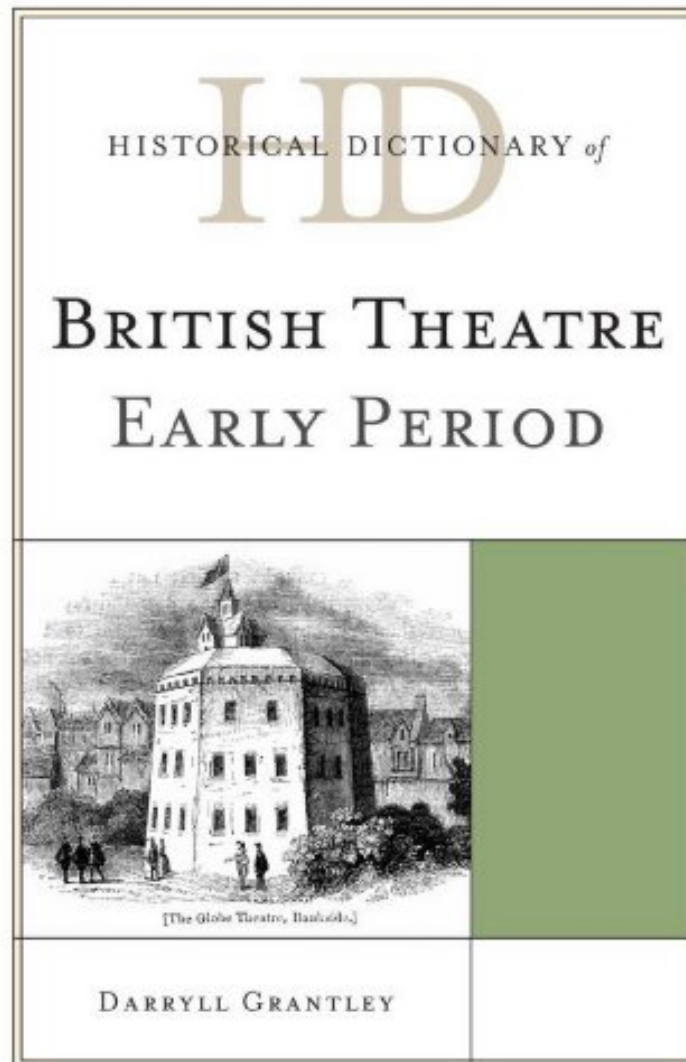


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Historical Dictionary of British Theatre: Early Period (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)

Darryll Grantley

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Darryll Grantley : Historical Dictionary of British Theatre: Early Period (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Historical Dictionary of British Theatre: Early Period (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts):

British theatre has a greater tradition than any other, having started all the way back in 1311 and still going strong today. But that is too much for one book to cover, so this volume deals with early theatre and has a cut-off date in 1899. Still, this is almost six centuries, centuries during which British theatre not only developed but produced some of the greatest playwrights of all time and anywhere, including obviously Shakespeare but also Marlowe and Shaw. And they wrote some of the finest plays ever, which are known around the world. So there is plenty for this book to cover, just with the playwrights, plays and actors, but it also has information on stagecraft and theatres, as well as the historical and political background. This book has over 1,183 entries in the dictionary section, these being mainly on playwrights and plays, but others as well including managers and critics, and also on specific theatres, legislative acts and some technical jargon. Then there are entries on the different genres, from comedy to tragedy and everything in between. Inevitably, the chronology is quite long as it has a long period to cover and the introduction provides the necessary overview. The *Historical Dictionary of Early British Theatre* concludes with a pretty massive bibliography. That will be of use to particularly assiduous researchers, but this book itself is a good place to start any research since it covers periods that are far less well-known and documented, and ordinary theatre-goers will also find useful information.

From Booklist British plays and playwrights are arguably some of the most well known and most popular in the theatrical world. Grantley, a professor of theater history at the University of Kent, offers a thorough, informative, and entertaining look at the places, plays, and people involved in British theater from 1311 to 1899. A lengthy chronology showcases such important dates as the 1610 outbreak of plague that shut down London theaters, notes the first performance of various important plays, and recognizes the inventions of various theatrical techniques. The informative introduction highlights the significant aspects of the era. The dictionary entries range from a paragraph to several pages and are cross-referenced. Famous figures, such as Sarah Bernhardt, Shakespeare, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Shaw, appear, as do a number of actors and playwrights who may be less known to the general public. Major plays (*Arms and the Man*, *The Country Wife*, *Much Ado about Nothing*) are given full entries; minor works get a more concise treatment. Terms such as Burlesque, Ghost glide, Mummings/mumming plays, and Verse drama are defined. There are also entries for theater buildings themselves. A generous and well-organized bibliography rounds out the work. This historical dictionary is recommended for academic and public libraries, particularly where there is a student interest in the topic. --Rebecca Vnuk British plays and playwrights are arguably some of the most well known and most popular in the theatrical world. Grantley, a professor of theater history at the University of Kent, offers a thorough, informative, and entertaining look at the places, plays, and people involved in British theater from 1311 to 1899. A lengthy chronology showcases such important dates as the 1610 outbreak of plague that shut down London theaters, notes the first performance of various important plays, and recognizes the inventions of various theatrical techniques. The informative introduction highlights the significant aspects of the era. The dictionary entries range from a paragraph to several pages and are cross-referenced. Famous figures, such as Sarah Bernhardt, Shakespeare, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Shaw, appear, as do a number of actors and playwrights who may be less known to the general public. Major plays (*Arms and the Man*, *The Country Wife*, *Much Ado about Nothing*) are given full entries; minor works get a more concise treatment. Terms such as Burlesque, Ghost glide, Mummings/mumming plays, and Verse drama are defined. There are also entries for theater buildings themselves. A generous and well-organized bibliography rounds out the work. This historical dictionary is recommended for academic and public libraries, particularly where there is a student interest in the topic. (Booklist) This volume in the 'Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts' series focuses on the development of British theater from the 13th through the 19th centuries. Grantley is a seasoned scholar in theater history. This clearly constructed dictionary includes useful elements such as a chronology of early British theater and an extensive, well-organized bibliography. The 1,100-plus entries cover specific people, works, events, and relevant terminology. Grantley's dictionary presents information regarding early British theater in a very broad spectrum. It is best suited for generalists or undergraduate researchers. . . . Summing Up: Recommended. Lower- and upper-level undergraduates; general readers. (CHOICE) This volume is part of the Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts series from Scarecrow Press. It deals with British theater from its earliest stage presentations (1311 C.E.) to 1899. The dictionary's entries cover authors, trends, genres, literary and historical concepts, plays, actors, and great eras. A year-by-year chronology that highlights important theatrical events leads off the volume. That is followed by a condensed historical essay. The author divides his essay into historical eras. The alphabetically organized entries include some of the greatest playwrights of all time; William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and George Bernard Shaw. A very extensive bibliography organized by eras closes this handy volume. . . . [T]here is extensive cross-referencing in the dictionary entries. The dictionary entry portion of the book is nearly 450 large type pages. This book can be of great value as an introduction to the early British theater, which can make for pleasant reading and lead to further research. It will be of interest to both the general reader interested in the theater as well as theater scholars. It covers periods that not well known or well documented making it useful to a broad range of readers. (American Reference Books Annual) About the Author Darryll Grantley has spent 26 years teaching theatre history at the University of Kent, and also amassing

numerous facts for this fact-filled volume. In his courses, he covers all periods of British theatre, with an emphasis on the late medieval and early modern periods. In this time, he has written numerous articles and authored, edited or contributed to over a dozen books, including *London in Early Modern Drama*, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* and *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*.