We live in a celebrity-obsessed culture, but until recently the history of celebrity has been little discussed. The contributors to this innovative collection locate the origins of a distinctively modern kind of celebrity in the Romantic period. Celebrity was from the beginning a multi-media phenomenon whose cultural pervasiveness – in literature and the theatre, music and visual culture, fashion and boxing – overflows modern disciplinary boundaries and requires attention from scholars with different kinds of expertise. Looking back to the 1720s and forward to the 1890s, this volume identifies the people and institutions that made the Romantic period a pivotal moment in the creation of celebrity. Tracing connections between celebrity and the period’s discourses of heroism, genius, nationalism, patronage and gender, these essays investigate a cultural apparatus that many of the period’s central figures became implicated in, even as they sought to distance themselves from it.

Tom Mole is Associate Professor of English at McGill University. He is the author of Byron’s Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy (2007).
ROMANTICISM AND CELEBRITY CULTURE, 1750–1850

TOM MOLE
Contents

List of Illustrations page vii
Notes on Contributors viii
Acknowledgments xi

Introduction
Tom Mole 1

PART I: APPARATUS 19
1. Celebrity and the spectacle of nation
   Jason Goldsmith 21
2. Celebrity, politics and the rhetoric of genius
   David Higgins 41
3. The physiognomy of the lion: encountering literary celebrity in the nineteenth century
   Richard Salmon 60

PART II: SITES 79
4. Rara avis or fozy turnip: Rossini as celebrity in 1820s London
   Benjamin Walton 81
5. Daniel Mendoza and sporting celebrity: a case study
   Peter M. Briggs 103
6. Siddons rediviva: death, memory and theatrical afterlife
   Heather McPherson 120
### Contents

PART III: GENDER

7. Trials of the dandy: George Brummell’s scandalous celebrity  
   *Clara Tuite*  
   143

8. Celebrity violence in the careers of Savage, Pope and Johnson  
   *Linda Zionkowski*  
   168

9. Mary Robinson’s conflicted celebrity  
   *Tom Mole*  
   186

PART IV: AUDIENCE

10. Patron or patronised?: ‘fans’ and the eighteenth-century English stage  
    *Cheryl Wanko*  
    209

11. Byron, commonplacing and early fan culture  
    *Corin Throsby*  
    227

12. Ann Hatton’s celebrity pursuits  
    *Judith Pascoe*  
    245

*Bibliography*  
264

*Index*  
283
Illustrations

Fig. 1.1 George Hayter, *The Duke of Wellington visiting the Effigy and Personal Relics of Napoleon* (1852), mezzotint (1854) by James Scott. National Portrait Gallery, London. page 24

Fig. 3.1 Kenny Meadows, *The ‘Lion’ of a Party*, engraved by Orrin Smith, from *Heads of the People: or, Portraits of the English*, drawn by Kenny Meadows; with original essays by Distinguished Writers, 2 vols. (London: Robert Tyas, 1840–1). Special Collections, Leeds University Library. 62

Fig. 5.1 James Gillray (?), *The Battle Between Mendoza and Humphrey*, published by J. Aitken, 7 May 1789. National Portrait Gallery, London. 109

Fig. 6.1 Henry Perronet Briggs, *Sarah Siddons and Fanny Kemble* (c.1830). Boston Athenaeum. 129

Fig. 6.2 Bette Davis as *Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse*, tableau-vivant at the 1957 Laguna Beach Festival. Courtesy of the Laguna Beach Festival of Arts. 135

Fig. 7.1 William Hogarth, *Calais Gate, or the Roast Beef of Old England* (1749). British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings. 144

Fig. 7.2 ‘The Dowager Dandy’, in Captain Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell, Esq., commonly called Beau Brummell*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1844), frontispiece to Volume I. Collection of the Author. 150

Fig. 7.3 ‘The Broken Beau’, in Captain Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell*, frontispiece to Volume II. Collection of the Author. 152
Contributors

Peter M. Briggs is Professor of English at Bryn Mawr College and the author of ‘Laurence Sterne and Literary Celebrity in 1760’, *The Age of Johnson*, 4 (1991), 251–80. A frequent contributor to the *Scriblerian*, he has also recently published essays on Swift and Addison.

