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thusiasm, is for those who take it seriously enough to get fun out of it – as performer, technician, playgoer and the like – and the museum is for them. It must not be thought of as yet another sideshow for that precious prestige piazza in Covent Garden and if there do turn out to be queues day after day outside; then in our view it will have failed.

But enough! The point is made! Not another word from me on the importance of the juxtaposition of multiple insignificant images! Well, at least not until I review the opening of the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden.

Meanwhile I will just enjoy the selective significant images on view at the V & A. Let me firstly rejoice that this exhibition is not bogged down in drama. If an art or craft involves an actor and an audience, it is to be found in this exhibition – if there are sins of omission, I did not detect them either at the exhibition or in the catalogue.

And let me commend that catalogue, **IMAGES OF SHOW BUSINESS** published as a self-sufficient book by Methuen. I shall declare an interest here. The editor is James Fowler, Assistant Keeper of the Theatre Museum, a job for which I was shortlisted. Well Fowler got the job and Reid did not – and I have to tell you that the catalogue benefits enormously from this decision by Dr Strong, Mr Schouvaloff and the Civil Service Commissioners. For Fowler is a scholar whereas Reid is rather akin to a tatty exhibit (not significant enough an object to be displayed at the V & A, but perhaps worthy of sharing a crowded perch in Copenhagen). I jest. This catalogue really is good stuff and by this token, Fowler is a good man to have assisting the Keeper.

The catalogue, like the exhibition, is arranged in logical sections:

- Performers and Performances.
- Production Processes.
- Programmes, Posters and Publicity.
- Performance Places.

The performers are all stars, most of them with a bankable reputation gained in London or the international circuit. But I must not start looking for Frank H. Fortescue, Moody-Manners or Harry Gordon: it might lead me to a discourse on the nature of significance. Rather, I will rejoice in such photographic goodies as Sarah Bernhardt as Cleopatra, Ellen Terry as Juliet, Mr & Mrs Charles Kean in *Much Ado*, the Kaufmann Cycling Beauties, and Fred Astaire dancing 'Night and Day' with Claire Luce in an age when a Divorcee could still be billed as Gay. And lovely drawings of Grisi and Lablache in *I Puritani*, Mrs Siddons, Taglioni, Isadora Duncan, and Andrew Ducrow's equestrian balletics against a candelabra'd proscenium door. I acknowledge the significance of Mick Jagger's lips and choppers, but they afford me little pleasure as an object for contemplation.

The architectural section (performance places) is a bit thin but there are some nice glimpses of the backstage process. The Illustrated London News is always a good source whether it be Joseph Harker at his

paint frame or panto propmakers at the Lane – and there is an opportunity to drool over designs by Grieve, de Louthenbourg, and Bakst. Or be surprised by an early Piper. There is an E. G. Craig Hamlet which was ahead of the technology of 1912 and probably still could not be achieved precisely as Craig intended – well not in a way that would also satisfy the director, actors, critics and audience.

A goodly selection of posters, programmes and tickets is offered. When and in what circumstances did the Theatre Royal York offer a Gallery Complimentary? With the roll number of 3001 it was presumably not an occasional occurrence. And my heart warms to the Sadler's Wells marketing officer who offered a shilling gallery ticket endorsed with 'This ticket with sixpence will entitle the bearer to a Pint of Wine or Punch'. But it adds 'for this night only': bet you it was a show no one wanted to see – not even with a concession!

The general ambience of the exhibition is helped enormously by a good tape montage mixed from significant sounds, both speech and music.

Special commendation also to the Theatre Museum for making an increasing number of their nicest items available on postcard.



The **ROYAL OPERA HOUSE RETROSPECTIVE 1732-1982** at the Royal Academy went backwards through the 250 years of the three theatres on the Covent Garden site. And it literally went backwards in time from entering the first room which was devoted to opera and ballet in recent years. I am not at all clear whether this backwards progress was dictated by the geography of the rooms or whether it was intended to build a mounting sense of climax as one approached the older and