CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, Nov. 27, 1863

First Night of J Wilkes Booth - Claude Meinotte

The brief Summer engagement played here by Mr. Booth and the popularity he created prepared us in part for the brilliant ovation that greeted him last evening. The house was not only crowded - - but crowded with one of the most fashionable audiences of the season, and this fact, in connection with the overflowing numbers that thronged to hear Edmund Kirk before the Library Association, shows the growing disposition of our people for public entertainment.

Mr. Booth's rendition of the role of "Claude Melnotte", of which, however, we saw but the closing portion, was a beautiful and brilliant performance, and drew from the thronged Academy repeated and rapturous applause, culminating in a call for his re-appearance at the close of the play, when he was received with another storm of approval. We were struck in the last act, when clothed in the full uniform of a General of the Grand Army, with the long military cloak half enveloping his figure, with his remarkable resemblance to the First Napolion as that greatest of warriors the world has ever seen, is represented to us crossing the Alps. - - The picture was inimitable.

The part of "Claude" well becomes Mr. Booth, and he has made it measurably his own by the freshness and vigor as well by the fine interpretation he gives us of the young Peasant-Hero. We cannot speak of the entire performance and therefore criticism in this instance is out of the question. We trust to witness his "Hamlet" tonight, when we shall make up a verdict regarding the range and scope of his powers.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, Nov. 28, 1863

Mr. Booth's personation of "Hamlet" last evening was so replete with charms that it is difficult to single out any particular point, where all were so telling, and give it especial praise. The one that struck as as being the finest, however, was the closet scene with the Queen, when the Ghost appears, to "whet" "Hamlet's" "almost blunted purpose". The frenzy of fine actin was reached in this scene, and the audience fairly shivered with affright as he started back from the apparition with the words, "Save me and hover over me ye Heavenly guards!"

The scene was given superbly, and deserves a lengthened analysis and a meed of praise, such as we, unfortunately, from want of time, cannot bestow. The thundering applause which greeted this, as all the other scens, however, is better testimony and more gratifying, no doubt, of how completely he succeeded in carrying with him the popular heart. The play was well cast, and though it dragged a little, the whole performance was a success.

Tonight Mr. Booth appears in "Shakespeare's great character, "Richard III"- a part which he invests with vigor and power of portrature that makes it among the greatest of his roles.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER - December 2, 1863

Mr. Booth as Iago

Mr. J Wilkes Booth played his role of "Raphael Duchalet," in the play of the "Marble Heart," for the second time last evening and made of the part a very superb performance.

Tonight he appears for the first time in Shakespear's great character of "Iago". This was one of his father's greatest parts, and we doubt not it will be handled with skill and ability by the son, upon whose shoulders the mantle of the great Booth has descended. Mr. McCollom plays "Othello" a fine opportunity for this promising young actor to display his varied abilities.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, DEC. 3, 1863

Mr. Booth as Iago

What little we saw of the closing part of "Othello" last evening gave us the warmest admiration for Mr. Booth's portraiture of "Iago," which we regretted exceedingly not having witnessed entire. A friend tells us it was a very superior performance, and we think Mr. Booth may congratulate himself upon another triumph in adding this difficult role to his repertoire.

Tonight he will appear in "Richard" and fight again that terrific combat with "Richmond.". The tragedy is given again at the request of numerous citizens. The house will no doubt be crowded, as this is the last night but one of Mr. Booth's appearance.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, Dec. 5, 1863

Last Night of Mr. Booth

Tonight Mr. J. Wilkes Booth, who has been playing a very successful engagement for the past week or two, makes his last appearance and has chosen for his closing piece Schiller's grand tragedy of "The Robbers". We have no doubt but that the character of "Charles DeMoor" in the hands of Mr. Booth will be a very superior - nay, a great performance.

In the "Stranger" and"Petrucio" last night he played with consummate ability, and indeed his whole engagement has tended to make a great impression on the lovers of the drama, among whom he has secured many admirers, and from whom he will always receive a hearty welcome. Mr. Booth has genius and talent of a high order, and nature has not been niggard in endowing him with the gift of a fine person and a voice capable of much, and great variety of expression. Time and study cannot fail to secure for him an exalted place among the most gifted who have ever trod the boards. Let him but wisely use the gifts within his grasp cultivate nature and develop them - and a brilliant future must crown him with an enduring halo of fame.

