

18th- and 19th-Century Plays by Irish (and Irish Diasporic) Women

The first two plays written by a woman which were staged in Ireland were by the Anglo-Welsh writer Katherine Philips: *Pompey* (1663) and *Horace* (1664). Both were produced at Dublin's Smock Alley Theatre. In 1700, a highly talented playwright emerged in London who some scholars believe was born in Co. Tyrone: Susanna Centlivre. However, definitive proof of Centlivre's Irish birth has never been discovered, and it is certain that her parents were English and that she was raised in Lincolnshire. What's more, only one of Centlivre's plays features an Irish character (a crude Stage Irishman in the one-act farce, *A Cure for Cuckoldom; or, A Wife Well-Manag'd* – which was published in 1715 but never staged due to its virulently anti-Catholic views).

The first Irish-born playwright to have a play professionally staged was Dubliner Mary Davys, whose *The Northern Heiress* was a hit at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London in 1716. Many women playwrights who were born in Ireland, who lived in Ireland for much of their lives, or who were of Irish descent have subsequently followed in Davys's footsteps...

Davys, Mary, *The Northern Heiress; or, The Humours of York* (1716)

Davys, Mary, *The Self-Revival* (1725, unacted)

McCarthy, Charlotte, *Celia; or, The Perjured Lover* (1733, attributed)

Boyd, Elizabeth, *Minerva's Triumph: A Masque* (1739)

Boyd, Elizabeth, *Don Sancho; or, The Students' Whim* (1739)

Pilkington, Laetitia, *The Turkish Court, or The London Prentice* (1748)

Clive, Catherine "Kitty", *The Rehearsal; or, Bays in Petticoats* (performed c.1750, published 1753)

Young Gentlewoman, A [credited to Elizabeth Griffith], *Theodorick, King of Denmark* (1752, closet)

Clive, Catherine "Kitty", *Every Woman in Her Humour* (1760)

Sheridan, Frances, *The Discovery* (1762)

Clive, Catherine "Kitty", *Sketches of a Fine Lady's Return from a Rout* [a.k.a. *The Faithful Irishwoman*] (1763)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *Amana* (1764, closet)

Sheridan, Frances, *The Dupe* (1764)

Sheridan, Frances, *A Trip to Bath* (1765)

McCarthy, Charlotte, *The Author and the Bookseller: A Dramatic Piece* (1765)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *The Platonic Wife* (1765)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *The Double Mistake* (1766)

Anonymous [credited to Elizabeth Griffith], *Dorval; or, the Test of Virtue* [straight translation of the Diderot play] (1767)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *The School for Rakes* (1768)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *The Father* (1770, unacted)

Du Bois, Lady Dorothea, *The Magnet* (1771)

Du Bois, Lady Dorothea, *The Divorce* (published 1771, performed 1772)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *A Wife in the Right* (1772)

Du Bois, Lady Dorothea, *The Haunted Grove* (1773)

Du Bois, Lady Dorothea, *South Briton* (1773)

Cullum, Mrs., *Charlotte* (1775)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *The Barber of Seville* [straight translation of the Beaumarchais play] (1776, unacted)

Ryves, Elizabeth, *The Prude* and *The Triumph of Hymen*, in the volume *Poems on Several Occasions* (1777, closet)

Ryves, Elizabeth, *The Debt of Honour* (c. 1777, accepted by Drury Lane but never performed or published)

Griffith, Elizabeth, *The Times* (1779)

Cornelys, Margaret, *The Deceptions* (1781)

Sheridan, Elizabeth “Betsy”, *The Ambiguous Lover* (1781)

Edwards, Anna Maria, *The Enchantress* (1783)

O’Brien, Mary, *The Temple of Virtue* (1785, closet)

Edgeworth, Maria, *The Double Disguise* (1786)

Ross, Anna, *The Cottagers* (1789)

Forsyth, Elizabeth, *The Siege of Quebec; or, The Death Of General Wolfe: A Five-Act Tragedy* (1789)

O'Brien, Mary, *The Fallen Patriot* (1790)

Brooke, Charlotte, *Belisarius* [after Marmontel] (c.1790, lost but possibly plagiarised by Charles Kemble)

Brooke, Charlotte, *The School for Christians*, in the volume *Dialogues for the Use of Children* (1791)

Burrell, Lady Sophia, *Comala: A Dramatic Poem in Three Acts, From "Ossian"* (1792)

Burrell, Lady Sophia. *The Female Archers* and *Connal and Crimora*, in the volume *Poems* (1794, closet)

Bateman, Charlotte, *Miss from Boarding School* (1795)

Edgeworth, Maria, *Whim for Whim* (1797)

Edgeworth, Maris, *Old Poz* (1797)