Jason Goldsmith is Assistant Professor of English at Butler University, where he works on Romanticism, nineteenth-century British literature and culture, and modern critical theory. He has published articles and translations in *SEL, Studies in Hogg and His World, Hispanofilia* and *Meridian*. He is currently at work on a book exploring the relationship between popular celebrity and the Romantic nation entitled *Cult Figures: The Spectacle of Romantic Nationalism*.

David Higgins is a Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Leeds. He is the author of *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine: Biography, Celebrity, Politics* (Routledge, 2005) and *Frankenstein: Character Studies* (Continuum, 2008). He is co-editing (with Sharon Ruston) a collection of essays entitled *Teaching Romanticism*. His current research explores how nationalism and imperialism impact on Romantic autobiography.


Tom Mole is Associate Professor of English at McGill University and the author of *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the*
Contributors

Judith Pascoe is Professor of English at the University of Iowa and the author of two books on Romantic literary culture: *Romantic Theatricality: Gender, Poetry, and Spectatorship* (Cornell, 1997) and *The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors* (Cornell, 2006). She is the editor of *Mary Robinson: Selected Poems* (Broadview, 2000). She is currently at work on a book-length study of Sarah Siddons’s voice.

Richard Salmon is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Leeds, with research interests spanning a wide range of nineteenth-century literature and culture. He is the author of *Henry James and the Culture of Publicity* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and *William Makepeace Thackeray* (Northcote House, 2005), and of essays on journalism, biography and celebrity culture. He is currently completing a book on early Victorian literary professionalism, provisionally titled *The Disenchantment of the Author*.

Corin Throsby is a Senior Scholar at Hertford College, Oxford University. She has published articles on Byron, Conrad and literary responses to the sinking of the *Titanic*.


Benjamin Walton is a University Lecturer in Music at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Jesus College. His work centres on the cultural history of music in the first half of the nineteenth century and he is the author of *Rossini in Restoration Paris: The Sound of Modern Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). He has also published work in *19th-Century Music, The Cambridge Companion to Rossini* and the *Blackwell..."
Contributors

Cheryl Wanko is a Professor in the Department of English, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches Restoration and eighteenth-century British literature and culture. She is the author of Roles of Authority: Thespian Biography and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century England (Texas Tech University Press, 2003) and of essays on theatre in the long eighteenth century in Studies in English Literature and Harvard Library Bulletin. She has been a contributor to the new Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Linda Zionkowski is Professor of English at Ohio University and the author of Men’s Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660–1784 (Palgrave, 2001). She served as editor of Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, volumes 37 and 38, and has edited and contributed to a collection of essays with Cynthia Klekar entitled The Culture of the Gift in Eighteenth-Century England (Palgrave, 2009). Her most recent project is a book on women and gift economies in the fiction of Richardson, Burney and Austen.
Acknowledgments

My principal debt is to the scholars who have contributed essays to this volume; their erudition and intellectual curiosity have been an inspiration, their professionalism has made my job as editor a pleasure, and their insights have broadened and deepened my understanding of celebrity culture in Romantic Britain. I am also indebted to Linda Bree and Maartje Scheltens at Cambridge University Press, who believed in this collection’s potential before the essays were written, and have seen it into print patiently and attentively. I am grateful for the helpful comments of the press’s anonymous readers. Tara MacDonald read every essay with care and intelligence and offered valuable assistance with the editorial process; this collection owes much to her conscientious work.
We live in a celebrity-obsessed culture, but until recently the history of celebrity has been little discussed. The contributors to this innovative collection locate the origins of a distinctively modern kind of celebrity in the Romantic period. Celebrity was from the beginning a multi-media phenomenon whose cultural pervasiveness - in literature and the theatre, music and...