



Singing Simpkin and other Bawdy Jigs

Musical Comedy on the Shakespearean Stage: Scripts, Music and Context

by Roger Clegg and Lucie Skeaping

DESCRIPTION:

A popular crowd-pleaser in the late 16th and mid-17th century, the dramatic jig was a short, comic, bawdy musical-drama which included elements of dance, slapstick and disguise. With a cast of ageing cuckolds and young head-strong wives, knavish clowns, roaring soldiers and country bumpkins, jigs often followed as afterpieces at London's playhouses, and were performed at fairs, in villages and in private houses. Troublesome to the authorities, they drew the crowds by offering a lively antidote to more sober theatrical fare.

This performance edition presents for the first time nine examples of English dramatic jigs from the late sixteenth century through to the Restoration; the scripts are re-united as far as possible with their original tunes. It gives a comprehensive history, discusses sources, plots, instrumentation and dancing, and offers practical information on staging jigs today.

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Bibliography

CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES:

Lucie Skeaping is a celebrated musician and broadcaster and currently presents 'The Early Music Show' on BBC Radio 3.

Following her training as a violinist at the Royal College of Music, Lucie founded 'The City Waites' (www.citywaites.co.uk), an early music band specialising in 16th and 17th century English broadside ballads and popular tunes that has since recorded numerous CDs and toured worldwide (the Daily Telegraph dubbed her 'the bawdy babe of Radio 3').

She also spent several years as a popular BBC television children's presenter. She has contributed to numerous soundtracks including the Oscar-winning movie 'The Pianist', 'The Draughtsman's Contract' and Simon Schama's 'History of Britain' series; TV appearances include Jonathan Miller's 'The Beggar's Opera', 'Early Music', 'Rude Britannia', Songs of Praise, BBC Breakfast and 'Sounds of London' with Jools Holland. Theatre roles include several pantomimes and 'The Beggar's Opera', and, as a musician, she has worked with the Royal National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, Rambert Dance Company and the RSC.

Lucie's publications include 'Broadside Ballads', winner of the Music Industry Award for Best Classical Music Publication 2006, and the schools book 'Let's Make Tudor Music' (Stainer and Bell 1999); she writes a column for the BBC Music Magazine, and has contributed articles for The Financial Times and History Today.

She has run jig workshops for the RSC and at Dartington International Summer School, and lectures regularly on the ballads of 17th century England. More information can be found on Lucie's website at <http://www.lucieskeaping.co.uk>

Roger Clegg is Senior Lecturer in Drama Studies at De Montfort University, where his teaching includes Twentieth Century European Drama, Popular Theatre, Pre-texts and Contexts of Drama and Renaissance English Theatre.

His research is in the politics and practice of Renaissance popular performance and the relationship between the stage and the culture and society which it inhabits. He has researched and written on English jigs from the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, and has also investigated the staging of Singing Simpkin at Shakespeare's Globe as part of Globe Education's 'Winter Playing' research (2003).

Publications include 'He's for a jig or a Tale of Bawdry: Notes on the English stage Jig', with Peter Thomson, Studies in Theatre and Performance, 2009.

Roger is also particularly interested in popular humour, political satire and comic performance, and organises a conference and other events annually under the banner Playing for Laughs: On Comedy in Performance (as part of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival) which invites academics and practitioners of comedy to come together to share ideas on just why and how people generate laughter through performance.