Edgeworth, Maria, *Eton Montem* (1800)

Burrell, Lady Sophia, *Maximian: A Translation from Corneille* (1800)

Burrell, Lady Sophia, *Theodora; or, The Spanish Daughter: A Tragedy in Five Acts* (1800)

Mountain, Mrs, *Travellers at Spa* (1806)

Owenson, Sydney [Lady Morgan], *The First Attempt; or, Whim of a Moment* (1807, with music by Thomas Simpson Cooke)

Macauley, Elizabeth Wright, *Marmion* (1811)

Isdell, Sarah, *The Poor Gentlewoman* (1811)

Bartley [née Smith], Sara, *Border Feuds, or The Lady of Buccleigh* (1811)

Bartley [née Smith], Sara, *The Lady of the Lake* (c. 1811)

Le Fanu, Alicia, *The Sons of Erin; or, Modern Sentiment* (1812)

Leadbeater, Mary Shakleton, *Cottage Dialogues among the Irish Peasantry* (1813, closet)

Leadbeater, Mary Shakleton, *Honesty is the Best Policy* (1814)

Balfour, Mary, *Kathleen O'Neil* (1814)

Liddiard [née Wilkinson], J.S. Anna, *Kenilworth: A Masque*, in the volume *Kenilworth and Farley Castle with Other Poems* (1813, closet)

Nooth, Charlotte, *Clara: or, The Nuns of Charity: A Drama in Five Acts and Verse*, in the volume *Original Poems and a Play* (1815)

Mountain, Mrs, *National Sketches* [attributed] (1816)

Edgeworth, Maria, *Love and Law / The Two Guardians / The Rose, Thistle and Shamrock*, in the volume *Comic Dramas* (1817)

Clarke, Olivia, *The Irishwoman* (1819)

Wilmot [née Brand and later Lady Dacre], Barbarina, *Gonzalvo of Cordova: A Romance Dramatized / Pedrarias: A Tragic Drama / Ina: A Tragedy / Xarifa: A Tragic Drama*, in *Dramas, Translations and Occasional Poems* (2 vols., 1821)

Hemans [née Browne], Felicia Dorothea, *The Vespers of Palermo* (1823)

Hemans [née Browne], Felicia Dorothea, *The Siege of Valencia* (1823)

Harrington, Marianne, *A Dialogue Between a Christian and a Professor (On New Birth)* (1824, Socratic Dialogue)

Caulfield, Frances Sally, *The Innocents*, in the volume *The Innocents, Ocean and The Earthquake at Aleppo* (1824, closet)

Isdell, Sarah, *The Cavern* (1825, with music by Sir John Stevenson)

Owenson, Sydney [Lady Morgan], *The Cavern; or, The Outlaws* (1825, with music by Sir John Stevenson)

Edgeworth, Maria, *The Grinding Organ / Dumb Andy / The Dame Holiday*, in the volume *Little Plays for Children* (1827)

Brontë, Charlotte, *The Poetaster* (1830)

Norton, Caroline Sheridan, *The Gypsy Father* (1830)

Hemans [née Browne], Felicia Dorothea, *Prologue to the Tragedy of Fiesco: As Translated from Schiller by Colonel D'Aguilar* (1832)

Owenson, Sydney [Lady Morgan], *The Easter Recess; or, The Tapestry Workers / Manor Sackville / Temper*, in the volume *Dramatic Scenes from Real Life* (1833, closet)

Hemans [née Browne], Felicia Dorothea, *Sebastian Of Portugal: A Dramatic Fragment / De Chatillon' or, The Crusaders: A Tragedy / The Alcestis of Alfieri / Caius Gracchus* [after Monti] / *Il Conte Di Carmagnola* [after Manzoni] / *The Battle Of Macclodio / Dramatic Scene Between Bronwylfa and Rhyllon / The English Martyrs: A Scene of the Days of Queen Mary / Flowers and Music in a Room of Sickness / Wood Walk and Hymn / Burial Of An Emigrant's Child In The Forest / Prisoners' Evening Service: A Scene of the French Revolution / The Indian's Revenge: Scenes from the Life of a Moravian Missionary in The Works of Mrs Heman with a Memoir* (7 vols., 1834, closet)

Shannon, Mrs. F.S., *The Mountain Sylph: A Romantic Grand Opera* (1834, possibly co-written with Thomas James Thackeray and with music by John Barnett)

Hall, Anna Maria ["Mrs. S.C. Hall"], *St. Pierre, the Refugee* [later retitled *The French Refugee*] (1836)

Hall, Anna Maria ["Mrs. S.C. Hall"], *Mabel's Curse* (1837)

