

**Kindred Spirits in the Early Years:  
Madrid's Teatro de la Cruz and Edinburgh's Carrubber's Close Theatre**

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An international conference in October of 1987 at the University of Calgary in Canada assembled a panel of distinguished specialist in English and Spanish Drama to study the "surprising parallels between the two stages at the time of their formation" (Fothergill-Payne 7). The convocation of such a group of scholars does not seem unusual or surprising given the quantity of material written about the relationship between Spanish and English theatre. Referencing dramatic works in the 1660-1685 period, Braga Riera writes that the borrowing of plots from Spanish plays was an English custom dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century (40). In addition, there is no small amount of material written about the similarities of playhouses in England, such as the Boar's Head in London, and the corral theatres in Spain, including the Corral del Príncipe in Madrid (Allen 111). John J. Allen notes in his book, *The Reconstruction of a Spanish Golden Age Playhouse: El Corral del Príncipe, 1583-1744*, a quotation from Glenn Wickham, "the resemblances, in respect of both stage and auditorium, between the Spanish 'corral' playhouses and what we know of the playhouse in the Boar's Head Inn in London at the end of the sixteenth century are so striking as to throw some light on the arrangements pertaining during the early seventeenth century at the first Fortune and at the Red Bull" (Wickham 72). Allen continues, "In fact, the more one learns about both the Spanish and the English playhouses, the more striking these resemblances become" (111).

Although much less studied and much more limited in scope, the evolution of theatre in Scotland, and more specifically, in Edinburgh, was not dissimilar to that of

London and Madrid. Though more suppressed, more ruled by conservative social mores, and less quickly developed; it was, nonetheless, exuberant, influential, and popular among its following. Given the dearth of research on the subject, observing, comparing and contrasting theatrical elements in Edinburgh with those in Madrid will provide new information leading to further insights into and giving a more in-depth understanding of the trade in these two places, especially as related to the historical development of theatrical venues and playhouses. It is the purpose of this work to take a closer look at such venues in Edinburgh and Madrid, chronicling their development, and, thereby, bringing to the forefront little known comparative and contrastive data related to theatre in these two cities. In this first study the progression leads us to focus on two theatre venues: the Carrubber's Close Theatre in Edinburgh and the Coliseo de la Cruz in Madrid. Subsequent studies will complete the comparative contrastive descriptions of Theatre Royal Edinburgh and the Coliseo de la Cruz, Madrid.

The development of secular<sup>1</sup> theatre in Madrid and Edinburgh followed much the same pattern (Findlay 255). Though early secular theatre took place on the streets and in palaces, the earliest manifestations of theatre in enclosed venues were in palaces. Entertainment for royalty has always been a necessity in one form or another. From court jesters to popular minstrels, kings and queens have needed escape from the pressures of ruling their kingdoms and protecting their possessions. The theatre (*coliseo*, see Fig. 1) located in the Buen Retiro Palace in Madrid was an enclosed, state of the art venue inaugurated in 1640, only seven years after the construction of the palace. Before that, other locations for royal performances already existed in the

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<sup>1</sup> Though ecclesiastic theatre is not discussed here, its influence on and importance to the development of secular theatre is undeniable and a topic of discussion within itself. "Religious drama flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but declines as the sixteenth century progressed because of opposition from the Reformers. In their association with the practices of the Roman Catholic church, religious plays were vigorously denounced as 'superstitious'; the feast days associated with Catholicism, and on which the communal religious dramas traditionally took place, were suppressed; new emphasis was placed on strict keeping of the Sabbath as a day devoted to worship" (Findlay 255).

Alcázar Palace (1536), precursor to the present Royal Palace; the Zarzuela Palace (1621); and in open-air locations of the Retiro Park (Narciso Tardón 10).



Figure 1. Bataglioli, Francesco. Colección de lienzos producidos desde 1847-1758 en Almacenes del Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Ponencia de Margarita Torreones, Congreso a la Corte de los Borbones. (4 dic 2011). Reproducción: [https://elpais.com/ccaa/2011/12/15/madrid/1323944944\\_771935.html](https://elpais.com/ccaa/2011/12/15/madrid/1323944944_771935.html) . (Non-commercial use for research only in accordance with copyright permissions.)

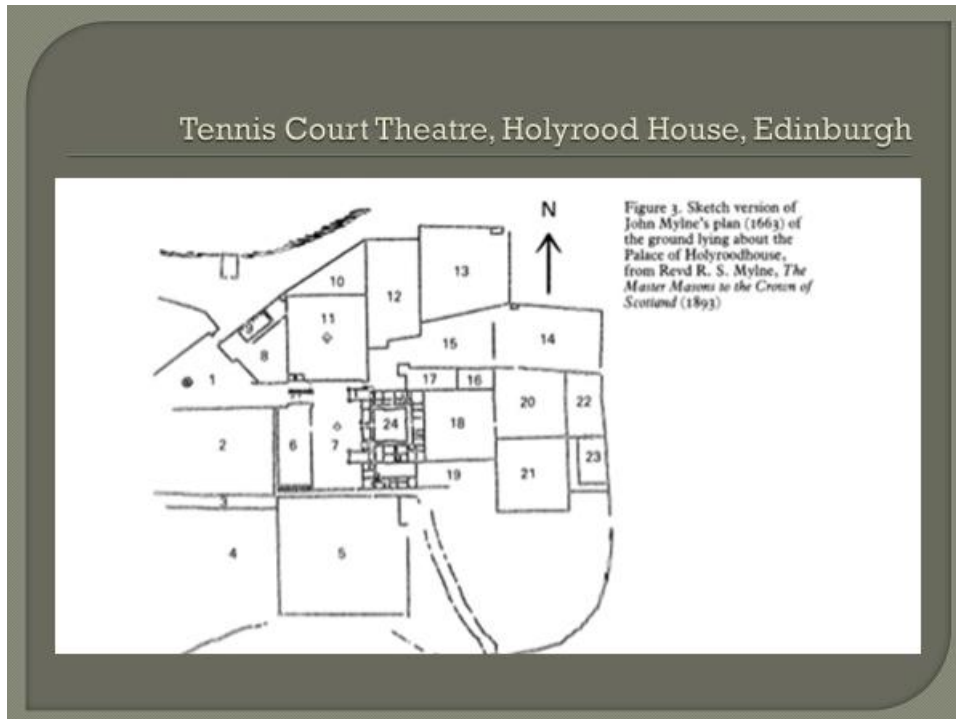


Figure 2. According to Jamieson, who reproduced this plan, the Tennis Court is labelled 9. (Non-commercial use for research only in accordance with copyright permissions.)

