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The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance)

Judith Pascoe

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Judith Pascoe : The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating and ear-openingBy IchthyornisThis is a wonderful book. The book is about Sarah Siddons, but is also about Pascoe the literary scholar's comically doomed search to discover a

lost soundscape. Reading this book made me think about Romantic theatre differently, but it also made me perk up to the sounds all around me. Pascoe historicizes diverse contexts of listening and hearing and theorizes about the intensity and variety of audience pleasures. The book itself is a pleasure to read, a lovely, loitering investigation of loss and also, quite unexpectedly, funny. I wish more critics wrote like this.

English actress Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) was an international celebrity widely acclaimed for her performances of tragic heroines. We know what Siddons looked like; an endless number of artists asked her to sit for portraits and sculptures; but what of her famous voice? In lively and engaging prose, Judith Pascoe journeys to discover how the celebrated romantic actor's voice sounded and to understand its power to move audiences to a state of emotional collapse. The author's quixotic endeavor leads her to enroll in a "Voice for Actors" class, to collect Lady Macbeth voice prints, and to listen more carefully to the soundscape of her own life. *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files* is the first full-scale attempt to address the importance of the voice in romantic culture. Bringing together archival discoveries, sound recording history, and media theory, the book shows how the romantic poet's preoccupation with voices is linked to a larger cultural anxiety about the voice's ephemerality. *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files* contributes to a growing body of work on the fascinating history of sound, and will engage a broad audience interest in how recording technology has altered human experience.

"Along the way, the author aptly developed her own voice: her gift for felicitous, first-person writing, still a skeptically viewed undertaking in academic monographs. . . . Pascoe succeeds in creating an account, personal and learned, of her quest. . . . She spices *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files* with lively writing . . . a literary counterpart to Siddons's riveting voice."