



Attraction of the Month, Denmark

Teatermuseet i Hofteatret: The perfect setting for a Royal Affair

Teatermuseet i Hofteatret (The Theatre Museum at the Court Theatre) is located on the Christiansborg riding ground, in central Copenhagen. Situated above the Royal Stables, it is part of Christiansborg Castle, a former royal residence which today accommodates the Danish Parliament. The building has housed a theatre for almost 250 years and has survived both of the great fires that consumed the castle itself.

By Yane Christensen | Photos: Teatermuseet i Hofteatret

The collection at the Theatre Museum explores different aspects of Danish theatrical history - opera, pantomime, ballet and drama - from the seventeenth century to the present day. It includes drawings, engravings, paintings, photographs, costumes and assorted memorabilia from the museum's extensive archives.

The theatre itself remains an integral part of the museum. The auditorium is a real gem with its sloping stage, elegant royal boxes and beautifully decorated oriental ceiling, evoking an atmosphere of theatrical splendour. Seat yourself in the plush red velvet upholstery and imagine the times when the king and his court would come to watch theatre performances

amidst masquerades and intrigues. Throughout history, many rich and influential people have gossiped and schemed on these very premises. While the official theatre was the Royal Theatre, the Court Theatre was more like the equivalent to what would today be the king's private television lounge.

The museum is brimming with quirky corners and fascinating facts: during the reign of Christian VIII, he had a private 'throne' built directly below the stage, complete with a leather covered seat. Today, this remains as a humorous part of the exhibition. Also, the theatre is connected to the parliament building by a secret corridor.

The theatre has recently come into international prominence as the setting of the critically acclaimed film *A Royal Affair*. The film tells the story of the German physician Johan Friedrich Struensee who was the personal physician to King Christian VII in the 1770s. He began an affair with the queen, and in 1771, he was appointed cabinet minister; thus he possessed the highest office in the country and had real authority. However, following a masquerade at the Court Theatre, he was arrested and taken to the scaffold, where he was beheaded. His body was drawn and quartered and put on display as a deterrent to the public. The Theatre Museum at the Court Theatre is currently running an exhibition on this dramatic story called *Struensee - The Fall*.

For more information, please visit:
www.teatermuseet.dk