Likewise, in Edinburgh, royalty of the same period enjoyed their theatre. There the earliest recorded performances took place at the Tennis Court Theatre (See fig 2), an enclosed venue of Holyrood Palace.<sup>2</sup> Grant explains that the Royal Tennis Court (Gordon's map, 1647) was a long, narrow building with a court, which had previously been a weaver's workhouse. He states, "...not only is it connected with the game of tennis, as played there by the Duke of Albany; Law, the great financial schemer; and others; but the early and obscure history of the stage in Scotland" (Grant 39). Though it has not been confirmed that it was here, he notes that a "*litill farsche and play maid* by William Lauder" was staged before Queen Regent, Mary of Guise. Another play by Robert Simple was staged in an unspecified place in Edinburgh "before the grim Lord Regent and others of the nobility in 1567." During the time of James VI, several theatre companies came from London. Shakespeare was a member of one of those companies though his presence in Edinburgh has not been confirmed. In 1599, a company was forbidden to present its work though licensed by the King. The interdiction was annulled thus permitting representations and encouraging further development of theatre. Subsequently, an English company led by Laurence Fletcher, known as "comedian to his majesty," came to Scotland. Charles Knight in his *Life of Shakespeare* concludes that Shakespeare was with Fletcher (Grant 40). In this same testimony he notes that Shakespeare was often associated with the Tennis Court Theatre. After James VI departed for England in 1603 and until his grandson the Duke of Albany and York arrived in 1680, it is doubtful that any serious dramatic work was on the boards in Edinburgh.

Although in both Edinburgh and Madrid theatrical production for the nobility was very much alive in enclosed venues before the construction of public, purpose-built theatres (at least until 1603); in Madrid we do not see the opposition so prevalent in

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<sup>2</sup> According to Daniel, James IV built a palace next to the Holyrood Abbey and occupied it with his wife, Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII in 1503 (39).

Edinburgh, which contributed to the lack of growth of the art form from 1603 until 1680.<sup>3</sup> This absence of theatre had a very negative impact on its development in Edinburgh and the entirety of Scotland. In contrast, the theatre in Madrid not only flourished as a developing genre for the nobility, but also continued its growth and popularity among the general public.

By 1583, there were at least two venues in Madrid that functioned as permanent sites for the production of theatre open to the public. These open-air venues, known as *corrales*, were large interior patios surrounded by private dwellings. The Corral de la Cruz (See Fig 4) opened its doors in 1579 and remained in operation until July 1, 1736 (Sepulveda 7), when it was closed for demolition and reconstruction as an enclosed theatre, a *coliseo* (Thomason ix). Performances began in 1583 in the Corral del Príncipe (Allen 3, See Fig. 3). Other *corrales* in the city were soon closed and the decision to have only two sites for public theatre was confirmed legally, but with the possibility of opening others, should there be public demand (Sepulveda 9).

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<sup>3</sup> The literature is filled with references about the Church of Scotland, the conservative church supporters, and their opposition to theatre. For an early discussion of this, see Jackson, pp. 11ff.

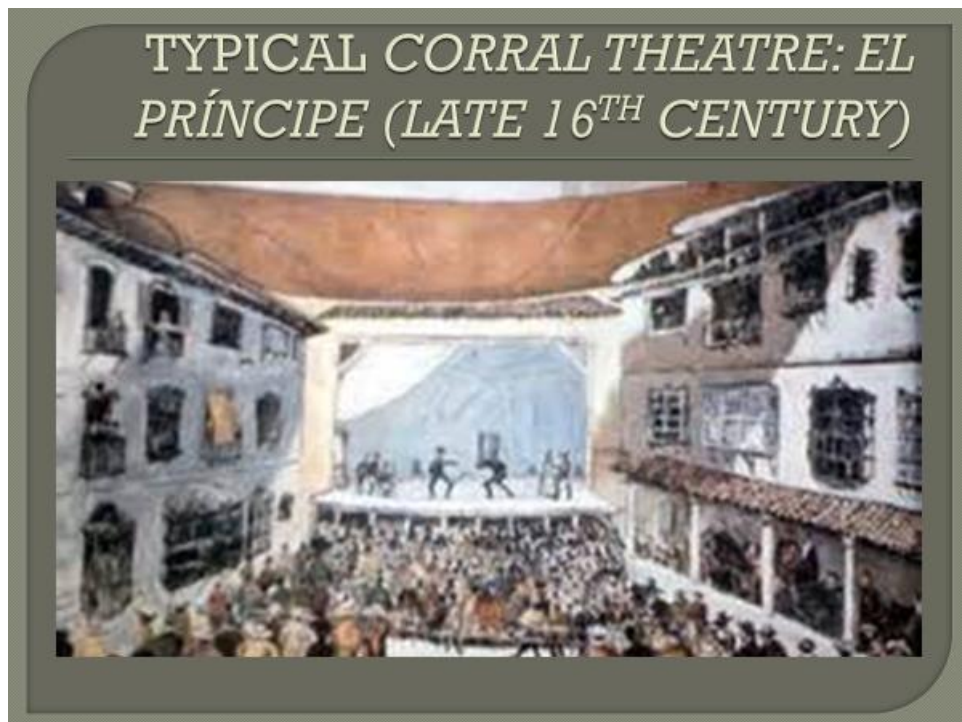


Figure 3. Colorized version of Comba's drawing as reproduced in Allen (C, following p. 52). Reproduction from Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes: [http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/lope\\_de\\_vega/imagenes\\_corral/imagen/imagenes\\_corral\\_02\\_dibujo\\_de\\_comba\\_teatro\\_principe\\_siglo\\_xvii/](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/lope_de_vega/imagenes_corral/imagen/imagenes_corral_02_dibujo_de_comba_teatro_principe_siglo_xvii/). (Non-commercial use for research only in accordance with copyright permissions.)

