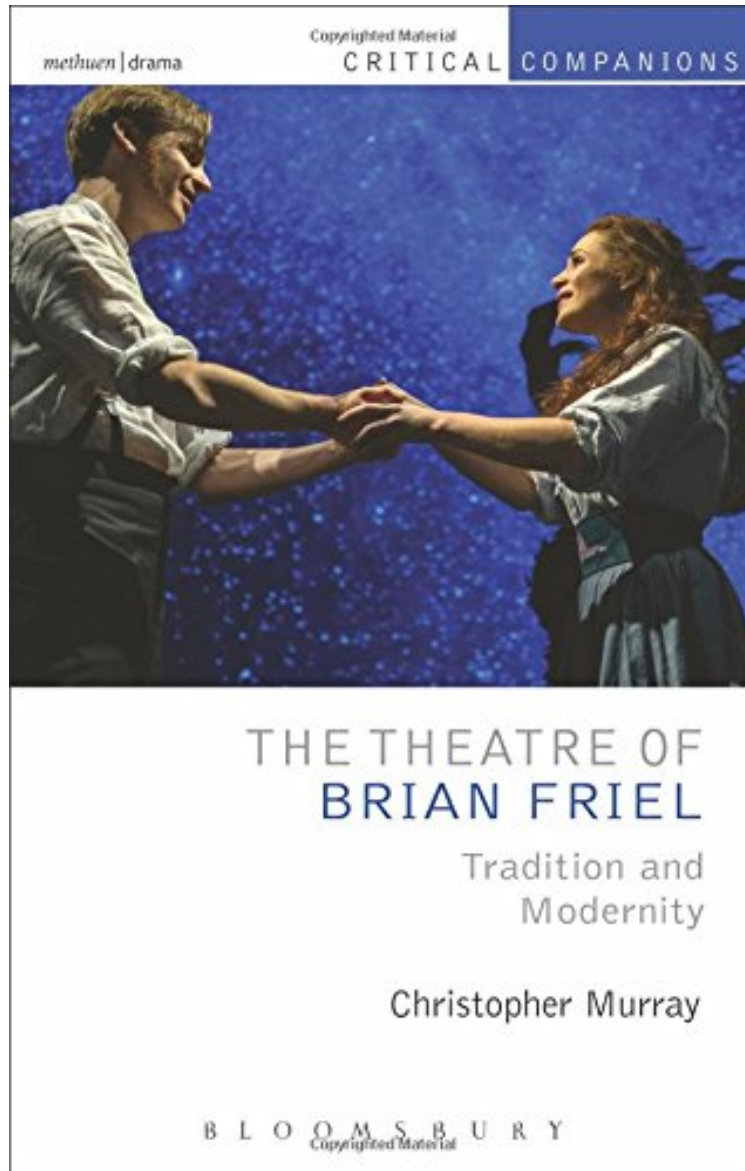


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The Theatre of Brian Friel: Tradition and Modernity (Critical Companions)

Christopher Murray

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Christopher Murray : The Theatre of Brian Friel: Tradition and Modernity (Critical Companions) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Theatre of Brian Friel:

Tradition and Modernity (Critical Companions):

Brian Friel is Ireland's foremost living playwright, whose work spans fifty years and has won numerous awards, including three Tonys and a Lifetime Achievement Arts Award. Author of twenty-five plays, and whose work is studied at GCSE and A level (UK), and the Leaving Certificate (Ire), besides at undergraduate level, he is regarded as a classic in contemporary drama studies. Christopher Murray's *Critical Companion* is the definitive guide to Friel's work, offering both a detailed study of individual plays and an exploration of Friel's dual commitment to tradition and modernity across his oeuvre. Beginning with Friel's 1964 work *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, Christopher Murray follows a broadly chronological route through the principal plays, including *Aristocrats*, *Faith Healer*, *Translations*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Molly Sweeney* and *The Home Place*. Along the way it considers themes of exile, politics, fathers and sons, belief and ritual, history, memory, gender inequality, and loss, all set against the dialectic of tradition and modernity. It is supplemented by essays from Shaun Richards, David Krause and Csilla Bertha providing varying critical perspectives on the playwright's work.

Creative, fertile and fresh. Murray's kind of criticism is best described as classical, representing an exemplary standard within a basically traditional and long-established form or style. As a generalist analysis of Friel's plays and their impact on contemporary theatre, this is the best, most extensive and most up-to-date study so far. Ulf Dantanus, UK, *Nordic Irish Studies* What sets this monograph apart from others devoted to this key playwright are its many illuminating, nuanced, surprising framings of Friel's plays by other plays from the Irish, English, and European stage. Murray's most provocative insights arise from his imaginative juxtapositions, for example, of *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and *Miller's Death of a Salesman*. Murray's fluency with theater history beyond the twentieth-century Irish stage gives his survey its flavor and edge. I would include [The Theatre of Brian Friel] among the indispensable recent full-length appraisals of this seminal figure of the Irish stage. Brian W. Shaffer, Rhodes College, *English Literature in Transition* About the Author Christopher Murray is Emeritus Professor of English and Drama at University College, Dublin, Ireland, where he was the founder member and first director of the UCD Drama Centre offering MA and PhD in Modern Drama Studies. His many publications include *Twentieth-Century Irish Drama: Mirror up to Nation*. He is chair of the board of directors of the Gaiety School of Acting, Dublin.