Following his opposition to the establishment of a theatre in Geneva, Jean-Jacques Rousseau is often considered an enemy of the stage. Yet he was fascinated by drama: he was a keen theatre-goer, his earliest writings were operas and comedies, his admiration for Italian lyric theatre ran through his career, he wrote one of the most successful operas of the day, *Le Devin du village*, and with his Pygmalion, he invented a new theatrical genre, the *Scène lyrique* (‘melodrama’). 

Through multi-faceted analyses of Rousseau’s theatrical and musical works, authors re-evaluate his practical and theoretical involvement with and influence on the dramatic arts, as well as his presence in modern theatre histories. New readings of the *Lettre à d’Alembert* highlight its political underpinnings, positioning it as an act of resistance to external bourgeois domination of Geneva’s cultural sphere, and demonstrate the work’s influence on theatrical reform after Rousseau’s death. Fresh analyses of his theory of voice, developed in the *Essai sur l’origine des langues*, highlight the unique prestige of Italian opera for Rousseau. His ambition to rethink the nature and function of stage works, seen in *Le Devin du village* and then, more radically, in *Pygmalion*, give rise to several different discussions in the volume, as do his complex relations with Gluck. Together, contributors shed new light on the writer’s relationship to the stage, and argue for a more nuanced approach to his theatrical and operatic works, theories and legacy.
Patrick Primavesi
3. The voice of nature in Rousseau’s theatre: reconstructing a dramaturgy, Jørgen Langdalen
4. Rousseau’s *Pygmalion* and the limits of (operatic) expression, Jacqueline Waeber

Part II. Rousseau as playwright
5. Pygmalion’s power struggles: Rousseau, Rameau and Galathée, Maria Gullstam
6. Rousseau and his early comedies: the concept of the comic, Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval

7. Rousseau’s *Pygmalion* and the theatre of autobiography, David Marshall

Part III. Rousseau’s operatic and theatrical posterity
8. The melodic language of *Le Devin du village* and the evolution of opéra-comique, David Charlton
10. A theatrophobic dramatist: J.-J. Rousseau’s position in theatre historiography and on today’s stage, Willmar Sauter
11. The judgement of Rousseau: *Paride ed Elena* by Gluck and Calzabigi, Vienna 1770, Magnus Tessing Schneider

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**Pages:**
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**Price Sterling (£):**
75.00

**Collaborators:**
Felicity Baker, University College London; David Charlton, Royal Holloway, University of London; Maria Gullstam, Stockholm University; Jørgen Langdalen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology; David Marshall, University of California, Santa Barbara; Michael O’Dea, Université Lumière Lyon 2; Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, Université Paris-Est Créteil; Prof. Dr. Patrick Primavesi, Universität Leipzig; Willmar Sauter, Stockholm University; Magnus Tessing Schneider, Stockholm University; Jacqueline Waeber, Duke University.