Small Archive of Material relating to Eugene & Louise Silvain, their daughter Jeanne and Jeanne’s husband, Edmond Roze

Items from the estate of Jeanne Silvain Roze Laidley (1892-1983), the actress daughter of Eugene Silvain (1851-1930) doyen of the Comedie-Francaise, actor, poet, playwright and director, and Louise Silvain (1874-1930), an acclaimed stage actress. Jeanne Silvain married Edmond Roze (1878-1943), an actor, director and theatrical impresario, who died at Auschwitz. Between the two generations of this family, they collaborated, consorted and acted with many of the finest French stage actors and playwrights from the 1900s through the 1940s. We have already catalogued most of the books Jeanne owned, but there remains a small cache of letters and other material that are worth
listing. We have divided the material into A) Material from Eugene Silvain; B) Material from Louise Silvain; C) Letters to the family members from various theatrical personalities; and D) Everything Else. Forgive the lack of diacritical marks (accents); nous sommes désolées. The price for the collection is $2000.

A. EUGENE SILVAIN

1. 1903 letter to MARGUERITE MORENO re staging Racine’s Britannicus and Jean Moreas’s version of Iphigenia, etc. Moreno was married to Marcel Schwob at the time, and acted and collaborated both in productions by Silvain and by Edmond Roze.

2. 1900 letter to MARGUERITE MORENO regarding the staging of certain plays and the styles of certain actors (quite critical), including a passage on Sarah Bernhardt, Racine, etc. 4 sides of small stationary.

3. 1927 2pp densely handwritten letter to his daughter JEANNE.
4. 1925 (?) 2pp letter to his children regarding his travel and other activities during the summer.

5. 1918 letter to an unnamed author (“Mon cher poete ami”), regarding working with Ernest Jaubert to translate and stage Greek dramas and what his wife is up to.

6. 1919 letter to “Burhaneddine” — possibly a Turkish person of some power — regarding his visit to France, staging classical plays, the effect of the war on theatre, life in Constantinople, etc. 4 sides, densely written.
7. Two 1924 & 1925 letters (and one reply) to an unnamed official at the Chambre des Deputes, regarding his wife’s acting in certain staged classical plays and some of the difficulties she’s encountered, and a second letter complaining about the low morale at the Comedie-Francaise because of the administrative actions of Emile Fabre, and urging officials to look into his behavior. 6 closely written pages.

8. 1929 letter to LOUISE SILVAIN from Clermont-Ferrand, giving an account of the great success of his “conference” and giving many details about it.

B. LOUISE SILVAIN

1. Group of 11 letters to EUGENE SILVAIN. 9 letters are from August 6-18, 1924, newsy and with many of her activities and observations recounted; unclear where each of them were. Each letter is 4 pp. The letters from 1926 continue along the same themes.
2. 2 photos, ca. early 1900s, of Louise Silvain in classical garb holding a dagger, measuring approx. 6.5 x 3.5 inches, mounted, photographer is Paul Berger.

C. LETTERS TO THE SILVAINS

1. Andre Antoine (1858-1943), the “father of the mis-en-scene in France.” 1 pp. note, of a few lines, probably to Edmond Roze. Undated.


4. Docteur de Cardenal of Villereal. 1913 letter, in original envelope, enclosing carte-de-visite photo of Eugene Silvain, expressing his pleasure in seeing Silvain in Villereal and inviting him and his wife back. We could not find much on the doctor, except that he seemed to be on friendly terms with Lhote and Cocteau.
5. Ernest Alexandre Honore Coquelin, sometimes known as Coquelin Cadet (1848-1909), French actor. 1898 note to Marguerite Moreno (closely associated with the Silvains) accepting an invitation from her and her husband, Marcel Schwob. In envelope.

6. Georges Courteline (1858-1929), dramatist and novelist. Short friendly note to Edmond Roze, from 1925, and another short note, with no named recipient, giving his compliments.

8. Robert de Flers (1872-1927), sometime President of the Societe des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques. 1921 letter expressing apologies for not attending a performance because of a recurring attack of the gout, and other subjects. In envelope.


10. Alexandre-Marie Desrousseaux, also known as “Bracke” (1861-1955), socialist and activist; his wife was named Luce Bracke. Postcard with his picture, addressed to the Silvains at their summer place in Asnieres, signed “Les Brackes.” 1936 letter to the Roze’s on Le Populaire letterhead (a socialist journal edited by Leon Blum), probably from Luce, discussing Bracke’s activities including in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. 2 pp, in envelope. Letter to Louise, probably from 1927, complimenting her on her performance in Electre, from Bracke. Letter from Luce to Jeanne from 1958, very friendly, and enclosing a 1917 letter from EUGENE SILVAIN to Bracke about theatre and a lot of other subjects, since Bracke was regarded as a “Hellenist.” Included is also a newspaper clipping of the time, that seems to reprint Bracke’s reply to the Silvain letter.
11. Henri Duvernois (1875-1937), author and playwright. Short note, undated, probably to Edmond Roze, as the two were good friends.

