Renaissance Theatre: France
1630 to 1700

King Louis XIII
1601-1643

King Louis XIV
1638-1715
Jean Baptiste Poquelin
1622-1673

• Better known as Moliere
• France’s greatest comic playwright
• Organized the *Theatre Illustre* at the age of 21
• We have 10 major plays
• Divide into 2 groups
Farcical comedies

1. *The Doctor In Spite of Himself*
2. *The Tricks of Scapine*, also known as *Scapino*
High comedies
Comedy of character

1. *Tartuffe*
2. *The Miser*
3. *The Imaginary Invalid*
4. *The Misanthrope*
His Masterpiece

Tartuffe
Moliere’s Death

- He **collapsed, on stage**, during a performance of *The Imaginary Invalid*
- Died later that evening at his home
- Buried after dark in a private ceremony
- In 1817 his **remains were moved to the Cemetery Père Lachaise in Paris.**
Comedie Francaise
World’s First National Theatre
Comedie Francaise

- Formed 1680
- By order of King Louis XIV
- Granted a monopoly over French drama
- Performs the works of Moliere, Racine and Corneille
Pierre Corneille
1606-1684

• Remembered for his tragedies
• Most important work: *Le Cid*
• A turning point in French Drama
Academie Francaise

- Organized in 1637
- Limited to "forty men of letters"
- Guiding force was Cardinal Richelieu
- Function: Regulation of the French language and literature
Cardinal Richelieu
1586-1642

• Was King Louis XIII’s “Chief Minister”
• Consolidated royal power and crushed domestic factions
• Patron of the Arts
• The antagonist in The Three Musketeers
Five Neoclassical rules
Product of the *Academie Francaise*

1. Anything which happens on stage must be able to happen in real life
2. Every drama must preach a moral lesson
3. No mixing of dramatic styles -- a play was either a comedy or tragedy
4. A play must observe the three unities (time, place and action), and
5. A drama must be divided into five acts
Neoclassic Tragedy

1. Characters must be drawn from the nobility.
2. Plot must deal with affairs of state.
3. Ending must be tragic.
4. Dialogue must be poetic.
Neoclassic Comedy

- Characters drawn from the *middle and lower class*
- Plot must deal with *domestic affairs*
- Ending must be *happy*
- Dialogue must be written in *prose*
Jean Racine
1639-1699

- France’s most important tragic playwright
- Adapted Greek tragedies
- Major work: *Phaedre*
- Based on Euripides' *Hippolytus*. 
Hotel de Bourgogne

- 1548: France's first permanent theatre
- Built by the Confraternity of the Passion
- In the town house of the Duke of Burgundy

Cyrano De Bergerac
Hotel de Bourgogne
Palais Cardina

- Built by Cardinal Richelieu
- 1641: Paris' first proscenium theatre
- 1642: Renamed Palais Royal
- Become’s home of Moliere’s acting company