Meanwhile, dramatic performances were very common in Scotland, including Edinburgh, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Once productions were excluded from churches, signaling the beginning of secular theatre, more worldly subjects were introduced and performed in open-air venues (Arnot 57-58). These productions were often in what was called the "Play Field." Every town of note had its own play field. That of Edinburgh was located at Greenside-well (Arnot 58). Opposition, however, arose to such performances with church members being among the first to support the suppression of dramatic productions and the prohibition of plays being written on divine subjects. Nor could productions take place on Sunday (Jackson 10). In fact, in an effort

to abolish theatrical performances, parishioners were threatened with excommunication by the Church of Scotland, an order which could not stand and was rescinded "by command of the King" (Arnot 58).

When Charles II was restored to the Crown in 1660, his brother, the Duke of York, took up residence in Holyrood House, and he was attended by a troupe of actors. Dryden in his prologue to the University of Oxford "humorously apologizes" for the troupe's small number (Jackson 22). After citing the latter John Jackson notes, "From this period, through the whole of Queen Anne's reign, till after the troubles in 1715, no theatrical representations were attempted in Scotland" (22). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Cameron mentions the fact that plays were performed in Edinburgh by touring actors, similar to the wandering troupes in Spain, in the chocolate and coffee houses "until a proper theatre could be built in 1715" (193).

The aforementioned year, 1715, brings us to within twenty years of the opening of Madrid's first enclosed, permanent, public theatre in 1736. Edinburgh could boast, as yet, no such structure. It was soon to come, however, but not with the ease, longevity, or permanence of the Madrid playhouses. Jackson reports that the first "adventurer" to be heard of in the context of performances after 1715 was an Italian named Signora Violante who was *en route* from Dublin with some of her countrymen.<sup>4</sup> She paid a visit to Edinburgh for an exhibition of "feats of strength, postures, and tumbling," in a room in Carrubber's Close that was fitted for the purpose (Jackson 22). The success of this experience in Edinburgh led her to return to the same quarters with a group of comedians she had assembled in England. Subsequently, she performed there

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<sup>4</sup> John Jackson's account, after mentioning the 1715 date as the beginning of new performances, simply states that the acrobat was the "first adventurer we hear of..." (23). Alasdair Cameron states, "In 1715 a rope dancer...opened a theatre in the Taylor's Hall..." (196). Michael Murphy notes in his "Alan Ramsay's Contributions to Edinburgh Theatre" that the *Caledonian Mercury* advertised on February 9, 1736 an upcoming performance by a rope dancer in the 'new theatre' by the name of Signora Violante. Is this a correction of dates from previous work or a performance 21 years later than the one recorded by Cameron?



for several years (Jackson 23). Jackson further notes that after this itinerant performer played in Merchant Taylor's Hall, so called for the name of the associated corporation. This venue was soon deemed too small and some performers along with Mrs. Ward, a favorite actress, obtained enough subscriptions to begin the building of a new theatre. Tradesmen were given partial payment and the promise of further income that would come from future profits of the theatre (23). Thus, a purpose-built theatre was constructed on the fourth side of the Canongate with the first stones laid in August of 1746 by Mr. Lacy Ryan of the Covent Garden Theatre. Jackson comments, "I was favored with his [Ryan's] acquaintance. He bore a most respectable character as a man and was a good actor" (23). This building would ultimately be refurbished and opened legally with the name Theatre Royal in 1767 (*Acting with Confidence* 6), a direct precursor to the purpose-built *Theatre Royal Edinburgh* constructed in Shakespeare Square in 1768 and opened in 1769. (Cameron 201). Nevertheless, before one can do justice to a study of the *Theatre Royal Edinburgh*, the events leading up to its establishment and the spirit that created the dynamic for its construction should be explored.

Sorensen's article on the varieties of public performance along with Joe Rock's study of the properties of Richard Cooper Senior helps fill the gaps of Jackson's account of the progress toward the construction of a purpose-built theatre (133-42). According to Sorensen in 1733 Allan Ramsay managed the first residential company of players in Scotland and built their playhouse in Carrubber's Close in 1736" (137). Rock specifies 1732-1735 as the time period in which Ramsay managed the Edinburgh Company of Comedians who performed in Tailors' Hall in the Cowgate and "did much to improve their standing." He further notes that new scenery was made, possibly by Cooper, for the performances of *The Tempest* and *Henry IV* (15) in the year that the Coliseo de la Cruz

opened in Madrid. The Carrubber's Close theatre was shut down after the season of 1737 due to new theatre patent laws.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, in the same year, 1736, both Edinburgh, Carrubber's Close, and Madrid, Coliseo de la Cruz, opened new theatres in venues specifically planned and intended for the production of dramatic performances. In 1735 the process to demolish the old open-air Corral de la Cruz in Madrid was begun when Pedro de Ribera, Master Architect of the city, submitted a plan to separate the patio, which comprised the theatre, from the lateral boxes which were still part and parcel of the adjoining houses (See Fig 4). His plan included the construction of boxes within the patio itself, thus giving the theatre management complete control over those who attended performances. The plan was never realized but was replaced by one calling for the complete demolition of the existing *corral* and the construction of a new theatre (Thomason 3). Don Filippo Juvarra (also known as Felipe Juvara and Phelipe Ybarra), the renowned Italian architect summoned to Madrid by the Bourbon King Philip V to take charge of the construction of a royal palace, produced plans for the construction of the new theatre. Juvarra, great disciple of late Italian Baroque architecture, died in 1736. Subsequently, the parcel on which the old Corral *de la Cruz* had stood was chosen for the new theatre; and Pedro de Ribera inherited the project directing the work and implementing, "although not completely and in everything," the ideas of Juvarra (Thomason 4).

