



Eighteenth-Century Brechtians

Theatrical Satire in the Age of Walpole

by Joel Schechter

DESCRIPTION:

Discussing the actor mutiny of 1733, theatre censorship, controversial plays and Fielding's forgery of an actor's biography, the book contends that some subversive Augustan and Georgian artists were early Brechtians. Reconstructions of lost episodes in theatre history include a recounting of Fielding's last days as a stage satirist before his Little Haymarket theatre was closed, Charlotte Charke's performances as Macheath and Polly Peachum in *The Beggar's Opera* and the 1740 staging of Jonathan Swift's *Polite Conversation* on a double bill with Shakespeare's *Merry Wives ...*

Some documents in this collection offer another perspective on theatre history by employing fiction - speculative reconstructions of Georgian theatre events for which historical facts are scarce or missing. Brecht also employed fiction to reconsider history in short stories he wrote about Lucullus and Socrates, and a novel about Julius Caesar. The stories and several new letters attributed to Fielding delve into theatre history and keep some of its controversy alive in new ways, historicizing fiction and theatre somewhat as Brecht did.

It offers an unconventional, new reading of theatre history, Brecht's tradition and stage satire.

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