

Fantasies of Empire: The Empire Theatre of Varieties and the Licensing Controversy of 1894 (Hardback)



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FANTASIES OF EMPIRE: THE EMPIRE THEATRE OF VARIETIES AND THE LICENSING CONTROVERSY OF 1894 (HARDBACK)



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University of Iowa Press, United States, 2005. Hardback. Condition: New. New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In the London summer of 1894, members of the National Vigilance Society, led by the well-known social reformer Laura Ormiston Chant, confronted the Empire Theatre of Varieties, Leicester Square, and its brilliant manager George Edwardes, as he applied for a routine license renewal. On grounds that the Empire's promenade was the nightly resort of prostitutes, that the costumes in the theatre's ballets were grossly indecent, and that the moral health of the nation was imperiled, Chant demanded that the London County Council either deny the theatre its license or require radical changes in the Empire's entertainment and clientele before granting renewal. The resulting license restriction and the tremendous public controversy that ensued raised important issues - social, cultural, intellectual, and moral - still pertinent today. *Fantasies of Empire* is the first book to recount, in full, the story of the Empire licensing controversy, in all its captivating detail. Contemporaneous accounts are interwoven with Donohue's identification and analysis of the larger issues raised: what the controversy reveals about contemporary sexual and social relations, what light it sheds on opposing views regarding the place of art and entertainment in modern society, and what it says about the pervasive effect of British imperialism on society's behavior in the later years of Queen Victoria's reign. Donohue connects the controversy to one of the most interesting developments in the history of modern theatre, the simultaneous emergence of a more sophisticated, varied, and moneyed audience and a municipal government insistent on its right to control and regulate that audience's social and cultural character and even its moral behavior. Rich in illustrations and entertainingly written, *Fantasies of Empire* will appeal to theatre, dance,...

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