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978-0-521-89675-7 - Women on the Stage in Early Modern France: 1540–1750

Virginia Scott

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WOMEN ON THE STAGE IN EARLY MODERN FRANCE: 1540–1750

Focusing on actresses in France during the early modern period, Virginia Scott examines how the stereotype of the actress has been constructed. The study then moves beyond that stereotype to detail the reality of the personal and artistic lives of women on the French stage, from the almost unknown Marie Ferré – who signed a contract for 12 *livres* a year in 1545 to perform the “antiquailles de Rome” or other “histories, moralities, farces, and acrobatics” in the provinces – to the queens of the eighteenth-century Paris stage, whose “adventures” have overshadowed their artistic triumphs. The book also investigates the ways in which actresses made invaluable contributions to the development of the French theatre in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and looks at the “afterlives” of such women as Armande Béjart, Marquise Du Parc, Charlotte Desmares, Adrienne Lecouvreur, and Hippolyte Clairon in biographies, plays, and films.

VIRGINIA SCOTT is Professor Emerita in the Department of Theater, University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She specializes in commedia dell’arte and French theatre of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Her books include *The Commedia dell’Arte in Paris*, which won the George Freedley award, and *Molière: A Theatrical Life*. Professor Scott is also a dramaturg, playwright, actor, and director.

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico CityCambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UKPublished in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New Yorkwww.cambridge.orgInformation on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521896757

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First published 2010

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library**Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Scott, Virginia, 1934–

Women on the stage in early modern France : 1540-1750 / Virginia Scott.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-89675-7 (Hardback)

1. Actresses—France—Biography. 2. Theater—France—History. I. Title.

PN2637.S 53 2010

792.02'80820944—dc22

2010008973

ISBN 978-0-521-89675-7 Hardback

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*To my dear friends and colleagues
Laurence Senelick
and
Richard Trousdell
with gratitude for years of support and companionship*

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Acknowledgments

This book has been underway for a while, and I am indebted to many people and institutions for support and assistance. My thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a 1999 senior fellowship, to the American Society for Theatre Research for a research grant, and especially to the Camargo Foundation for a 2003 residential fellowship.

I am appreciative of the help of librarians and archivists at the great national libraries of France and at the archives of the Comédie-Française. Closer to home, I have never been disappointed by the University of Massachusetts Library Interlibrary Loan, and I owe special thanks to Kathryn Leigh, director of that office, as well as to Abby Yochelson, research librarian of the Library of Congress. I also want to thank Ida Hay from the Bunker, the Five-College Book Depository, which lives under the Holyoke Range in a former headquarters of the Strategic Air Command, who found for me a truly obscure document, scanned it, and attached it to an e-mail. How amazing are the ways of scholarship in the modern world.

E-mail has also made it possible for me to consult – pester – many colleagues for help and advice. Among them: Sabine Chaouche, Jody Enders, Aurore Evain, Annette Fern, Melinda Gough, Al Hamscher, Sarah Hanley, Alan Howe, M. A. Katritzky, Amalia Kessler, Anne MacNeil, Patricia Ranum, Joseph Roach, Louis C. Seifert, Laurence Senelick, Dan Smith, Jed Wentz, and Andrew W. White. Many others have listened to me talk about actresses and acting at various conferences and seminars and have responded with useful comments and fruitful ideas.

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Sara Sturm-Maddox, who read much of the book and offered many insights and helpful suggestions for revision. We had such a good time doing a book together that she was kind enough to afford me the luxury of having a friend–colleague–first reader for this one.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Finally, I want to thank Victoria Cooper and Rebecca Jones of Cambridge University Press for their support.

Translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

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