Readers Theater French Revolution

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smoothly blending performance theory literary analysis and historical insights cecilia feilla explores the mutually dependent discourses of feeling and politics and their impact on the theatre and theatre audiences during the french revolution remarkably the most frequently performed and popular plays from 1789 to 1799 were not the political action pieces that have been the subject of much literary and historical criticism but rather sentimental dramas and comedies many of which originated on the stages of the old regime feilla suggests that theatre provided an important bridge from affective communities of sentimentality to active political communities of the nation arguing that the performance of virtue on stage served to foster the passage from private emotion to public virtue and allowed groups such as women children and the poor who were excluded from direct political participation to imagine a new and inclusive social and political structure providing close readings of texts by among others denis diderot collot d herbois and voltaire feilla maps the ways in which continuities and innovations in the theatre from 1760 to 1800 set the stage for the nineteenth century her book revitalizes and enriches our understanding of the significance of sentimental drama showing that it was central to the way that drama both shaped and was shaped by political culture

publisher description

this cultural history of the restoration which incorporates previously unexploited archival sources offers a rich and colorful portrait of a period previously ignored by most historians which is crucial for the

emergence of modern democratic politics in france

this volume examines the issue of the timing of cultural change problems of revolutionary anticipations and reverberations and the relationship between culture politics and society individual essays combine both old and new approaches ranging from textual analysis to the study of local judicial records from the psychohistorical to the demographic but they all demonstrate the usefulness of linking social and cultural history broadly conceived and of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of events part one addresses directly the creation of french revolutionary culture the contributors describe the physical act of dismantling and redefining the culture of the ancien regime for revolutionary purposes new conceptions of time and generation relations in revolutionary rhetoric and law the second part identifies key cultural ingredients from the distant past it reminds us of the extent to which the revolution employed the huge storehouse of western culture to create something original because the creation of a democratic culture implies a crisis of consciousness part three brings together a range of investigations into the question of cultural crisis three essays see the revolutionary era as engendering psychological dislocation in part four social historians reveal the variety of approaches they have taken in trying to understand eighteenth century france the varied contributions exploit the sources that have become the stock in trade of modern social history poverty crime and population are among the leading topics in current historiography but military and political institutions are also examined in new ways this edited collection provides new insights into a critical period of world history and will be welcomed by all scholars of the french revolution and its aftermath

a comprehensive inventory of theatre performances announced in parisian newspapers during the decade of the french revolution introduced by an intelligent revisionist overview of the historiography of french revolutionary theatre

during the french revolution most performances on the london stage were strictly censored but political attitudes found indirect expression new and popular genres like pantomime gothic drama history plays musical and spectacular entertainment and above all melodrama provided metaphors for the hopes and fears inspired by the conflict in france and subsequent european wars this 2001 book looks at how british drama and popular entertainment were affected by the ideas and events of the french revolution and napoleonic wars he argues that melodrama had its origins in this period with certain gothic villains displaying qualities attributed to robespierre and napoleon and that recurrent images of incarceration and dispossession reflected fears of arbitrary persecution from the tyranny of the bastille to the jacobin s reign of terror by a cultural analysis of the popular entertainment and theatre performances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries taylor reveals issues of ideological conflict and psychological stress

relations between theater and state were seldom more fraught in france than in the latter part of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth centuries in his illuminating study f w j hemmings traces the vicissitudes of this perennial conflict which began with the rise of the small independent boulevard theaters in the 1760s and eventually ended in 1905 with the abandonment of censorship by the state there are separate chapters on the provincial theater while the french revolution is given particularly detailed attention this work complementing his earlier book the theatre industry in nineteenth century france cup 1993 will be of interest to students of theater history french studies and european culture in general

for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries classical dogma and royal censorship worked together to prevent french plays from commenting on or even worse reenacting current political and judicial affairs criminal trials meanwhile were designed to be as untheatrical as possible excluding from the courtroom live debates trained orators and spectators according to yann robert circumstances changed between 1750 and 1800 as parallel evolutions in theater and justice brought them closer together causing lasting transformations in both robert contends that the gradual merging of theatrical and legal modes in eighteenth century france has been largely overlooked because it challenges two widely accepted narratives

first that french theater drifted toward entertainment and illusionism during this period and second that the french justice system abandoned any performative foundation it previously had in favor of a textual one in dramatic justice he demonstrates that the inverse of each was true robert traces the rise of a judicial theater in which plays denounced criminals by name even forcing them in some cases to perform their transgressions anew before a jeering public likewise he shows how legal reformers intentionally modeled trial proceedings on dramatic representations and went so far as to recommend that judges mimic the sentimental judgment of spectators and that lawyers seek private lessons from actors this conflation of theatrical and legal performances provoked debates and anxieties in the eighteenth century that according to robert continue to resonate with present concerns over lawsuit culture and judicial entertainment dramatic justice offers an alternate history of french theater and judicial practice one that advances new explanations for several pivotal moments in the french revolution including the trial of louis xvi and the terror by showing the extent to which they were shaped by the period s conflicted relationship to theatrical justice

the first study of french theater and war at a time of global revolutions colonial violence and radical social transformation

from the start of the french revolution contemporary observers were struck by the overwhelming theatricality of political events examples of convergence between theater and politics included the election of dramatic actors to powerful political and military positions and reports that deputies to the national assembly were taking acting lessons and planting paid claqueurs in the audience to applaud their employers on demand meanwhile in a mock national assembly that gathered in an enormous circus pavilion in the center of paris spectators paid for the privilege of acting the role of political representatives for a day paul friedland argues that politics and theater became virtually indistinguishable during the revolutionary period because of a parallel evolution in the theories of theatrical and political representation prior to the mid eighteenth century actors on political and theatrical stages saw their task as embodying a fictional entity in one case a character in a play in the other the corpus mysticum of the french nation friedland details the significant ways in which after 1750 the work of both was redefined dramatic actors were coached to portray their parts abstractly in a manner that seemed realistic to the audience with the creation of the national assembly abstract representation also triumphed in the political arena in a break from the past this legislature did not claim to be the nation but rather to speak on its behalf according to friedland this new form of representation brought about a sharp demarcation between actors on both stages and their audience one that relegated spectators to the role of passive observers of a performance that was given for their benefit but without their direct participation political actors a landmark contribution to eighteenth century studies furthers understanding not only of the french revolution but also of the very nature of modern representative democracy

dictionnaire historique politique histoire sociale histoire économique et histoire artistique de la révolution française

in staging the french revolution author mark darlow offers an unprecedented opportunity to consider the material context of opera production combining in depth archival research with a study of the works themselves he argues that a mixture of popular and state interventions created a repressive system in which cultural institutions retained agency compelling individuals to follow and contribute to a shifting culture theatre thereby emerged as a locus for competing discourses on patriotism society the role of the arts in the republic and the articulation of the revolution s relation with the old regime and is thus an essential key to the understanding of public opinion and publicity at this crucial historical moment

taking as notional parameters the upheaval of the french revolution and the events leading up to the unification of italy this volume charts a period of political and social turbulence in europe and its reflection in theatrical life apart from considering external factors like censorship and legal sanctions on theatrical

activity the volume examines the effects of prevailing operational conditions on the internal organization of companies their repertoire acting stage presentation playhouse architecture and the relationship with audiences also covered are technical advances in stage machinery scenography and lighting the changing position of the playwright and the continuing importance of various street entertainments particularly in italy where dramatic theatre remained the poor relation of the operatic and itinerant acting troupes still constituted the norm the 460 documents many of them illustrated have been drawn from sources in britain france and italy and have been annotated and translated where appropriate

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