

"An Alarm to the frequenters of Plays, wrote by a Religious Person" handwritten broadside

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circa 1774



Title Statement

"An Alarm to the frequenters of Plays, wrote by a Religious Person" handwritten broadside
Guide to "An Alarm to the frequenters of Plays, wrote by a Religious Person" handwritten broadside C0445

Subtitle: "An Alarm to the frequenters of Plays, wrote by a Religious Person" handwritten broadside

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Publication Statement

Publisher: George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

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March 24, 2025

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-03-25 08:44:43 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0445

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/738

Unit Date

circa 1774

box

1 (folder)

Language

English .

Abstract

Handwritten manuscript copy of an anti-theatre broadside written by preacher Rowland Hill titled "Alarm to the frequenters of plays, wrote by a religious person".

Creator

Hill, Rowland, 1744-1833

Extent

.1 Linear Feet 1 folder

Physical Location

R 71, C 1, S 1

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Public Domain. There are no known restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from L&T Respress Books in 2017.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in February 2025. Finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in March 2025.

Preferred Citation

"An Alarm to the frequenters of Plays, wrote by a Religious Person" handwritten broadside, C0445, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries

Biographical Information

Born on August 23, 1744 in Shropshire, England, Rowland Hill is best remembered as an evangelical preacher and minister who often preached in the open air without a license, putting him in opposition to the authorities and crowds of locals. In 1783 he built and founded the independent, non-denominational Surrey Chapel in Blackfriars, London and would go on to establish a number of Sunday Schools and charity societies, such as the Religious Tract Society. In 1806, he opened a medical clinic attached to Surrey Chapel after becoming an early proponent of smallpox vaccination due to his friendship with Dr. Edward Jenner. Hill was also well-known for having a strong aversion to theatre and the attendance of proclaimed Christians at plays, believing "Religion is the Christian's truest treat, Christ is his enjoyment" (Graves 2024). Hill passed away on April 11, 1833 at the age of 88 and was initially buried below his pulpit at Surrey Chapel, before later being moved to the Lincoln Memorial Tower in Lambeth.

Scope and Content

Handwritten manuscript copy of an anti-theatre broadside written by preacher Rowland Hill titled "Alarm to the frequenters of plays, wrote by a religious person." This title is written on the back of the manuscript to be displayed when folded. On the front side is a full page of text mimicking a theatrical broadside or play bill advertising a "play" titled "'The Great Assize" to be performed at "the Theatre of the Universe". The manuscript begins with large text written at the top of the front side reading: "By Command of The King of Kings. (At the Desire of all who Love his Appearing) At The Theater of The Universe. On the Eve of Time, will be performed The Great Assize or Day of Judgement." The manuscript ends with a notation stating "The above is a Copy of a Play Bill which was Stuck up at Richmond on Saturday the 4th June 1774. The King's Birth Day Close to the Bill for that Day." Based on the birthday and date, the king referenced is likely King George III of England.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other manuscripts and broadsides, including the North American 19th century theatre broadside collection and Illuminated manuscript leaf.

Contemporary commercial copies of Hill's broadside are held at Cambridge University Library's Special Collections and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust archives.

Keywords

Broadsides

Playbills (Posters)

Manuscripts

Bibliography

"British School, 18th Century - The Revd Rowland Hill (1744-1833)." n.d. Accessed March 12, 2025. <https://www.rct.uk/collection/420810/the-revd-rowland-hill-1744-1833>.

Graves, Dan. 2024. "Rowland Hill: Theater Going Will Never Do." Christian History Institute. August 14, 2024. <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/blog/post/rowland-hill-against-theater>.

"Rowland Hill (1744-1833)." n.d. Find a Grave. Accessed March 12, 2025. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/109530506/rowland-hill>.

"Rowland Hill (Preacher)." 2024. In Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rowland_Hill_\(preacher\)&oldid=1265007786](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rowland_Hill_(preacher)&oldid=1265007786).

Arrangement

This is a single item collection.