



Performing Opposition: Modern Theater and the Scandalized Audience

Neil Blackadder

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Modern theater history is punctuated by instances of scandalized audience members disrupting and in some cases suspending the first production of a new play. Such incidents are usually dismissed as riots, as self-evident displays of philistinism. Neil Blackadder's intriguing new study reveals them in fact to be multifaceted conflicts, showing the ways in which these protesters—acting against plays by such notables as Jarry, Synge, and Brecht—creatively devised and enacted resistance through verbal rejoinders, physical gestures, and organized group demonstrations.

Performing Opposition draws on reviews, memoirs, interviews, and court records to present engaging and insightful accounts of these clashes?clashes that Blackadder proposes as a unique and distinct category of event in a time when unprecedently restrained norms of auditorium behavior coincided with a regeneration of writing for the stage. Offering the first detailed examination of affronted theatergoers' counter-performances, the volume represents an intriguing illumination of a largely overlooked aspect of performed drama and its history.



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