Volume One begins in Roman Britain and ends with Charles II's restoration to the throne imminent. The nineteen essays that make up the volume are written for the general reader by leading British and American scholars, who combine an interest in the written drama with an understanding of the material conditions of the evolving professional theatre which the drama helped to sustain, often enough against formidable odds.

Volume Two begins in 1660 with the restoration of King Charles II to the throne and the re-establishment of the professional theatre, and follows the far-reaching development of the form over two centuries and more to 1895. Essays by experts in the field provide authoritative, up-to-date and clearly written accounts of theatres, dramatists, actors and actresses and audiences. Chapters on two remarkable hits and two historically crucial years accompany wide-ranging studies of such topics as censorship, politics and morality, and theatrical legislation.

Preface and acknowledgments; Part I. 1660 to 1800:
This volume explores the rich and complex histories of English, Scottish and Welsh theatres in the ‘long’ twentieth century since 1895. Twenty-three original essays by leading historians and critics investigate the major aspects of theatrical performance. The collection presents an exciting evolution in the scholarly study of modern British theatre history, skilfully demonstrating how performance variously became a critical litmus test for the great aesthetic, cultural, social, political and economic upheavals in the age of extremes.

Please order from your local bookseller