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<sup>5</sup> As a response to Fielding's political satire *Tom Thumb* against Walpole's government, the Licensing Act was passed in 1737 by those who had been satirized. In order to function, a theatre where spoken drama was used had to be granted a Royal Patent, which required an act of Parliament (Cameron 197).

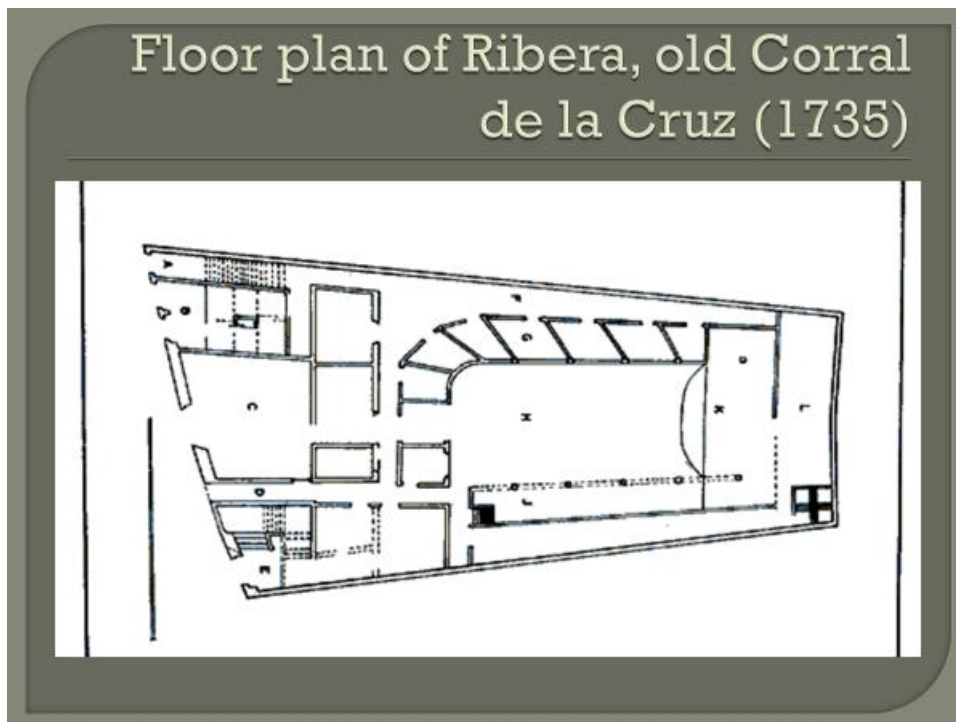


Figure 4. Ground plan of the Corral de la Cruz as reproduced in Allen, p. 11. (Non-commercial use for research only in accordance with copyright permissions.)

The latter comment leads us to a brief description of the building. Although there are designs of facades of various planned theatre buildings, these designs were for sites other than the calle de la Cruz site and would have had to be modified to fit the parcel. Furthermore, the original plans, though following the ideas of Juvarrá for the theatre construction (“although not completely and in everything”) were not carried out by him, but by Ribera. That leads us to delineate what we know about the building that was constructed though it does not necessarily reflect the various extant plans. It is known that the curvature of the front had to be reduced to a smaller center section and that the more rectangular design had to be elongated to fit on a narrower and more irregular parcel of land (Thomason 25), resulting in a small, narrow theatre. That this was a perpetual problem is confirmed by constant attempts to enlarge the theatre, purchasing space in connecting buildings.

Though not exactly like it in appearance, it is probable that the façade was like the plan of Juarra which shows a very harmonious and perfectly symmetrical construction (See Fig 5). The most outstanding characteristic was a wide curve extending out from the front wall measuring about 80 feet in width and 21 feet in depth. The entire front wall measured only 105 feet, so the curvature in the plan dominates the front appearance of the theatre. The main door, probably double, was set into the center of the façade with three doors on either side. Two of the doors on each side and within the curve of the façade lead to the lobby area. The third, on the straight line of the façade lead to a stairway. On the façade floor plan two windows were shown between the first and last doors. This conflicts with the original elevation plan that revealed two openings at each side of the main door.

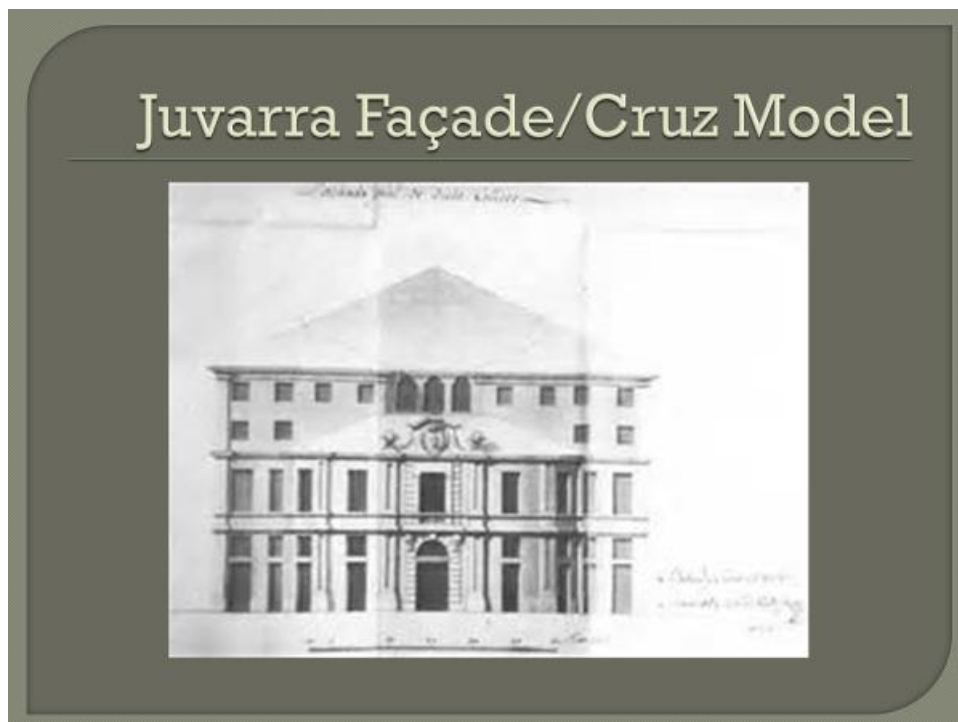


Figure 3. Juarra façade plan from Archivo de Villa (Thomason 16).

