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Chapter 1 : Jan Vřiclav Kautsk½ â€“ Wikipedie

A Biographical Dictionary of Scenographers: B.C. to A.D. (Constitutions of the United States; 4) by Robin Lacy (Author).

James merits an entry in a recent scholarly account of scene painting, "A Biographical Dictionary of Scenographers, B. However he also appears to have developed a strong relationship with the managers and companies of The Lyceum Theatre, where his son Alfred is also reputed to have later been employed as a scene painter. Meadows, the son of Mr Meadows, of The Surrey". Although descriptions of the latter could be quite extensive, they did not always run to mentioning the artists. Macready retired from the stage in 1795. Given his association with The Surrey Theatre, it is likely that James moved his family south of the river for professional reasons in the 1790s, after the birth of his youngest child Arthur who was born in Mile End in 1794. Ira Aldridge, the first successful black actor, also appeared here at the same time. Self-portrait, by James Meadows. Reproduced by kind permission of Joan Audrey Meadows. From 1795, the theatre was managed by the contralto Madame Vestris and her husband, the actor-manager Charles Matthews the Younger. Charles Matthews the Elder, a renowned actor-manager in his own right, had seen William Meadows perform in Dublin in 1794 and commented favorably on his performance see the Early career of William Meadows. Whether this had any bearing on James Meadows engagement is unknown, but it is certain that his family background would have endeared him to his fellow scene painter, William Roxby Beverley, one of the leading lights and revolutionaries of 19th century scene painting. His father managed the Durham circuit of theatres, and four of his brothers and sisters all took to the stage. William started by acting in low-comic roles, before moving on to stage design. From 1795 he was the scene painter of The Lyceum, before moving to Covent Garden in 1796, and then spending the remainder of his career from 1797 at Drury Lane. He was the first artist to use transformation scenes with folding and descending scenery, renowned for its spectacular beauty. James Meadows prominence as a scenic artist resulted from his partnership with Beverley at The Lyceum, under the management of Matthews the Younger; three second-generation representatives of theatrical families whose forbears first trod the boards, and maybe even crossed paths, fifty years earlier, when William Meadows appeared in the earliest pantomimes with Grimaldi at The Haymarket. Amongst the productions for which Beverley and Meadows produced the scenery were: *Closely connected to the Court* by family and professional associations, he was nonetheless a prolific and successful playwright for sixty years. A long-standing friend of Madame Vestris, he was "playwright, librettist, general advisor and superintendent of the decorative departments" at The Lyceum from 1795. Much of the success of these productions was due to the scenery which supported them, and even today they are considered masterpieces of stage scenery. This was the first example of a transformation scene. There was some very excellent dancing introduced into the course of the evening, but the scenery and machinery were beautiful in the extreme; indeed I never saw anything in this way to equal them. Matthews was magnificently placed upon the stage, every attention being bestowed upon scenic effect and illusion. The *Temple of Bacchus* was a splendid triumph of art, and spoke highly for the exquisite talent and tastes of Messrs. Beverley and Mr J. Meadows, surpasses, if possible, anything hitherto done for the decoration of burlesque. Mere magnificence is common enough, but here magnificence is combined with the best taste, and with truly classical feeling. In 1796, it was the turn of William Beverley to leave, and move around the corner to Covent Garden for a season, before making his final move to Drury Lane in 1797. Vestris and Matthews gave up the management of The Lyceum in 1798, and so the revels now were over for the band which had made The Lyceum such a success. Reproduced by kind permission of Lesley Hayward. By the time of the next census in 1801, James and his family were living at 12, Coburn Street in Bow. It is to this later period of his life and career that James Meadows owes his reputations as a marine painter. From 1801 until 1805, James exhibited 21 paintings at the Royal Academy, all of which depicted ships or coastal scenes. The scenes depicted included the mouth of the River Thames; Dover, Pevensey and Beachy head on the south coast, Scarborough on the north coast, and Yarmouth on the Norfolk coast. William Beverley was also a prolific and successful watercolour marine artist,

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including many scenes of Scarborough and the Yorkshire coastline of his childhood. Perhaps the three of them all knew that their "rough magick" as scenic artists would turn to dust and disappear, but that their artistic posterity might be guaranteed by scenes of both tranquility and excitement of the every-day Victorian world of the sea. A coastal scene by James Meadows Snr. Dated , this may be a companion piece to another similar painting of trawlers off the coast at Rye. Reproduced from a private collection, by kind permission of the owner. James Meadows died of diabetes on 5th May, at his home in Coburn Street, and his funeral took place at the local parish church, Holy Trinity, Mile End. According to one obituary, it appears that he was buried in this churchyard. No doubt this was quite simply in order to raise funds for his widow. Both the Dublin City Directory and the The Dublin Street Directory of indicate that this was the professional address of, amongst others, Thomas Cranfield, "printseller, carver, gilder and photographer" Cranfield must have acted as the Meadows family agent for the exhibition. The links below provide more details of the life of William Beverley; the history and development of British pantomime, including an article on The Lyceum; and access to two excellent sources of information, the on-line catalogues of Victorian playbills at the University of Kent and the University of Worcester.

Chapter 2 : Robin Thurlow Lacy | LibraryThing

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Chapter 3 : The later career of James Meadows

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