This is the first study to be entirely devoted to African literary drama in French, a major component of African theatre. Beginning with a detailed analysis of its relationship to a variety of pre-colonial, but sometimes still contemporary traditions of performance which constitute part of its roots, Conteh-Morgan examines this drama both in its literary and theatrical dimensions. He discusses its development, themes and techniques and considers its attempts, since the 1980s, to move away from the predominantly text-based drama of first generation playwrights to a more performance-oriented one. He links this trend, in part, to the desire felt by many theatre practitioners to overcome an abiding paradox of this drama; that of being both popular and even radical in intent (to reach and stir a mass audience) but elitist in achievement (excluding that audience through the use of French and European stage conventions).

The book is divided into two sections: part I offers a theoretical and historical background and part II analyses key individual plays central to the repertoire. These include two from the Caribbean, which not only explore African issues but contributed to the rise of French-language African drama. Quotations from playtexts are translated into English. With its comparative references to English-language drama, its discussion of the literary and institutional influence of France on Francophone drama and of modern non-literary dramatic forms in the Francophone region, the book will be of interest to students and scholars of theatre history, French and African studies.
THEATRE AND DRAMA IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA
THEATRE AND DRAMA IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

A critical introduction

JOHN CONTEH-MORGAN
The Ohio State University
To my parents
And to Nyo, Déi and Mei
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Acknowledgements

In writing a book, one incurs many debts and this one is no exception. My single greatest debt of gratitude goes to Professor Martin Banham of the University of Leeds. He gave me encouragement when I first presented the work to him as a research project for a Commonwealth Universities Staff Fellowship award, and was generous with his advice and assistance throughout the book’s preparation. As a Visiting Commonwealth Staff Fellow in the Workshop Theatre at Leeds which he directs, I enjoyed the luxury of leisure and the stimulation of the environment. Without that one uninterrupted year of research (1986–7), this study would still have been on the drawing-board. I also wish to thank the Association of Commonwealth Universities for the award and Professor Roger Little of Trinity College, Dublin, for supporting my application for it.

I am very grateful to Professor Abiola Irele of The Ohio State University for comments on an earlier draft of this book, and for sharing with me his vast knowledge of African literature and his splendid library. Professor Clive Wake, formerly of the University of Kent, and the anonymous readers of Cambridge University Press all made suggestions on my manuscript which I found helpful and constructive and for which I thank them. I also want to salute one of my earliest drama teachers, Professor Durosimi Eldred Jones, in whose writings and dedication I have always found inspiration.

This work began in the University of Leeds, was completed at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and revised at The Ohio State University. I am pleased to acknowledge the vastly different but complementary facilities which I enjoyed in all three institutions.

Finally, I extend my gratitude to my parents for their labour, to my dear wife Nyo for accepting even at odd hours to be my interlocutor and sounding-board, and to our loving children Déri
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Acknowledgements

and Mei for their supportive affection and for their willingness to deprive themselves often of my company.

The author and the publishers wish to thank the following who have kindly given permission for the use of copyright material: Présence Africaine (Paris) for extracts from La Tragédie du roi Christophe by Aimé Césaire, Béatrice du Congo and Îles de Tempête by Bernard Dadié; Seuil (Paris) for extracts from Une Saison au Congo by Aimé Césaire; Nubia Press (Paris) for extracts from Le Žulu by Tchicaya U’Tamsi; P. J. Oswald for extracts from L’Œil by Zadi Zaourou and L’Exil d’Albouri by Cheik Ndao; CEDA (Abidjan) for extracts from La Puissance d’Um by Werewere Liking; Haho (Lomé) for extracts from On joue la comédie by Senouvo Zinsou and CLE (Yaoundé) for extracts from Trois prétendants … un mari by Guillaume Oyono-Mbia.

Some material in the introduction, chapters 2, 4 and 7, reproduces in modified form articles of mine published in the Canadian Journal of African Studies 19, 2 (1985), African Literature Today 14 (1984) and 18 (1992), The French Review 52, 2 (1983), Ba Shiru 11, 2 (1980) and Comparative Drama (Special Issue, 1994). I wish to thank the editors of these journals for allowing me to use this material, sometimes in its near-original form.

Freetown and Columbus