Above each one of these windows and the six lateral doors there was a small squared window complemented by a semi-circular window above the main entry. The façade elevation plan had 4 stories. The first floor (second story) had 8 tall windows located above corresponding openings on the main floor with a balcony in the middle. The third story had only 4 small windows at the extremes of the building due to the roof of the second story covering part of the façade at this level. The fourth story had 8 small windows at each side and three larger arched windows in the center of the roof of the second story. A noteworthy architectural feature referenced in archival documentation is a cross located on top of the building. The first reference is to a wooden cross; the second is to an iron cross<sup>6</sup>. No doubt these were symbolic of the name of the theatre (Thomason 25-26).

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<sup>6</sup> Even before the use of the Corral de la Cruz site for open air presentations, the Brotherhood of the Cross (*Hermandad de la Cruz*) was established on this same street and rented another corral for the presentation of religious drama with proceeds supporting the needs of the impoverished. They thus established an enduring relationship with actors of the area who performed on these special occasions, especially Easter, and participated in the processions. According to Capmany (78), the street was then known as Calle de las Comedias and the site of the Cruz was a chapel. Perhaps this explains, at least in part, the name of the theatre and street. See Capmany.

The interior of the theatre had to be modified accordingly, yet we do not find an actual floor plan of the extant theatre during this early period (See Fig 6).

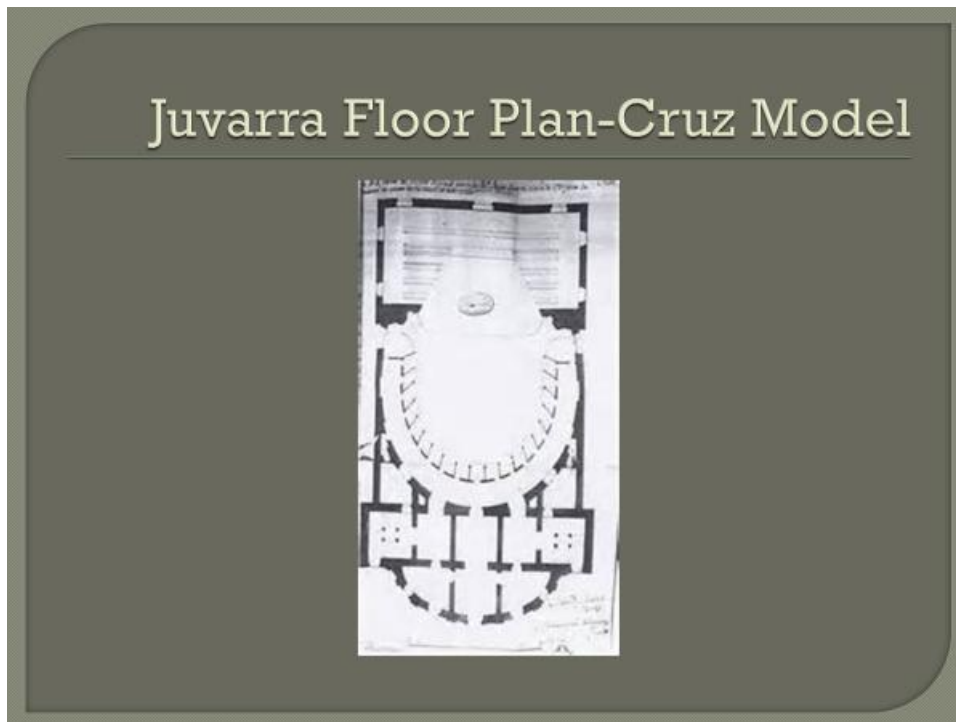


Figure 4. Juvarra proposal that was never built, Archivo Municipal de Madrid (Thomason 16).

There is, however, a pencil drawing with erasures and changes similar to the other floor plan of the Coliseo that, clearly, would not fit onto the parcel where it was actually constructed. It is not until the 1841 remodeling project that we have partial plans of the floor and boxes of a structure that was actually built. The measurements in these latter plans coincide with estimates related to changes on previous plans to make the building fit on the Cruz Street parcel. From these and from construction documents of the earlier period, we know that the theatre was essentially U shaped with a semi-circular amphitheatre (Thomason 33).

Although the *coliseo* (See Fig. 7) is radically different from the old *corral* in that it reflects the modern style of Italian enclosed theatres, it retained characteristics in common with the *corrales*.

