



The Cambridge Companion to the Actress (Cambridge Companions to Literature)

John Stokes

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This Companion brings together sixteen new essays which examine, from various perspectives, the social and cultural role of the actress throughout history and across continents. Each essay focuses on a particular stage in her development, for example professionalism in the seventeenth century; the emergence of the actress/critic during the Romantic period and, later on, of the actress as best selling autobiographer; the coming of the drama schools which led to today's emphasis on the actress as a highly-trained working woman. Chapters consider the image of the actress as a courtesan, as a 'muse', as a representative of the 'ordinary' housewife, and as a political activist. The collection also contains essays on forms, genres and traditions - on cross dressing, solo performance, racial constraints, and recent Shakespeare - as well as on the actress in early photography and on film. Its unique range will fascinate, surprise and instruct theatre-goers and students alike.

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