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.

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For Elizabeth Quantz Richards,
who endured
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