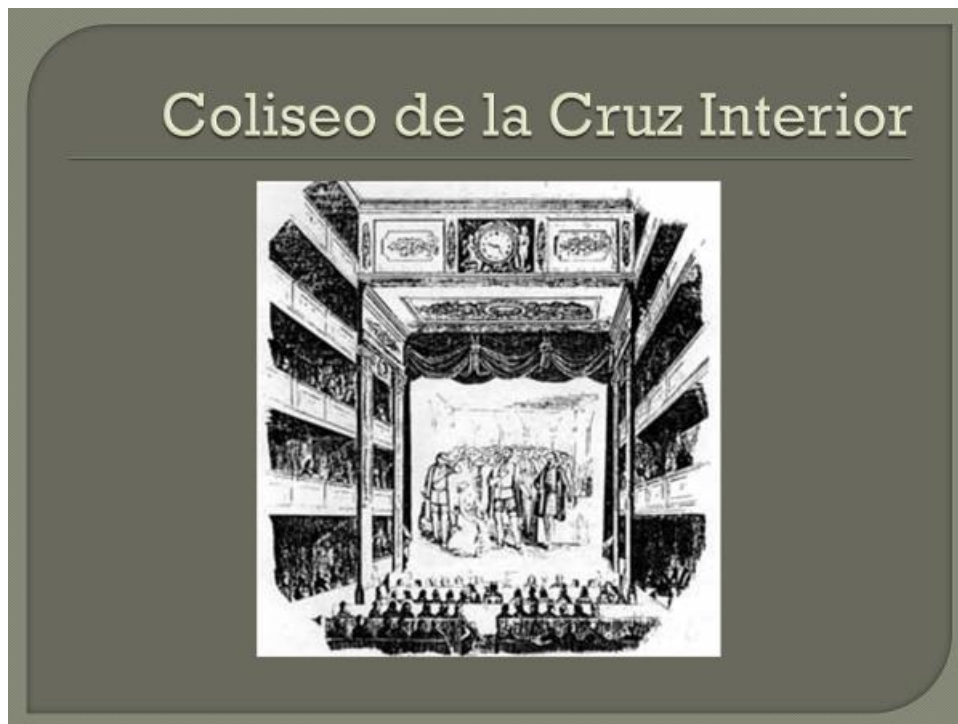


Figure 5. Interior of the Teatro de la Cruz as reproduced in Carrette Parrondo, p 1218. Indeterminate Source. (Thomason 45).

The various locations for viewing performances remained basically the same as in the *corrales*. Of note is the fact that all seating, including the so-called boxes, was incorporated into the theatre building. These boxes, which were actually rooms in the adjoining houses, were now built into the theatre structure with entry controlled by the theatre management .<sup>7</sup> The configuration of the theatre included the *patio* or yard where patrons (men only) stood until after 1797; benches located around the sides of the

<sup>7</sup> Allen describes the names used for these boxes and their relative size. See his review article "The Lateral *apostentos* of the Corral de la Cruz: Thinking Outside the Box." p. 779.

floor; bleacher type stands that extended up to an elevated seating area containing two levels; and above these benches, three levels of boxes. There were also special boxes for women, government officials, and the king. From accounting records, it can be determined that the capacity of the theatre was approximately 2000 with 1268 persons standing on the floor. The number of patrons on the patio made it quite crowded with disruptions and arguments often breaking out in this area (Thomason 50).

Finishing the brief description of the interior of the *coliseo*, we move to the stage, where one of the greatest differences between the *corral* and the *coliseo* is observed. The *coliseo* stage provided a completely different view for the spectators in that it was separated from the audience and could be used for perspective settings and other scenic effects not suitable for the old *corral* stage which was extended and exposed to the public on three sides. The larger size of the *coliseo* stage also provided more room for action and settings. Though akin to the stage planned by Juvarra; it, like the rest of the building, was adapted to fit on a much smaller parcel of land than that which the original architect had envisioned. According to the plan of Juvarra, the dimensions of the stage opening were 52 feet wide by 46 feet high with a proscenium of some 11 feet. The stage was set six feet above the floor of the patio. We can confirm from the 1841 remodel, that the opening was only 34 feet in width—longer than the *corral* stage but far short of the planned dimensions of Juvarra. The height from the patio floor remained at six feet (Thomason 42).

As mentioned above we are describing two venues specifically prepared for the presentation of dramatic performances. The Coliseo de la Cruz was a purpose-built theatre from the ground up, but when we return to a discussion of the Edinburgh theatre, we note that it was a space prepared for performances, but not a purpose-built theatre from the ground up. Allan Ramsay, playwright and theatre entrepreneur, was much encouraged by the success of his *The Gentle Shepherd* in the 1720s and early 30s. In



the face of religious opposition, he opened his own theatre in Carrubber's Close as referenced above.

Unfortunately, because of Fielding's political satire, *Tom Thumb*, against the government of Walpole, the Licensing Act was passed in 1737. As previously mentioned, the new law mandated any theatre presenting spoken drama to obtain a patent, which required an Act of Parliament. Allan could not obtain such a license, so his theatre had to be closed (Cameron 197).



Figure 6. Plaque commemorating Carrubers Close: "CARRUBER'S-CLOSE WILLIAM CARROBERIS-MERCHANT 1450 HAD HIS MANSION HERE- A JACOBITE RESORT FROM 1688-IN 1736 ALLAN RAMSAY LAUNCHED A THEATRE WHICH THE MAGISTRATES CLOSED."

