Contents

List of illustrations Acknowledgments		<i>page</i> viii xiii
I	INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH	I
	A celebration of Restoration comedy	I
	The critical reversal	3
	The life is in the style	5
	The playgoers: a homogeneous audience	7
	The behaviour of the audience	8
	A self-conscious theatre	II
	Recreating the performance	16
2	THE PLAYHOUSE AND THE PERFORMANCE	19
	Tennis court into court theatre	19
	The stage doors	23
	The balconies	25
	The scenery	27
	Discoveries	28
	Familiar locations	29
	The music	35
	Lighting and effects	36
	Restoration setting on the modern stage	38
3	THE ACTOR	43
	The primacy of the acting style	43
	The actor in costume	45
	Dorimant greets the new day	54
	His personal props	59
	The style is the man	65
	The beau assumes his role	70
	Sir Fopling introduced	75
	The actor shares himself with the audience	79
	A bright dance of life	84
4	THE ACTRESS	89
	Women on the stage	89

v

	Exploiting the actress	91
	Dress and undress	96
	The toilette	102
	The fan	107
	The mask	II2
	The style of the actress	118
	Departures from acceptability	126
	The breeches part	133
5	STAGE AND SEXUAL TACTICS	143
	The promenade and the stage space	143 I43
	The spacious entrance and exit	143 147
	Patterns for lovers	153
	Dorimant suffers the rites of love	160
	Lovers play lovers	163
	Love in the burlesque vein	167
	A stage for dancing	170
6	A MODE OF SPEECH	175
	Speech or song?	175
	Differences in speech between characters	179
	Repartee	182
	Whining of love	186
	Love on the tongue	189
	Contracts and provisos	194
	A note on verse, song and non-illusion	198
	Double entendre	201
	The glories of the aside	204
7	THE SPIRIT OF THE PERFORMANCE	210
	Plot or situation?	210
	Real or artificial?	212
	Town and country matters	214
	Chase and capture, seduction and conquest	217
	Mismatches and cuckoldry	227
	A note on disguising	232
	Sex and farce: Aimwell's swoon	234
	A temple of pagan delights	238
	The spirit, the style and the revivals	243

Contents

APPENDICES A A partial list of Restoration comedies revived in the twentieth century 252 B The comedies in order of popularity 1660–1747 After 1900 258 Selected bibliography 259 Index 259