Let not a seat be vacant tonight to see him in that most beautiful of all of Schiller's dramatic compositions, "Charles De Moor"

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, Dec. 9, 1863

Mr. Booth in the Robbers

Mr. Booth's impersonation of the character of "Charles D'Moor" is in our judgment, his greatest performance. To a full house he played this part on the occasion of his last appearance here, Saturday evening, and we but utter the simple truth when we say he completely swept the chords of feeling of his crowded and intensely thrilled auditory and carried captive both reason and imagination. From the first to the last he entered into the spirit and genius of this magnificent but most false creation of the great Schiller, and gave us a portraiture wondrous for its fidelity, sublime for its intensity, and grand for its masterly effect upon a theatre crowded from pit to dome to witness

"A play of hopes and fears"

The character of Charles D'Moor is intensely written. Schiller has in his eye - - it was his first, earliest and greatest triumph as a dramatist - - Shakespear's sublime creation of "Hamlet", of which "Charles D'Moor is the pale but most successful reflection. No other writer has so completely caught the spirit of this, the grandest creation of the immortal bard, and the delineation of it in the hands of Mr. Booth, is, of his impersonations, his most triumphant.

The play was put upon the stage with great excellence. The parts were all filled with more than the average ability and particularly those confided to Mrs. Ellsler, Mr. McCollom, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Leslie were portrayed with an excellence that gave the whole play a charm no other has had that has been given during Mr. Booth's engagement. This is not the place or time to criticise and condem the radical errors and gross absurdities of the play itself as a creation of nature. It is most unusual - most inhuman. But the author, not the actor, is the culprit, and him we cannot here condemn or criticise. Let the "dead bury the dead," the play is not without its redeeming feature - its terrible horrible, fearful lesson.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, Dec. 9, 1863 (continued)

In this part Mr. Booth takes mark with the finest actors who now tread the boards - - though in saying this we would not have him infer that it is a faultless portraiture. Time, "the great corrector", will, however, smooth the uneven precipices and level all difficulties, great or small, that mar the portraiture or take from its grandest aspects. Mr. Booth was greeted with a storm of applause at the fall of the curtain, nor did the thunders of approval cease until his appearance before the curtain appeased the intensely gratified audience.

CLEVELAND HERALD, June 30, 1863

Booth, the Great Tragedian

Academy of Music. * This evening the celebrated young tragedian J Wilkes Booth, son of the famous J. B. Booth, will appear for the first time here. His engagement is positively limited to four nights, and those desirous of seeing this actor, who has created such a furore in many other cities, should not be slow in securing their seats. Tonight he appears in Richard III, in which character he has achieved considerable reputation. The theatrical season is drawing to a speedy close, and therefore his engagement cannot possibly be extended beyond four nights.

CLEVELAND HERALD, July 2, 1863

Acadmeny of Music - Last evening Mr. J Wilkes Booth appeared for the second time before a Cleveland audience, the play being Hamlet. The play was finely performed, and Booth's rendition of the "Melancholy Dane" drew repeated and enthusiastic applause from a large audience. Mr. Booth has justified the expectations of those who were led to expect something more than ordinarily good from his parentage, and during the last two nights of his stay we expect to see the Academy of Music crowded to excess. It will be borne in mind that tomorrow night will be positively his last appearance here.

Tonight, Mr. Booth will appear as "Alfred Evelyne," in Sir Edward Bulwer's splendid comey of Money, in which character Mr. Booth stands without a rival.

CLEVELAND HERALD, NOVEMBER 30, 1863

Academy of Music - The weather on Saturday night was so very unfavorable that it required some very great attraction to induce people to leave their firesides and brave the rain and mud. In spite of all, however, there was a full house to witness Mr. Booth's performance of Richard III, and those who were present received ample return for their courage in coming out. Mr. Booth is undoubtedly the best Richard on the stage. His personation of the character was of extraordinary merit, having the vigor and fire necessary to a proper representation, and yet entirely free from cant or violence. Even in "the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind" of his passion he never overstepped "the modesty of nature". The battle scene was of the most exciting character, and was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

Tonight Mr. Booth appears in the Marble Heart, where he is thoroughly at home in his part.