Caulfield, Frances Sally, *The Deluge: A Poem* (1837, closet)

Wilmot [née Brand and later Lady Dacre], Barbarina, *Frogs and Bulls: A Lilliputian Piece in Three Acts* (1838)

Shannon, Mrs. F.S., *Jealousy: A Petite Comedy* (1838)

Hall, Anna Maria ["Mrs. S.C. Hall"], *The Groves of Blarney* (1838)

Jameson, Anna Brownell Murphy, *The Country Cousin / Falsehood and Truth / The Princely Bride / The Uncle / The Young Ward* [straight translations of plays by Amalie, Princess of Saxony], in the volume *Social Life in Germany* (1847, all closet dramas)

Fitzsimon [or Fitz-Simon], Ellen O'Connell, *The Bay of Normandy*, in the volume *Darrynane in Eighteen Hundred and Thirty-Two and Other Poems* (1863, closet)

Connelly, Celia Logan, *The Odd Trick* (1873)

Connelly, Celia Logan, *The Homestead* (1873)

Connelly, Celia Logan, *Rose; or, The Mystery of the Deserted House* (1874)

Beauchamp, Emily, *The Anti-Matrimonial Agency* (1876)

Heyne, Mary and Elena Norton, *The Rose and the Ring* (1876)

Heyne, Mary and Elena Norton, *Don Giovanni Thompson* (1877)

Beauchamp, Emily, *Yes or No* (1877)

Heyne, Mary and Elena Norton, *The Lost Chord* (1879)

O'Brien, Charlotte Grace, *A Tale of Venice* (1881)

Riddell, Charlotte, *George Geith of Fen Court* (1883)

Connelly, Celia Logan, *An American Marriage* [later retitled *That Man*] (1884)

Douglas, Dulcie, *The Librarian* [straight translation of the Von Mozer play] (1885)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *The Skeleton* (1887, with York Stephens)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *Nitocris* (1887)

Connelly, Celia Logan, *Gaston Cadol* [after Charles Lomon] (c.1888)

Murphy, Louisiana, *Dunmore; or, The Days of the Land League* (1888)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *Puss in Boots* (1888)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *She* (1888, with Edward Rose)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *Death and Rachel* [a.k.a. *Rachel*] (1890)

Robertson, Eleanor Frances Le Fanu, *Daughter of Erin* (1891)

Forbes, Hon. Mrs., *All Hallow's Eve* (1891, with J.W. Whitbread)

Costello, Mary, *The Plebeian* (1891)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *Katharine Kavanagh* (1891)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *Dr and Mrs Neill* (1894)

Lynch, Hannah, *Folly or Saintliness / The Great Galeoto* [straight translations of the Echegaray plays], in the volume *The Great Galeoto* (1895, closet)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *A Mother of Three* (1896)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *A Match-Maker* (1896, with Gertrude Kingston)

Costello, Mary, *A Bad Quarter of an Hour* (1896)

Graves, Clotilde "Clo.", *Princess Tarakanoff; or, The Northern Night* (1897)

Beauchamp, Emily, *The Matrimonial Agency* (1897)

Magrath, Anna Jane, *Fardorougha and the Black Prophet* [after William Carleton] (1898)

Graves, Clotilde “Clo.”, *A Florentine Wooing* (1898)

Milligan, Alice, *The Green Upon the Cape* (1898)

Milligan, Alice, *Oisín and Patraic* (1899)

Two important writers who emerged at the end of the 19th century (and who are named above) would continue to produce successful plays into the early 20th-century: Omagh, Co. Tyrone-born Alice Milligan and Buttevant, Co. Cork-born Clotilde “Clo.” Graves.

Milligan’s 20th-century plays include *Oisín in Tír na nÓg* (1900), *The Last Feast of the Fianna* (1900), *The Harp that Once* (1901), *The Deliverance of Red Hugh* (1901), *The Daughter of Donagh: A Cromwellian Drama in Four Acts* (1902), *Brian of Banba* (1904), *The Last of the Desmonds* (1905), and *The Return of Lugh* (1909).

Graves’s 20th-century plays include *Nurse* (1900), *The Bishop’s Eye* (1900), *St. Martin’s Summer* (1902, written with Dublin-born Lady Colin Campbell), *A Maker of Comedies* (1903), *The Bond of Ninon* (1906), and *The General’s Past* (1909).

Another playwright listed above who continued producing work into the 20th century is Mary Costello: her later plays include *Not Made in Heaven* (1909), *The Coming of Aileen* (1910), and *The Chorus Lady* (1910).

The start of the 20th century also saw the emergence of the significant number of women playwrights associated with the Irish Literary Revival, including one of Ireland’s greatest playwrights: Lady Augusta Gregory...

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