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Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre: Women's Comedy and the Theatre (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama)

Nancy Copeland

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Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre: Women's Comedy and the Theatre (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama) Nancy Copeland
Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre studies the representation of gender in four of the most important plays by the leading professional women playwrights of the late Stuart period. Behn's The Rover (1677) and The Luckey Chance (1686) and Centlivre's The Busie Body (1709) and The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret (1714) are first placed in their original theatrical and cultural contexts and then studied through subsequent productions and adaptations extending from the eighteenth century to the twentieth. The detailed analysis of these plays is framed by a discussion of the cultural position of the playwrights and the kind of comedy they wrote. The survival of these plays in the repertoire offers an unusual opportunity to examine the theatrical 'double life' of works by early women playwrights. The lengthy production histories of these comedies placed them in dialogue with radically different ideas of appropriate and permissible behavior for both women and men. The resulting productions, alterations, and adaptations included both feminist reinterpretations and recuperations of the plays' challenges to dominant meanings of gender. This book will be of interest to scholars and students of dramatic literature, theatre, and women's studies.

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