Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic

Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic investigates the way in which theatre both reflects and shapes the question of identity in post-Revolutionary American culture. Richards examines a variety of phenomena connected to the stage, including closet Revolutionary political plays, British drama on American boards, American-authored stage plays, and poetry and fiction by early republican writers. American theatre is viewed by Richards as a transatlantic hybrid in which British theatrical traditions in writing and acting provide material and templates by which Americans see and express themselves and their relationship to others. Through intensive analyses of plays both inside and outside of the early American “canon,” this book confronts matters of political, ethnic, and cultural identity by moving from play text to theatrical context and from historical event to audience demographic.

JEFFREY H. RICHARDS is the author of Theater Enough: American Culture and the Metaphor of the World Stage, 1607–1789 (1991), and Mercy Otis Warren (1995), and has edited three other books. He has published articles in Early American Literature, William and Mary Quarterly, and other journals and collections. He has taught at the University of North Carolina, Duke University, and is currently Professor of English at Old Dominion University.
The American theatre and its literature are attracting, after long neglect, the crucial attention of historians, theoreticians, and critics of the arts. Long a field for isolated research yet too frequently marginalized in the academy, the American theatre has always been a sensitive gauge of social pressures and public issues. Investigations into its myriad of shapes and manifestations are relevant to students of drama, theatre, literature, cultural experience, and political development.

The primary intent of this series is to set up a forum of important and original scholarship in and criticism of American theatre and drama in a cultural and social context. Inclusive by design, the series accommodates leading work in areas ranging from the study of drama as literature to theatre histories, theoretical explorations, production histories, and readings of more popular or para-theatrical forms. While maintaining a specific emphasis on theatre in the United States, the series welcomes work grounded broadly in cultural studies and narratives with interdisciplinary reach. Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama thus provides a crossroads where historical, theoretical, literary, and biographical approaches meet and combine, promoting imaginative research in theatre and drama from a variety of new perspectives.

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Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic

JEFFREY H. RICHARDS
For Elizabeth Quantz Richards,
who endured
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