

(Photograph and ephemera). **Sarah Bernhardt in Fedora** (ca. 1882) photograph by Nadar, related note, as well as, autograph card signed “Sarah”.



1. Rare, large albumen photograph of Bernhardt as Princess Fedora. 7 ½" x 11 15/16" mounted on 9 ½ x 12" on stiff sheet signed by Bernhardt. Photograph by “Nadar” (pseud of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon.)\*

2. Holograph schedule of Bernhardt’s travels written on one sheet (5" x 7 3/4"). 13 lines in ink possibly by *Jacques Damala*\*\* on Sarah Bernhardt stationery, folded. This traveling schedule dates from October 13 (1887) through 11 January (1888) with cities of Anvers through Vienna, to Budapest, Constantinople, Cairo and Alexandria. At bottom in pencil: “puis Italie, Russie, Scandinavie, Londres”.

3. Small business card of Sarah Bernhardt (with black margins), undated to “Mon chérie Julie”. Note of about 20 words in tiny hand, signed “Sarah”.

The play *Fedora* by Victorien Sardou in which Bernhardt is here pictured is a romantic melodrama in four acts. It premiered on December 12, 1882 at Théâtre de Vaudeville in Paris with Bernhardt in the leading role of the princess Fedora. This justly famous photograph is by Nadar considered to be the most important portrait photographer of the era. Sarah Bernhardt was about twenty in 1864 when she first posed for Nadar. Nadar did many studio photos of the actress, as well as, portraits of her in costume as Tosca, Hernani, Pierrot, Theodora and as Phedre. Nadar’s son Paul (1856-1939) also did portraits of Bernhardt.

From a contemporary review *The Daily News* (London):

*M. SARDOU'S NEW DRAMA. (BY SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH.) (FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDANT.)* PARIS, Monday Night.

“*Fedora*, the new drama of M. Sardou, was produced to-night. Sarah Bernhardt was much applauded when, soon after the curtain rose, she made her appearance. She...*is the Princess Fedora, betrothed to the son of the great police official.* Her fiancé, on the eve of the day appointed for the wedding, is assassinated in a deserted house. A mystery hangs over this event, but Count Ivanhoff, who is known to be a Nihilist, is suspected of being the murderer.

Before he can be arrested, he escapes to Paris. Princess Fedora learns he is there and resolves to pursue him. *She is a beautiful incarnation of avenging justice, and an imitation of Judith.* On arriving in Paris she calls on Count Ivanhoff, and pretends to be in love with him in order to extract a confession from him. She actually does fall in love with the murderer. In the fourth act we find her in a villa near London where Ivanhoff has a rendezvous with her for midnight. He discovers her perfidy, and throws himself upon her with brutal fury, trying to strangle her, and pushing her against the marble table. *The end is tragical. Fedora dies.* In dying she falls with her arms extended, so as to form a cross.”

*The Daily News* (London) published a review which mentions couture worn by Bernhardt for the premiere: “...the Fedora dresses must at once affect the fashions. They were made by Madame Morin, of Vienna, and by Worth”. None of the reviews, however, mention a soft felt hat that came to be known as the Fedora that has been incorrectly associated with the play. (<https://wordhistories.net/2017/09/03/origin-of-fedora/>)

\*See slight variation of photo in *Sarah Bernhardt vue par les Nadar* Féedora. Victorien Sardou . Pierre Spivakoff. (1982).

\*\* Probably for the years 1887-88 as noted by Forrest Izard: “she acted in Constantinople, Cairo and Alexandria besides most of the European countries”. P32 (in *Heroines of the Modern Stage.*” Sturgis & Walton Company, 1915). At bottom of the schedule in unidentified pencil is a note: “écrit par M. Damala” (Jacques Damala. Born Aristides Damalas 15 January 1855 Died 18 August 1889, aged 34. Damala married Bernhardt April 4th 1882).

Ref: Ockman, Carol and Kenneth E. Silver. *Sarah Bernhardt. The art of High Drama*, 2005; [exhibition catalog] *Sarah Bernhardt and her times*. November 13-December 28, 1984. NY: Wildenstein, 1984; Salman, Eric (Editor). *Bernhardt and the theatre of her time*. 1977; Spivakoff, Pierre. *Sarah Bernhardt vue par les Nadar*. 1982.

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