Drawing on a wealth of unpublished archival material, this study offers a comprehensive assessment of the importance of theatrical performance in Vladimir Nabokov’s thinking and writing. Siggy Frank provides fresh insights into Nabokov’s wider aesthetics and arrives at new readings of his narrative fiction. As well as emphasising the importance of theatrical performance to our understanding of Nabokov’s texts, she demonstrates that the theme of theatricality runs through the central concerns of Nabokov’s art and life: the nature of fiction, the relationship between the author and his fictional world, textual origin and derivation, authorial control and textual property, literary appropriations and adaptations, and finally the transformation of the writer himself from the Russian émigré writer Sirin to the American novelist Nabokov.

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NABOKOV’S THEATRICAL IMAGINATION

SIGGY FRANK
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Much of this book is about notions of authorial property, and in some ways this study is a vivid illustration of individual and shared authorship, as I have benefited from discussions with colleagues and friends, all of whom have made some direct or indirect contribution to this study. First, I owe a large debt to Jane Grayson who has been an exceptionally generous friend and colleague over many years. Her inspiration, ideas and insights have been invaluable for this study. I would also like to thank the following people: Andrei Babikov, David Betha, Andy Byford, Neil Cornwell and Julie Curtis. I wish to thank the staff at the Taylor Institution Slavonic and Modern Greek Library, University of Oxford; The Berg Collection at
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Note on transliteration and translation

For transliteration of Russian texts, I adhere to the Library of Congress system without diacritical marks. For the sake of readability, however, I use common Anglicised spellings of Russian names of both historical and fictional persons: for instance, Cincinnatus (instead of Tsintsinnat), Dreyer (instead of Dreier), Franz (instead of Frants), Hermann (instead of German), Gogol (instead of Gogol’), Liubov (instead of Liubov’), Meyerhold (instead of Meierkhol’d), Stanislavsky (instead of Stanislavskii), Waltz (instead of Val’s) and so on.

For English translations of Nabokov’s work, I rely mostly on the standard English translations prepared or authorised by Nabokov himself. All other translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.
Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this book.

BAR Bakhtin Archive of Russian and East European Culture, Columbia University, New York.


Sobr. soch. Vladimir Nabokov, Sobranie sochinenii russkogo peri-
x 

List of abbreviations


VNLOC Vladimir Nabokov Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, DC.
