

The Theatres of Molière: A Historical and Architectural Exploration of the Venues That Shaped French Theatre

Molière, the undisputed master of French comedy, left an indelible mark on the history of Western theatre. His plays, filled with wit, satire, and social commentary, continue to be performed and enjoyed around the world. But beyond his literary genius, Molière played a pivotal role in the development of theatre architecture and production. In this article, we embark on a journey through the theatres of Molière, exploring the physical spaces where his masterpieces came to life and shaped the course of French theatre.



The Theatres of Moliere (Theatre Production Studies)

by Gerry McCarthy

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon (1658-1660)

Molière's first regular theatre was the Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon, located on the left bank of the Seine in Paris. The theatre was a former tennis court that was converted into a playhouse in 1658. Despite its modest size, the

Petit-Bourbon witnessed the premieres of some of Molière's most famous plays, including "The School for Husbands" (1661) and "The Misanthrope" (1666). The theatre's unique oval shape and intimate setting created a close relationship between actors and audience, allowing for a more expressive and engaging theatrical experience.



The Théâtre du Palais-Royal (1660-1673)

In 1660, Molière's company moved to a more prestigious theatre, the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. This theatre was located in the heart of Paris, near the Louvre Palace, and was a symbol of the growing importance of theatre in French society. The Palais-Royal was a larger and more elaborate theatre than the Petit-Bourbon, with a capacity of over 1,000 spectators. It featured a proscenium stage, elaborate sets, and a

sophisticated lighting system. This theatre hosted the premieres of some of Molière's most celebrated works, including "Tartuffe" (1664) and "The Bourgeois Gentleman" (1670).



The Théâtre du Palais-Royal

The Théâtre de la rue Richelieu (1673-1680)

In 1673, Molière's company moved to their final theatre, the Théâtre de la rue Richelieu. This theatre was built specifically for Molière's company and was the most technologically advanced theatre of its time. It featured a large stage, elaborate machinery, and a sophisticated lighting system. The rue Richelieu theatre hosted the premieres of some of Molière's most

famous late works, including "The Imaginary Invalid" (1673) and "The Miser" (1668).



The Legacy of Molière's Theatres

The theatres of Molière played a crucial role in the development of French theatre. They provided a physical space for the performance of Molière's plays, which in turn helped to shape the aesthetics and conventions of

French theatre. The theatres also contributed to the professionalization of theatre in France, as they provided a stable and prestigious venue for actors and playwrights to work.

Today, the theatres of Molière are still used for theatrical productions, and they continue to be an important part of French cultural heritage. They are a testament to the genius of Molière and the enduring power of theatre.

The theatres of Molière were more than just physical spaces where plays were performed. They were also the catalyst for the development of French theatre as an art form. Through their unique designs and technological innovations, Molière's theatres helped to create an immersive and engaging theatrical experience that has influenced theatre



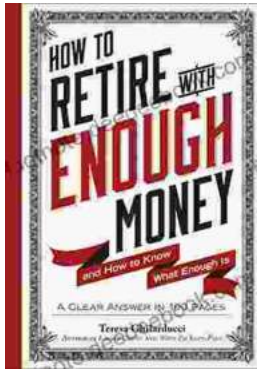
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