This book presents Edwardian entertainment and the Edwardian entertainment industry as parts of a vital but troubled era whose preoccupations and paranoia mirror those of our own age. Responding to the Edwardian stage as a social, economic and cultural phenomenon, it takes as its province broad patterns of theatrical production and consumption, focussing upon the economics of theatre management, the creation of new audiences, the politics of playgoing and the emergence of popular forms of entertainment such as variety theatre, sensation melodrama, the stage musical and the cinema. Employing new methodologies from allied disciplines contributors offer fresh insights into topics as diverse as music hall cross-dressing, the rise of musical comedy and the vexed relationship between theatre practice and suffrage politics. The book, with illustrations from the period, will be of interest to students and scholars of theatre and performance history, social history, cultural studies, women's studies and English literature, as well as to general readers.
THE EDWARDIAN THEATRE
THE EDWARDIAN THEATRE

Essays on performance and the stage

EDITED BY

MICHAEL R. BOOTH
JOEL H. KAPLAN
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

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/9780521453752

© Cambridge University Press 1996

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 1996

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

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data
The Edwardian theatre: essays on performance and the stage / edited
by Michael R. Booth, Joel H. Kaplan.

p. cm.
Includes index.
ISBN 0 521 45375 5 (hardback)
(Variety–theaters, cabarets, etc.) – Great Britain – History – 20th
century. I. Booth, Michael R. II. Kaplan, Joel H.
PN2595.E35 1996
792’.0941’09041 – dc20 95-18271 CIP


Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel
timetables, and other factual information given in this work is correct at
the time of first printing but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee
the accuracy of such information thereafter.
Contents

List of illustrations  ix
List of contributors  x
Acknowledgements  xii

Introduction  1

Joel H. Kaplan

1 What is the Edwardian theatre?  10
Joseph Donohue

2 ‘Naughty but nice’: musical comedy and the rhetoric of
the girl, 1892–1914  36
Peter Bailey

3 Varieties of life: the making of the Edwardian music hall  61
Dave Russell

4 Beating the bounds: gender play and role reversal in the
Edwardian music hall  86
J.S. Bratton

5 Edwardian management and the structures of industrial
capitalism  111
Tracy C. Davis

6 The New Drama and the new audience  130
Dennis Kennedy

7 Towards an ideal spectator: theatregoing and the
Edwardian critic  148
Victor Emeljanow

8 Suffrage critics and political action: a feminist agenda  166
Sheila Stowell
Contents

9 ‘A woman of genius’: Rebecca West at the theatre
  John Stokes

10 The East End
  Jim Davis

11 Changing horses in mid-ocean: The Whip in Britain and America
  David Mayer

Index
Illustrations

1 The Chorus Girl as Disciplined Modern Worker
   *(Sketch 13 Jan. 1909)*
   page 41
2 ‘Lady Clients at Garrod’s Stores’ *(Play Pictorial 1909)*
   43
3 Miss Billie Butt
   87
4 Miss Pauline Travis
   88
5 The Late Miss Bessie Wentworth
   90
6 Hetty King
   92
7 Mr Dan Leno as ‘Sister Anne’ *(Tailor 26 Feb. 1902)*
   99
8 Miss Vesta Tilley
   107
9 Shavians at the Savoy *(Bystander 2 Oct. 1907)*
   138
10 ‘Mr Punch’s Matinée Hari’ *(Mr Punch at the Play)*
   139
11 An Allegory *(Suffragette 20 Mar. 1914)*
   167
12 Lèse-Majeste at His Majesty’s Theatre (May 1914)
   179
13 *The Whip* on stage *(Play Pictorial 1909)*
   224
14 *The Whip* on film (1916)
   232
Contributors

Editors


Joel H. Kaplan is Professor of Drama and Chair of the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham. He is co-author of Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes (1994), and the forthcoming Wilde on Stage: A Cultural and Performance History.

Contributors

Peter Bailey teaches social history and cultural studies at the University of Manitoba. He is editor of Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure (1986) and author of Leisure and Class in Victorian England (2nd edn 1987), and Champagne Charlie Meets the Barmaid, a forthcoming collection of essays on the popular culture of the period.

J. S. Bratton is Professor of Theatre and Cultural History at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her publications include a theatre history edition of King Lear, and co-authorship of Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage (1991) and Melodrama: Stage/Picture/Screen (1994).

Jim Davis is Head of the School of Theatre and Film Studies at the University of New South Wales. His publications include John
Contributors


Tracy C. Davis teaches in the Departments of Theatre, English, and Performance Studies at Northwestern University. She is author of Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture (1991), George Bernard Shaw and the Socialist Theatre (1994), and articles on feminist theatre, gender history, and historiography.

Joseph Donohue, Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, is author of Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age (1970) and Theatre in the Age of Kean (1975). He is editor of Nineteenth Century Theatre and general editor of The London Stage 1800–1900: A Documentary Record and Calendar of Performances.

Victor Emejianow is Professor of Drama at the University of Newcastle, Australia. He is author of Chekov: The Critical Heritage (1981) and Victorian Popular Dramatists (1987). He is also a contributing editor to the Cambridge University Press Theatre in Europe series.

Dennis Kennedy holds the Samuel Beckett Chair of Drama and Theatre Studies at Trinity College, Dublin. His books include Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre (1985), an edition of Barker’s plays, Looking at Shakespeare (1993), and Foreign Shakespeare (1993). He is also a playwright and dramaturg.

David Mayer is Professor of Drama at the University of Manchester, director of the Victorian and Edwardian Stage on Film Project, and consultant to The American Memory Program at the US Library of Congress. He is author of Harlequin in His Element (1969) and editor of Henry Irving and The Bells (1980). His most recent book is Playing Out the Empire: Ben Hur and Other Toga Plays and Films (1994).

Dave Russell is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Historical and Critical Studies at the University of Central Lancashire. He is author of Popular Music in England 1840–1914: A Social History (1987) and has published a number of articles and papers on the history of popular music and popular culture.

John Stokes is Reader in English at the University of Warwick. He is author of Resistible Theatres (1972) and In the Nineties (1989), and editor of Fin-de-siècle/Fin du Globe: Fears and Fantasies of the Late Nineteenth-Century (1992).

Sheila Stowell is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham. She is author of A Stage of Their Own: Feminist Playwrights of the Suffrage Era (1992), and co-author of Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes (1994).
Acknowledgements

Eight of the following papers were first presented at ‘The Edwardian Stage’, an international conference held at Dunsmuir Lodge, Vancouver Island, Canada, in September 1992. We would like to thank the University of Victoria and the University of British Columbia for co-hosting that event, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for generous financial support.


M.R.B.
J.H.K.