



Interpreting Synge: Essays from the Synge Summer School, 1991-2000

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John Millington Synge, controversial in his own time and long established as a major figure of world theatre, has nonetheless suffered relative critical neglect. Where his great contemporaries Yeats and Joyce and his outstanding successor Beckett have attracted whole industries of scholarly attention, Synge, by reason of his short life and limited output, has been relegated to the unconsidered category of minor classic. This volume of essays, arising from lectures given at the Synge Summer School by some of the most distinguished writers and scholars of Irish literature, sets about the necessary task of interpreting Synge: his relation to cultural and theatrical contexts; the significance of his plays; the distinctive quality of his language and the thematic matrices of his work. Four original poems, specially commissioned for the book, provide an imaginative counterpoint to the critical interpretation of the essays. CONTENTS Introduction Nicholas Grene, 'On the margins: Synge and Wicklow' R.F. Foster, 'Good behaviour: Yeats, Synge and Anglo-Irish etiquette' Frank Mc Guinness, 'John Millington Synge and the King of Norway' Angela Bourke, 'Keening as theatre' Tom Paulin, 'Riders to the Sea: a revisionist tragedy' Antoinette Quinn, 'Staging the Irish peasant woman: Maud Gonne v. Synge' Christopher Morash, 'All playboys now: the audience and the riot' Martin Hilsky, 'Re-imagining Synge's language: the Czech experience' Declan Kiberd, 'The making and unmaking of myth: Synge as anthropologist' Anthony Roche, 'Synge: the woman and the tramp' Ann Saddlemyer, 'Synge's soundscape' With poems by Seamus Heaney, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill (after Synge), Gerald Dawe and Brendan Kennelly.

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