begs to call the attention of the Members of his Company to the following Rules and Regulations, which he desires may be implicitly observed, as under no pretence whatever will they be deviated from.

1. Any Lady going beyond the proscenium wing in Dancing, &c.—First offence 1s. Second offence, Instant Dismissal.

2. Any Lady crossing the Stage to get to her situation, after the Gas is Lighted—first offence 1s. Second offence, Instant Dismissal.

3. Any Lady, after the Scene is over, attempting to make an exit at a Wing until the Men holding the Coloured Fires have entirely cleared away—Instant Dismissal.

4. Any Lady having Garlands or other Properties to carry on the Stage, catching them on Fire, (the Gas having been placed above their heads,)—Instant Dismissal.

5. No Fires allowed in the Dressing Rooms of the Ballet Ladies. Any Lady attempting to light one—Instant Dismissal.

6. Any Ballet Lady not obeying the Carpenters or any other person employed on the Stage, in reference as to danger by Fire—Instant Dismissal.

7. Any Lady or Gentleman seeing the above Rules infringed, will oblige Mr. CAVE, by giving immediate information to the Stage Manager or Promptor.

Printed by Novell (late Peto's) Steam Machine, 74, New Cut, Lambeth.
REGULATIONS
FOR THE BETTER
Protection against Accidents
by Fire at Theatres,
Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain.

I.
All fixed and ordinary GAS BURNERS to be furnished with efficient Guards. Moveable and occasional Lights to be, when possible, protected in the same manner, or put under charge of persons responsible for lighting, watching, and extinguishing them.

II.
The FLOATS to be protected by a Wire Guard. The first Ground-Line to be always without Gas, and unconnected with Gas, whether at the Wings or elsewhere. Sufficient space to be left between each Ground-Line, so as to lessen risk from accident to all persons standing or moving among such lines.

III.
The rows or lines of GAS BURNERS at Wings to commence Four Feet at least from the level of the Stage.

IV.
WET BLANKETS or RUGS, with BUCKETS or WATER-POTS to be always kept in the Wings; and attention to be directed to them by PLACARDS legibly printed or painted, and fixed immediately above them. As in Rule I, some person to be responsible for keeping the Blankets, Buckets, &c., ready for immediate use.

V.
These REGULATIONS to be always posted in some conspicuous place, so that all persons belonging to the Theatre may be acquainted with their contents; every Breach or Neglect of them, or any act of carelessness as regards Fire, to be punished by Fines or Dismissal by the Managers.

SYDNEY,
Lord Chamberlain.
Lord Chamberlain's Office,
St. James's Palace,
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7. The Stott-Thorp Sunburner.
[From: J.Stott & Co. Trade Catalogue, 1907]
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SCALE, \( \frac{\text{1 in}}{\text{1 foot}} \).
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Colour photographs from www.williamsugghistory.co.uk show examples of gas sunburners although not in theatres. (Chris Sugg: CIBSE Heritage Group).
VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS
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SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY and FURTHER READING


GAS LIGHTING IN THEATRES
1978 Theatre Lighting Before Electricity, Frederick Penzel, Wesleyan UP, Middletown, Conn.