



The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice (Theater: Theory/Text/Performance)

Judith Pascoe

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English actress Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) was an international celebrity widely acclaimed for her performances of tragic heroines. We know what Siddons looked like—an endless number of artists asked her to sit for portraits and sculptures—but what of her famous voice? In lively and engaging prose, Judith Pascoe journeys to discover how the celebrated romantic actor's voice sounded and to understand its power to move audiences to a state of emotional collapse. The author's quixotic endeavor leads her to enroll in a "Voice for Actors" class, to collect Lady Macbeth voice prints, and to listen more carefully to the soundscape of her own life.

The Sarah Siddons Audio Files is the first full-scale attempt to address the importance of the voice in romantic culture. Bringing together archival discoveries, sound recording history, and media theory, the book shows how the romantic poets' preoccupation with voices is linked to a larger cultural anxiety about the voice's ephemerality. The Sarah Siddons Audio Files contributes to a growing body of work on the fascinating history of sound, and will engage a broad audience interest in how recording technology has altered human experience.



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