CLEVELAND HERALD, November 27th, 1863

Academy of Music - Mr. J Wilkes Booth commenced his brief engagement last night to a crowded house. We have no space to give an extended notice of the performance today, but his personation of Claude Melnotte was cordially received.

Tonight Mr. Booth plays Hamlet, a part which he plays most admirably.

CLEVELAND HERALD, November 28, 1863

Academy of Music - Hamlet was produced last night for the Benefit of Mr. Booth and was witnessed by a full house. The character of the "Melancholoy Dane" was well personated by Mr. Booth, who gave sereral of the finer passages with an effect that brought down immense applause. The other promient characters were filled by the leading members of the Company, and the gragedy was therefore played, as a whole, as well as it ever has been in this city, if not better.

Tonight, Mr. Booth appears in Richard III. On his previous visit here he created a great sensation by his performance of that character, and we are certain of a crowded house tonight. His combat with Richmond is unequalled, and on his visit last season, the whole audience rose to their feet with excitement as the combat went on.

CLEVELAND HERALD, December 1, 1863

Academy of Music - Last evening the powerful and startling drama of the "Marble Heart" was produced, with Mr. Booth as "Raphael Duchalet", the sculptor. The drama is of thrilling interest throughout, and was admirably put upon the stage. Mr. Booth's "Raphael" was a fine piece of acting, and was received with repeated bursts of applause. The other characters were all well played.

CLEVELAND HERALD, December 3, 1863

Academy of Music - The wrteched condition of the streets, the Opera at Brainard's Hall, and the gloom thrown over the city by the sad tidings from the Seventh Regiment, operated against the house last night, but in spite of all there was a good house. The play of "Othello" was well performed. The character of Iago, the wily plotting friend, was performed by Mr. Booth for the first time, and it was done admirably. We shall refer again to it.

Mr. McCollom's Othello was a very creditable performance, Mrs. Ellsler's Desdemona a fine piece of acting, and the other characters generally well played. We have not time this morning to give a more detailed notice.

Tonight, by general request, Mr. Booth will appear again in his great character of Richard III.

CLEVELAND HERALD, December 5, 1863

Academy of Music - Mr. Wilkes Booth had a very fine house on the occasion of his benefit last night. The plays were "The Stranger" and "Katharine and Petrucio". The "Stranger" is a play that has been worn out years ago, and its beauties, if it ever had any - - and we are not prepared to say it ever had - - have long since become hackneyed and stale, was played better than we remember to have seen it for years.

The "Stranger", by Mr. Booth was somewhat new in its conception, but taken as a whole his rendition of the character came nearer to our idea of the author's meaning - - if he ever had any - - than that of most of the actors who undertake the part. Mrs. Ellsler's "Mrs. Haller" was finely and faithfully given, particularly in the last act - the meeting between husband wife - - where there is a wide field for over-doing, which, we are sorry to say, is generablly embraced by most actresses. All the other characters were well sustained, more particularly the "Peter" of Mr. Lewis and the "Solomon" of Mr. Ellsler.

We never could imagine why an actor of Mr. Booth's abilities and standing should select such a play as the "Stranger" for his benefit or for any other performance, for that matter. In our estimation it is a play unsatisfactory, unnatural and unfinished; and, whether the fault of the author or translator, is devoid of plot, moral, or beauty of language, and should have been laid on the shelf, among the cast-off wardrobe, years ago.

"Katharine and Petrucio" was very finely performed, and as it has some substance in its composition, was well received by the audience.

Tonight is the last of Mr. Booth's engagement, when will be presented the "Robbers" and the laughable farce of "My Neighbor's Wife." Another attraction will be the recitation of "Drake's ode to the American Flag", by Mr. Leslie, his first appearance on any stage.

CLEVELAND HERALD, DECEMBER 4, 1863

Academy of Music - This evening the talented young actor, J. Wilkes Booth, takes his farewell Benefit, and will appear in the widely dissimilar character of "Petruchio" and the "Stranger". We hope the house will be crowded, for we hold that Mr. Booth to be an actor of talent and great promise and this opinion has grown upon us in spite of an unfavorable impression entertained at first, and although we do not consider him free from imperfections.