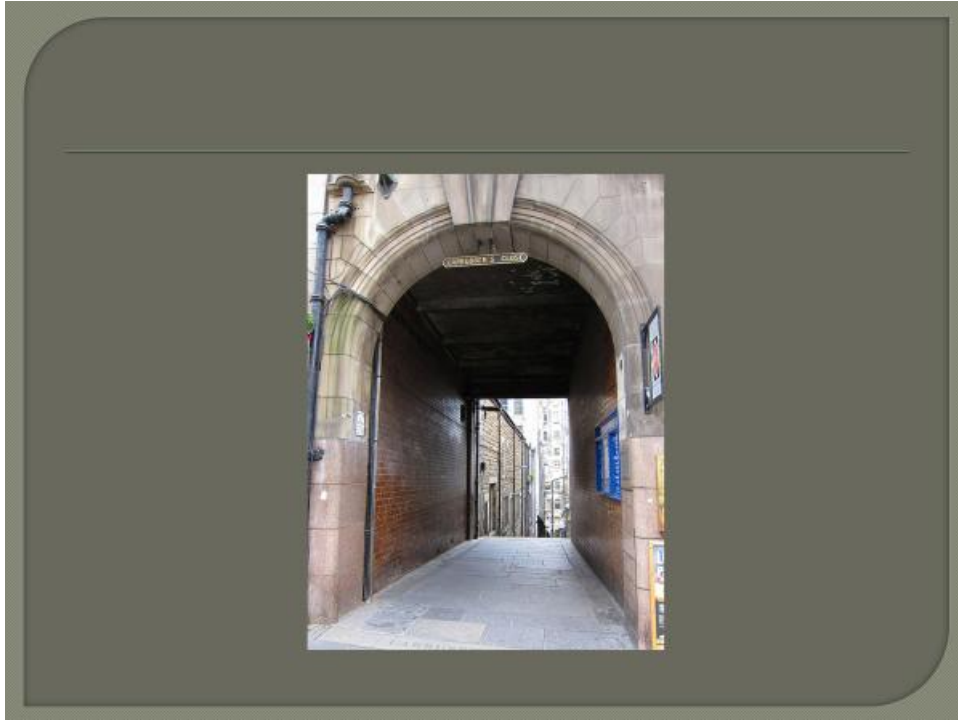


Figure 7. Modern day entrance to Carrubber's Close.

Despite the short life of this theatre, it has import in this study because it was a venue outfitted for the performance of spoken drama, and a study of the conditions surrounding its creation demonstrates the position of the Church of Scotland, supportive conservatives, and the government against such venues and public performances. This stands in stark contrast with Madrid where local governments often owned theatres and proceeds went to charitable, church related organizations to help the poor and sick. In addition, such venues, except for exceptional and relatively short periods of time, were also supported by the national powers.

One of the best descriptions of the theatre at Carrubber's Close and the details surrounding its short life are presented by Michael Murphy in his article on Allan Ramsay's contributions to theatre in Scotland. Ramsay, claiming to be underemployed and with the hope of capitalizing on the financial success of the Tailors' Hall, invested

in the “risky project” of fitting out and equipping what was to be known as the New Theatre. He believed that he could count on the support of his elite clientele and friends to support him against the Presbytery and Town Council which had so recently defeated Aston’s efforts to set up a regular theatre in the city (Murphy 11). Alasdair also attributes Ramsay’s motivation to the success of *The Gentle Shepherd*, which he finished in 1731 (Cameron 197). It is important to consider this effort and the resulting structure because this New Theatre is the first to be designed and equipped for public dramatic presentations with the intent of being a permanent venue for such performances. It is essentially the undesignated, unpatented, forerunner of the previously mentioned purpose-built theatre constructed in 1746 that is, in turn, a precursor to the 1769 purpose-built theatre which was finally legally patented and designated as the first Theatre Royal Edinburgh. In reference to Carrubber’s Close, Daniel Wilson also records the erection of a theatre at the foot of the Close but gives little detail about the physical facility other than subsequent uses until its demolition in 1872 when it was in use by the Carrubber’s Close Mission (42-44). He suggests that the building was located on the Close at the High Street end. As recorded by Ramsay, Murphy disputes this noting that the building “was situated close to Mr. Downie’s school of dancing, at the foot and on the west side of Carrubber’s Close...” (12).

Murphy gives us a bit more detail on the origins of the physical structure. Ramsay wrote a letter to Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, his patron, naming Charles Butter as “the proprietor of the walls and grounds” of the New Theatre. Subsequently in January 1735, Butter applied for a warrant to enclose the land that he purchased in 1733 with intent to build “one or two tenements” on the property, which was mostly, waste, but did include a workshop and some tenement ruins. A counter petition delayed the grant until September 1735 (Murphy 12). The first reference to a public performance here may be an advertisement for Signora Violante, the rope dancer. This helps us

pinpoint the construction and completion dates. The *Caledonian Mercury* of February 9, 1736 ran the following announcement:

At the new PLAY-HOUSE in CARRUBER´S (Sic) Close this present evening will be performed, these several new and surprising Entertainments on the STRAIT-ROPE: Also, several new and very Admirable performances by SIGNORA VIOLANTES, The famous Italian rope dancer. (Murphy 12)

The above information would indicate that the walls were built between late 1735 and early 1736. Because the furnishings and interior would not be ready for the fall of 1735, Ramsay scheduled the opening season for the next fall, 1736. In the meantime, the venue was apparently used for pilot performances such as the one advertised above. Regarding Ramsay´s claim to have “erected a new Theatre,” as stated in his letter to the Earl of Islay, it seems clear to Murphy (12) that an entirely new building was not constructed, but rather “he created within the existing new building the first custom-built theatre in Edinburgh, and indeed in Scotland” (12).

Physical descriptions of this New Theatre are limited in scope and number. Though we cannot find detailed descriptions of the interior of the theatre, it must be that the interior furnishings were done according to Ramsay´s specifications because he owned them. This is evident by the fact that he sold the expensive timberwork to Butter, when he gave up on the project in 1739. This probably included a raised stage, which is at least one descriptor of the interior of the playhouse (Ramsay 12).

The first full season opened in November 1736 and evoked such comments as “the new theatre is thought by all Judges to be as complete, [sic] and finished with as good a taste as any one of its size in the three kingdoms,” reported in the *Caledonian Mercury* (Murphy 12). These comments were confirmed, reluctantly, by an opponent who said, “it is a fine house”. It was a vast improvement over earlier venues in which traveling companies performed in guild halls, coffee and chocolate shops and, earlier on the Tennis Court at Holyrood (Murphy 12). Joe Rock confirms the first performances

as Dryden's *The Recruiting Officer* and Farquhar's *The Virgin Unmasked* (15). Further insights into the actual appearance of the interior of the theatre may be provided by a photograph of a large, high ceiled room on the top floor of the tenement after it was occupied by the Carrubber's Close Mission. The photography appeared in *These Fifty Years: The Story of the Carrubber's Close Mission (1858-1909)* and is reproduced by Rock (16). His description follows:

The photography shows their 'old hall' with slender Palladian Ionic columns supporting a gallery, apparently on three sides of the room.... The room used by the theatre was almost certainly the one extended upwards by an additional story that according to the biographical sketch of William Butler in *Kay's Portraits*, was 'added to his dwelling house in Carrubber's Close without taking down the roof. This he accomplished by means of screws. 'In effect Butter raised the roof, creating an upper story with clerestory windows on two sides and it seems very likely that this elegant room was Allan Ramsay's theatre (15-16, See Fig. 10).

