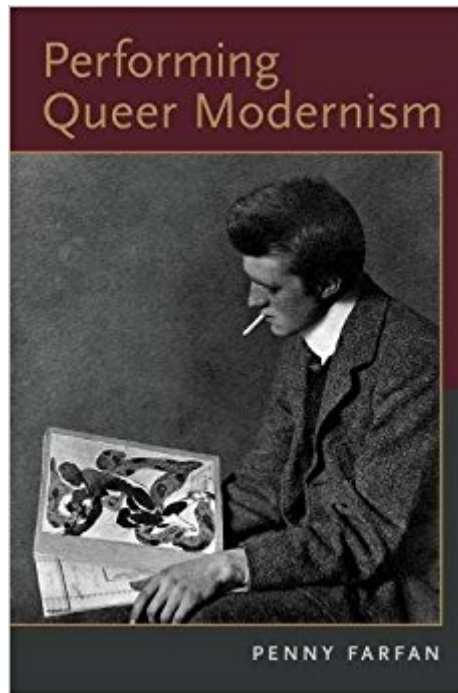




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Performing Queer Modernism



Synopsis

Focusing on some of the best-known and most visible stage plays and dance performances of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, Penny Farfan's interdisciplinary study demonstrates that queer performance was integral to and productive of modernism, that queer modernist performance played a key role in the historical emergence of modern sexual identities, and that it anticipated, and was in a sense foundational to, the insights of contemporary queer modernist studies. Chapters on works from Vaslav Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* to Noël Coward's *Private Lives* highlight manifestations of and suggest ways of reading queer modernist performance. Together, these case studies clarify aspects of both the queer and the modernist, and how their co-productive intersection was articulated in and through performance on the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century stage. *Performing Queer Modernism* thus contributes to an expanded understanding of modernism across a range of performance genres, the central role of performance within modernism more generally, and the integral relation between performance history and the history of sexuality. It also contributes to the ongoing transformation of the field of modernist studies, in which drama and performance remain under-represented, and to revisionist historiographies that approach modernist performance through feminist and queer critical perspectives and interdisciplinary frameworks and that consider how formally innovative as well as more conventional works collectively engaged with modernity, at once reflecting and contributing to historical change in the domains of gender and sexuality.

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Customer Reviews

"Where does one look for queer modernism? In her rich and compelling investigation, Penny Farfan finds examples in the interstices of disciplines and forms, genders and sexualities. Considering plays and performances, dance and bodies, uncanny ghostings and productive slippages, Farfan's crystalline prose, elegant insights, and multidisciplinary subjects and methods make for an illuminating, generative read."-- Jill Dolan, author of *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*"This book luminously reveals how queerness created modernism through a spinning prism of performances onstage and offstage, legitimate and illegitimate, embodied and literary. Like the turns of butch femme fatale Loie Fuller's Fire Dance, images and insights of one chapter linger as the next ones flash into view. Farfan's richly erudite, sinewy writing memorably captures the dense interweaving of sexual and aesthetic dissonance that circulated among audiences as well as performers and writers during this transformational era-and beyond."-- Kim Marra, Professor of Theatre Arts and American Studies, University of Iowa

Penny Farfan is Professor of Drama at the University of Calgary. She is the author of *Women, Modernism, and Performance*, the co-editor of *Contemporary Women Playwrights: Into the Twenty-First Century*, and a past editor of *Theatre Journal*. In 2015, she received the Association for Theatre in Higher Education's Excellence in Editing Award for sustained career achievement and the Women and Theatre Program's Achievement Award for Scholarship.

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