

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE
THEATRE OF THE
LONDON FAIRS IN THE
18TH CENTURY

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

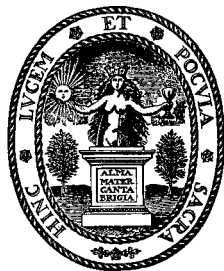
Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE
THEATRE OF THE
LONDON FAIRS IN THE
18TH CENTURY

BY
SYBIL ROSENFELD



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1960

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century
Sybil Rosenfeld
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521061292

© Cambridge University Press 1960

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1960
This digitally printed version 2008

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-06129-2 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-08167-2 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

IN MEMORIAM
LINDA R. CANE

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>List of Plates</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Chapter I</i> Bartholomew Fair. Early Shows	1
II Bartholomew Fair. Theatrical Heyday	22
III Bartholomew Fair. The Decline	44
IV Southwark Fair. Early Shows to 1735	71
V Southwark Fair, 1736–1762	97
VI May Fair	108
VII Some Lesser Fairs	121
VIII Plays and Drolls	135
IX Theatres and Staging	150
<i>List of References</i>	170
<i>Index</i>	177

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LIST OF PLATES

- | | | |
|------|--|------------------------|
| I | Bartholomew Fair in 1721
From the aquatint published by J. F. Setchel. British Museum | <i>-facing page 26</i> |
| II | Southwark Fair playbill of the late seventeenth century
From the Corporation of London Records Office | 76 |
| III | Southwark Fair in 1733
From the engraving after W. Hogarth. British Museum | 77 |
| IV | May Fair in 1716
From an engraving, after a water-colour, in <i>London Society</i> (1863).
British Museum | 114 |
| V | A fair balcony
From a drawing by Philip Norman, after an undated original,
in W. Rendle and P. Norman, <i>The Inns of Old Southwark</i> (1888) | 152 |
| VI | Richardson's booth at Greenwich Fair
From a water-colour by Thomas Rowlandson. British Museum | 153 |
| VII | Two scenes in a puppet booth
From Sayer's 'Punch's Puppet Show'. <i>Theatre Notebook</i> | 156 |
| VIII | Interior of a country fair booth
From <i>Sports of a Country Fair</i> engraved by Thomas Tegg
after Rowlandson. Author's possession | 157 |

I am indebted to Messrs Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., the publishers of *The Inns of Old Southwark*, for their efforts, unfortunately vain, to trace the executors of the late Philip Norman whose drawing is reproduced in Pl. V. I am also indebted to the Corporation of London Records Office for permission to reproduce Pl. II, to *Theatre Notebook* for lending the blocks for Pl. VII, and to the British Museum for photographing Pls. I, III, IV, V and VI from their copies.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.F.	Bartholomew Fair
C.G.	Covent Garden Theatre
D.L.	Drury Lane Theatre
L.I.F.	Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre
M.F.	May Fair
S.F.	Southwark Fair
T.C.	Tottenham Court Fair

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

THE scope of this book is limited to fairs in what is now greater London though in the eighteenth century a few of those included were outside the city. Others abounded throughout the country at various seasons of the year. The most important of these was Stourbridge Fair near Cambridge, whose entertainments I have covered in an article in *Studies in English Theatre History* (Society for Theatre Research, 1952). Provincial fairs were usually visited by the local circuit company which arranged its itinerary so as to be at the towns at the time when they were held and to reap the benefit of the crowds they gathered. In most cases their dramatic history is part of the annals of the circuit company concerned.

Because the fairs had a continuous history, it has not been possible to adhere too strictly to the eighteenth century. In particular some seventeenth-century material has been incorporated in order to show how their drama developed. Bartholomew Fair and others which survived into the nineteenth century underwent a definite transition when travelling showmen such as Richardson, Saunders and Gyngell toured from fairground to fairground with their wagons, providing more elaborate but standardised programmes of melodrama, farce and pantomime. The start of their activities has been touched on but their story remains to be written.

This is in no sense a history of the fairs nor even of their many and varied entertainments. These have been dealt with in: George Daniel, *Merrie England in the Olden Time* (1842); Thomas Frost, *The Old Showmen* (1874); Samuel McKechnie, *Popular Entertainments through the Ages* (1931); Henry Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair* (1892; 1st edition, 1857); R. W. L. Muncey, *Our Old English Fairs* [1936]; George Speaight, *History of the English Puppet Theatre* (1955); Cornelius Walford, *Fairs, Past and Present* (1883), and others. In the main I have confined myself to dramatic entertainments. Puppets, rope dancing, and music booths have been included only when

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08167-2 - The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century

Sybil Rosenfeld

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

PREFACE

I have found fresh material about them, when they were run by actors, or provided *commedia dell'arte* and other interludes or pantomimes. Freaks and menageries have been entirely omitted, though readers should bear in mind that they were always present.

It remains to express my deep appreciation and warm thanks to Professor A. H. Scouten for supplying me with material in American libraries and to Mr George Speaight for handing over to me references relating to live actors at the fairs.

S. R.

LONDON

1959