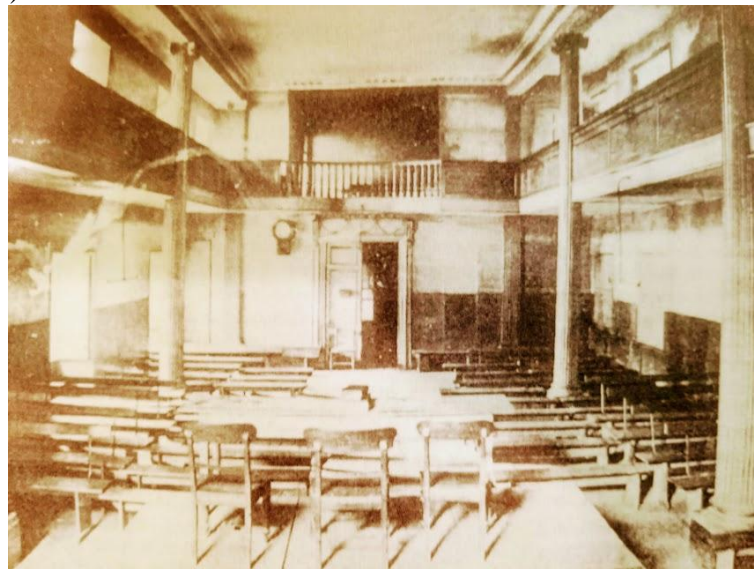


Figure 8. Labeled by Rock, "Interior of Old Hall". (Rock 16, Non-commercial use for research only in accordance with copyright permissions.)

After the 1736-1737 season the theatre was apparently not used for regular dramatic performances. Because of opposition from the Church and the Town Council, citing the Licensing Act of 1737 which forbade stage plays outside of Westminster, the theatre was closed down (Rock 15). In August of 1738, however, Ramsay began searching for English players and the New Theatre reopened at the same location on Friday, January 5, 1739 with a performance of *Macbeth*. This was followed by regular performances through January 22. During the performance of January 23, however, municipal officers were "hindered" as they tried to arrest a "list of persons" known to be associated with the theatre. The actors fled for sanctuary to Holyrood Abbey. In the face of this opposition Ramsay continued to promote benefit performances for his actors until February 23 and, subsequently, to fight by legal means for the legitimization of the theatre in Edinburgh. He failed to gain a patent from Parliament and so terminated his 8-year effort to operate a theatre in Edinburgh. He abandoned the New Theatre in 1739 selling the wood furnishings as they were to Butter, the building's proprietor. As previously mentioned and as indicated by Rock, this was a first attempt to design a public, purpose-built theatre in Scotland. Concurring with his conclusion that Ramsay "deserves great credit for his determination" (16), I would add that his efforts paved the way for the establishment of future permanent, public theatres in Scotland and provides a point of departure for the next segment of study which leads us to the inauguration of Theatre Royal Edinburgh.

In conclusion, what can be said to garner some meaning and value out of such a short compare and contrast study of the theatre in two very distinct places? Considering the physical facilities, both venues developed, earlier or later, from an itinerant type performance, which took place in plazas, street corners, coffee houses, and/or halls not designed specifically for theatrical performances. The Cruz Theatre in Madrid, however, did evolve from a more permanent type of venue which had been used for more than 100 years. Carrubber's Close was preceded by a make shift venue in the

Merchant Tailor's Guild which was in place for about a decade. Madrid's building was carefully planned and influenced by experienced, proven architects such as Felipe Ibarra, brought to Spain from Italy to help with the construction of the Royal Palace. It was purpose-built from the ground up to accommodate performances and elaborately decorated to reflect the success of Italian theatres of the period. It was primarily financed by local government, which would have a vested interest in the collection of its profits. Though there were periods of opposition to theatre in Spain, it, generally, had the full support of the government and the church, as entities that contributed to the wellbeing of the poor and needy. For its repertoire, it drew on a large body of extant, popular national drama as well as other types of shows. It existed for some 120 years before being demolished in 1859 to provide for better traffic flow.

In Edinburgh, Carrubber's Close was created, in part, by a builder (perhaps in modern times we would call him a real estate developer), from previous buildings and wall additions that he used to form a structure with a multipurpose auditorium-like hall. Only an interior hall was outfitted as a playhouse and this was done by an entrepreneur-manager who relied heavily on patrons and season ticket subscriptions for funding. There was much opposition to dramatic theatre by the church, the magistrates, and conservatives who perceived the actors as evil and the presentations as works of the devil. Theatres which presented dramatic performances were controlled by Parliament and permissions or patents were difficult to obtain. No significant body of national works was available from which to draw materials for performances, English works were presented and more often than not these works were presented in English by English players, not in the national language of Scots.

Similarities also exist and this is where I would like to end. In both countries, an active, lively theatre evolved from liturgy, to street, to public houses, to designated venues. In both countries, the spirit of the theatre and the necessity of self-expression could not be tamed by any sort of opposition or oppression. In spite of the obstacles to

Scottish drama in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and the lack of new creative works in Spain during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that free spirit of self and public expression triumphed in both countries. Just as the importance of the study of the parallel significance of English and Spanish drama is manifested by the scholars who met at Calgary in 1987, the importance of Spanish and Scottish theatre cannot be overlooked for it will reveal much, not only about the theatre and the works presented, but also about the character and spirit of indomitable people determined to have their shadow strut across the stage and to share that experience with a public desirous of entertainment so representative of life.

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