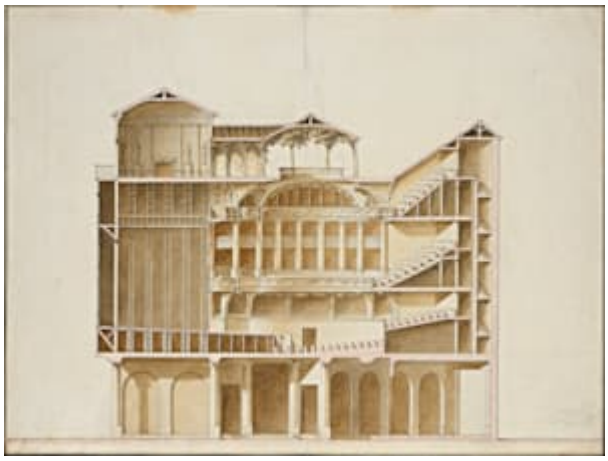


French School 18th Century

A Cross Section of the Interior of a Theatre: The Panthéon in the Place du Carrousel, Paris, in 1786.

Pen and black and red ink and brown wash, over a pencil underdrawing, on two joined sheets of paper.
Inscribed 1 pouce pour toise / 2 lignes pour pied / métrique at the lower right.
Signed(?) with a monogram Dr at the lower right.
452 x 600 mm. (17 3/4 x 23 5/8 in.)

Inaugurated in 1786, the theatre and ballroom known as the Panthéon was built on the Place du Carrousel in front of the Louvre, on the former site of the recently demolished 17th century Hôtel de Rambouillet. Its name Panthéon was derived from the circular cupola of the structure. The high cost of the land on which it was built led the architect to situate the ballroom – known as the Saloon du Vauxhall, or du Panthéon, and measuring sixty by thirty-five feet - on the first floor, to allow for shops on the ground floor. Two drawings by Claude-Louis Desrais, known from engravings published in the Journal polytype des sciences et des arts of 27 October 1786, record the interior of the ballroom and a cross-section of the entire building.

The architect of the Panthéon is unknown, but it may have been either Nicolas Lenoir, known as Lenoir le Romain (1733-1810), or Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1789). Both architects profited from the Parisian vogue for dancing halls known as ‘Vauxhalls’, after Vauxhall Gardens in London, and each designed several theatres in Paris at around the same time. Numerous ‘Vauxhalls’ were built in Paris in the second half of the 18th century, of which the Panthéon was one of the finest. In 1790 the Panthéon was converted into a theatre by Lenoir le Romain for Pierre-Antoine-Augustin de Piis and Pierre-Yves Barré’s Théâtre du Vaudeville, which opened in 1792. The building was destroyed by fire in 1836.

A different cross-section view of the Panthéon in the Place du Carrousel is reproduced in a print in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

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