



The Irish Dramatic Revival 1899-1939 (Critical Companions)

By Anthony Roche

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The Irish Dramatic Revival was to radically redefine Irish theatre and see the birth of Ireland's national theatre, the Abbey, in 1904. From a consideration of such influential precursors as Boucicault and Wilde, Anthony Roche goes on to examine the role of Yeats as both founder and playwright, the one who set the agenda until his death in 1939. Each of the major playwrights of the movement refashioned that agenda to suit their own very different dramaturgies.

Roche explores Synge's experimentation in the creation of a new national drama and considers Lady Gregory not only as a co-founder and director of the Abbey Theatre but also as a significant playwright. A chapter on Shaw outlines his important intervention in the Revival. O'Casey's four groundbreaking Dublin plays receive detailed consideration, as does the new Irish modernism that followed in the 1930s and which also witnessed the founding of the Gate Theatre in Dublin.

The Companion also features interviews and essays by leading theatre scholars and practitioners Paige Reynolds, P.J. Mathews and Conor McPherson who provide further critical perspectives on this period of radical change in modern Irish theatre.

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Editorial Review

Review

“... the series’ brief to provide both 'critical survey *and* analysis' [my emphasis] makes the task undertaken by Anthony Roche in his study of the Irish Dramatic Revival particularly challenging ... However, as might be expected from a critic whose work on Irish drama has been among the most informed of his generation, Anthony Roche fulfills this difficult task with aplomb ... Whether one comes to the book as a student looking for an authoritative introduction to the Irish Dramatic Revival, or as an experienced academic interested in finding connections to pursue in one’s own research, Anthony Roche proves to be a most engaging Critical Companion.” –Shaun Richards, St. Mary’s University, UK, *BREAC*

“Roche’s synthetic study close reads, contextualizes, and creatively juxtaposes individual plays of the Dramatic Revival in provocative ways that spark insights and make connections that reveal the dialogic nature?yet also coherence?of the Irish dramatic canon ... chapters of Roche’s book are filled with myriad illuminating observations on the plays and personalities of the Irish Dramatic Revival ... Those wishing to read further in the field will find Roche’s bibliography of primary and secondary sources useful and judicious.” – Brian W. Shaffer, Rhodes College, *English Literature in Transition*

“Roche (Univ. of California, Davis), whose previous publications include *Brian Friel: Theatre and Politics* (CH, Mar'14, 51-3711) and *Synge and the Making of Modern Irish Drama* (CH, Jul'13, 50-6097), focuses on the figures who shaped this movement?W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, John Millington Synge, Sean O’Casey?and offers contextualized readings of their important plays. The author discusses various writers, benefactors, actors, and other figures who had a noteworthy influence on these dramas ... It is accessible and valuable for those who seek to understand the cultural context of the revival. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals; general readers.” - *CHOICE*

About the Author

Anthony Roche is Professor in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College, Dublin, and has published widely on Irish drama and theatre from the late nineteenth century to the present. He is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel* (2006) and author of *Contemporary Irish Drama* (2009), *Brian Friel: Theatre and Politics* (2011) and *Synge and the Making of Modern Irish Drama* (2013).

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