12. Emile Fabre (1869-1955), Comedie-Francaise bureaucrat and actor, short note to Louise Silvain from 1923 about C-F business.

13. Claude Farrere (1876-1957), novelist and winner of the Prix Goncourt. Note probably to Edmond Roze, possibly responding to condolences regarding the passing of his wife.


17. Edmond Hurnaucourt (1856-1941) poet and novelist. Letter to Eugene Silvain, probably from 1927, on a number of subjects, including complimenting Louise on her performance of Electre.

18. Ernest Jaubert (1856-1942), poet and playwright and frequent collaborator of Silvain in translating and staging Greek classical theatre. 2 pp. typed 1924 poem in purple carbon copy entitled ‘Silvain,’ plus Emma Jaubert’s ‘Sonnet — Hommage a Mr. & Mme. Eugene Silvain’ handwritten, July 1924. Emma was probably Ernest’s spouse.


20. Albert Lambert-fils (1865-1941), actor and Societaire of the Comedie-Francaise from 1891 to 1935. 1903 short note in purple ink probably to Marguerite Moreno on topical concerns of the moment.
21. Pierre Lazareff (1907-1972), journalist and theatrical worker. 1925 note, probably to Eugene Silvain, expressing his support for Silvain to receive a Legion D’Honneur award and saying that his support will be printed in La Rampe and Journal du Peuple.

22. Georges Le Roy (1885-1965), actor and member of the Comedie-Francaise. 2pp letter from 1918 in original envelope to Silvain, regarding Le Roy’s nomination to C-F.

23. Henry Mayer (1857-1941), French actor, member of the Comedie-Francaise from 1901 on. 1920s letter (probably 1927) to Louise Silvain, applauding her acting.

24. Amelie Mesureur (1853-1926), French poet and novelist. 1923 letter, probably to Louise Silvain, commenting on the politics of the day (the Bloc National rightwing party’s ascent), plus some more personal and friendly material.


27. Alfred Poizat (1863-1936), novelist, playwright, etc.; in 1907 he adapted a classical play for Eugene Silvain. 1924 letter to Eugene Silvain, very topical but also about theatrical subjects and about the play Electra. 2 pp. And 1927 letter to Louise Silvain, 6pp, in envelope, discussing plans to visit the Silvains at Asniere and commentary on Louise’s performance in Electre.

28. Jane Renouardt (1890-1972), actress. Inscribed postcard real photo of Renouardt to Jeanne Roze, plus 1928 letter extending an invitation to her next performance of an operetta, either a matinee or evening performance, etc.

30. Gustave Simon (1848-1928), literary figure closely associated with the dispensation of the estate of Victor Hugo. 2 notes, from April 15 & 24, 1927, in the same envelope, addressed to Eugene Silvain, discussing various roles, Hugo, Frederick Lemaitre, etc.

31. Georges-Gabriel Thenon (aka RIP; 1884-1941), boulevardier, singer, author, artist, actor. Short note from 1928 to Eugene Silvain with 4-line poem in homage of Silvain’s interpretation of Moliere.

32. Jules Truffier (1856-1943), stage actor. 1918 sonnet, addressed to Eugene Silvain, on Comedie Francaise stationary, celebrating a 40th anniversary of Silvain’s position as Doyen of the company.
33. Edgar de Vernejoul (1860-1947), pastor and poet, collaborated with Nobel winning author Frederic Mistral. 2 sonnets, undated, probably early 1920s, about the Silvains doing theatre in Arles.

D. Everything Else

1. Extracts from reviews in the press of Louise Silvain’s performances, written in purple ink by a professional clerical firm. Includes 1907 performance as Electra, and her return to that role in the 1920s, also her 1911 performance in Hecuba in a translation by Silvain and Jaubert. Also a 4pp. typewritten review, also probably by a professional copyist, of Hector Fleischmann (1882-1914) review of Louise Silvain’s 1907 performance in Electre.
2. Important legal papers and documents. 1910 several page legal document prepared in Marseille regarding the welfare of the children of Eugene and Louise. 1916 driving permit for Louise Silvain. Dec. 22, 1916 Testaments, authorizing each spouse to handle the other’s estate in case of death. 1913 re-issue of Eugene Silvain’s birth certificate from 1878. Passport papers from 1916 & 1917 for both Louise and Eugene Silvain permitting them to reside in Switzerland for one year, 1924 passport papers for the two, without any country specified1926 hunting permit for Eugene Silvain.

3. Photos: 32 photos of friends and family (mainly family) including about 10 19th century images (cabinet photos of the children and of Louise), photos of family events, of actors’ dinners, theatre, etc. 11 larger photos (8x10 or larger) mainly studio photos —
some signed by the photographers — of Jeanne Silvain, one of a lunch in the countryside, one of both Edmond and Jeanne. Condition varies but mainly VG.