A History of Italian Theatre

With the aim of providing a comprehensive history of Italian drama from its origins to the present day, this book treats theatre in its widest sense, discussing the impact of all the elements and figures integral to the collaborative process of theatre-making. The impact of designers, actors, directors and impresarios, as well as of playwrights, is subjected to critical scrutiny, while individual chapters examine the changes in technology and shifts in the cultural climate which have influenced theatre. No other approach would be acceptable for Italian theatre, where, from the days of commedia dell’arte, the central figure has often been the actor rather than the playwright. The important writers, such as Carlo Goldoni and Luigi Pirandello who have become part of the central canon of European playwriting, and those whose impact has been limited to the Italian stage, receive detailed critical treatment, as do the ‘great actors’ of nineteenth-century theatre or the directors of our own time, but the focus is always on the bigger picture.

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Contents

List of illustrations viii
List of contributors x

In search of Italian theatre 1
JOSEPH FARRELL

PART I THE MIDDLE AGES 7

1 Secular and religious drama in the Middle Ages 9
NERIDA NEWBIGIN

PART II THE RENAISSANCE 29

2 The Renaissance stage 31
RICHARD ANDREWS

3 Erudite comedy 39
RICHARD ANDREWS

4 Ariosto and Ferrara 44
PETER BRAND

5 Machiavelli and Florence 51
PETER BRAND

6 The Intronati and Sienese comedy 58
RICHARD ANDREWS

7 Ruzante and the Veneto 61
RONNIE FERGUSON

8 Aretino and later comic playwrights 74
PETER BRAND

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CONTENTS

9 Tragedy 84
   Richard Andrews

10 Pastoral drama 91
   Lisa Sampson

11 Commedia dell’arte 102
   Kenneth and Laura Richards

PART III THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 125

12 The seventeenth-century stage 127
   Maurice Slawinski

PART IV THE ENLIGHTENMENT 143

13 Arrivals and departures 145
   Joseph Farrell

14 The Venetian stage 151
   Guido Nicastro

15 Carlo Goldoni, playwright and reformer 160
   Piermario Vescovo

16 Carlo Gozzi 177
   Alberto Beniscelli

17 Metastasio and the melodramma 186
   Costantino Maeder

18 Vittorio Alfieri 195
   Gilberto Pizzamiglio

PART V THE RISORGIMENTO AND UNITED ITALY 205

19 The Romantic theatre 207
   Ferdinando Taviani

20 The theatre of united Italy 223
   Paolo Puppa
21 The dialect theatres of Northern Italy 235
 ROBERTO CUPPONE

22 Neapolitan theatre 244
 GAETANA MARRONE

23 Sicilian dialect theatre 257
 ANTONIO SCUDERI

PART VI THE MODERN AGE 267

24 Actors, authors and directors 269
 JOSEPH FARRELL

25 Innovation and theatre of the grotesque 278
 JOSEPH FARRELL

26 The march of the avant-garde 285
 DONATELLA FISCHER

27 Luigi Pirandello 293
 PAOLO PUPPA

28 Italo Svevo, dramatist 312
 PAOLO PUPPA

29 D’Annunzio’s theatre 323
 JOHN WOODHOUSE

30 Theatre under Fascism 339
 CLIVE GRIFFITHS

31 Pier Paolo Pasolini 349
 ROBERT S. C. GORDON

32 Dario Fo 357
 JOSEPH FARRELL

33 Contemporary women’s theatre 368
 SHARON WOOD

34 The contemporary scene 379
 PAOLO PUPPA

Index 394
Illustrations

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1 San Carlo Theatre, Naples. Production of *Napoli milionario* by Eduardo De Filippo, directed by Francesco Rosi, 2003 production. Photo: Luciano Romano and Max Botticelli 11
2 Illustration of an Italian Renaissance stage 34
3 Elsa Vazzoler and Cesco Baseggio, as Gnu and Ruzante in *Parlamento de Ruzante*. Produced in Venice, 1954 64
4 Pantalone 1550 – Masques et bouffons 108
5 Harlequin 1570 – Masques et bouffons 109
6 Portrait of Carlo Goldoni 161
7 Scene from *The Family of the Antiquarian* by Carlo Goldoni 169
8 Scene from *The Liar* by Carlo Goldoni 169
9 Cesco Baseggio in *The Chioggia Squabbles* by Carlo Goldoni 172
10 Portrait of Carlo Gozzi 178
11 Adelaide Ristori on her 80th birthday 231
12 Portrait of Ferruccio Benini 240
13 Luca De Filippo and Mariangela D’Abbraccio in *Napoli milionario* by Eduardo De Filippo, directed by Francesco Rosi, 2003 production. Photo: Luciano Romano and Max Botticelli 252
14 *Christmas in the Cupiello House* by Eduardo De Filippo, 1976 production 254
15 Portrait of Nino Martoglio 259
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Scene from <em>Continental Airs</em> by Nino Martoglio, 1988 production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Scene from <em>The Impresario of Smyrna</em> by Carlo Goldoni, director Luchino Visconti (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Scene from <em>The Mountain Giants</em> by Luigi Pirandello, director G. Strehler (1947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Portraits of Pirandello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Scene from <em>Think it Over, Giacomino!</em> by Luigi Pirandello, director N. Rossa (1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Portrait of Gabriele D’Annunzio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Performance of <em>La figlia di Iorio</em> by Gabriele D’Annunzio, Vittoriale, 1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Giovacchino Forzano on the film set of <em>Villafranca</em>, with Prince Umberto di Savoia and Annibale Bertone as Vittorio Emanuele II, in 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Portrait of Pier Paolo Pasolini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Scene from <em>Affabulazione</em> by Pier Paolo Pasolini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Portrait of Dario Fo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Scene from <em>The Pope and the Witch</em> by Dario Fo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Scene from <em>The Third Wife of Mayer</em> by Dacia Maraini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Scene from <em>L’Arialda</em> by Giovanni Testori</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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