

PRINT AND PERFORMANCE IN THE 1820S

During the 1820s, British society saw transformations in technology, mobility, and consumerism that accelerated the spread of information. This timely study reveals how bestselling literature, popular theatre, and periodical journalism self-consciously experimented with new media. It presents an age preoccupied with improvisation and speculation – a mode of behaviour that dominated financial and literary markets, generating reflections on risk, agency, and the importance of public opinion. *Print and Performance in the 1820s* interprets a rich constellation of fictional texts and theatrical productions that gained popularity among middle-class metropolitan audiences through experiments with intersecting fantasy worlds and acutely described real worlds. Providing new contexts for figures such as Byron and Scott, and recovering the work of lesser-known contemporaries including Charles Mathews's character impersonations and the performances of celebrity *improvvisatore* Tommaso Sgricci, Angela Esterhammer explores the era's influential representations of the way identity is constructed, performed, and perceived.

ANGELA ESTERHAMMER, FRSC, is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto and General Editor of the *Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt*. Her previous books include *The Romantic Performative: Language and Action in British and German Romanticism* (2000), *Romanticism and Improvisation, 1750–1850* (2008), and the edited volume *Romantic Poetry: Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages* (2002).

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PRINT AND PERFORMANCE
IN THE 1820S

Improvisation, Speculation, Identity

ANGELA ESTERHAMMER

University of Toronto



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