



# Performing Opposition: Modern Theater and the Scandalized Audience

*Neil Blackadder*

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Modern theater history is punctuated by instances of scandalized audience members disrupting and in some cases suspending the first production of a new play. Such incidents are usually dismissed as riots, as self-evident displays of philistinism. Neil Blackadder's intriguing new study reveals them in fact to be multifaceted conflicts, showing the ways in which these protesters-acting against plays by such notables as Jarry, Synge, and Brecht-creatively devised and enacted resistance through verbal rejoinders, physical gestures, and organized group demonstrations.

*Performing Opposition* draws on reviews, memoirs, interviews, and court records to present engaging and insightful accounts of these clashes?clashes that Blackadder proposes as a unique and distinct category of event in a time when unprecedentedly restrained norms of auditorium behavior coincided with a regeneration of writing for the stage. Offering the first detailed examination of affronted theatergoers' counter-performances, the volume represents an intriguing illumination of a largely overlooked aspect of performed drama and its history.

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