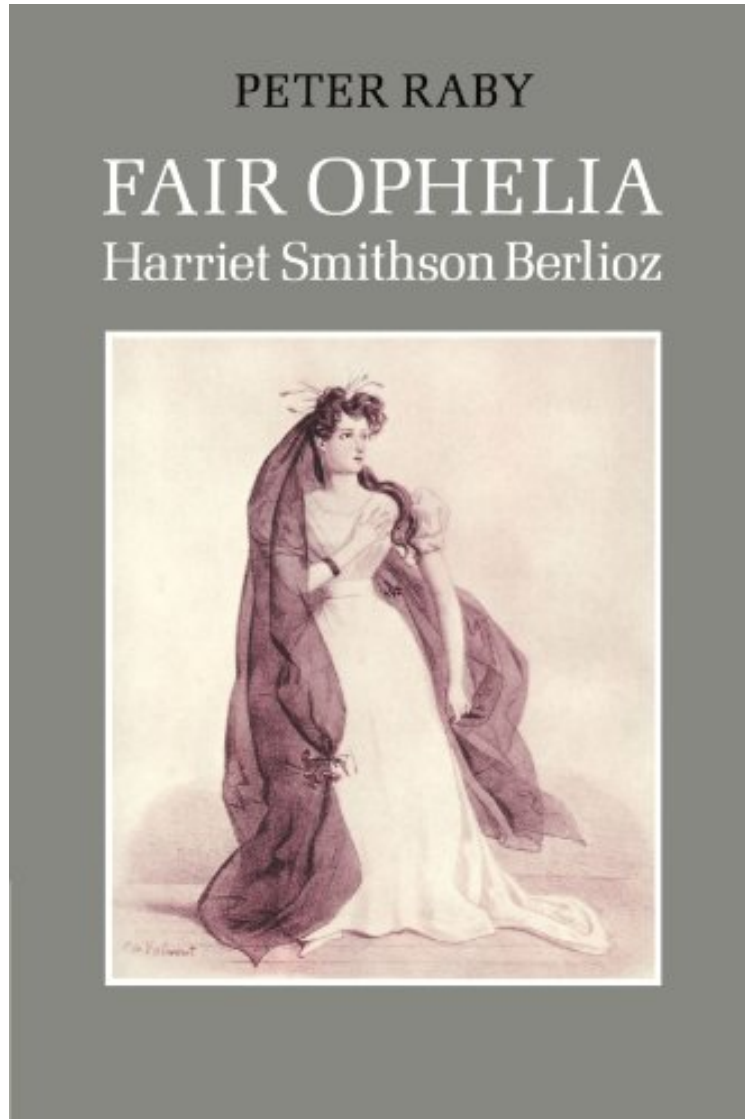


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Fair Ophelia: A Life of Harriet Smithson Berlioz

Peter Raby

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Peter Raby : Fair Ophelia: A Life of Harriet Smithson Berlioz before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fair Ophelia: A Life of Harriet Smithson Berlioz:

This book presents a complete account of the remarkable life and career of Harriet Smithson Berlioz. Peter Raby's success in this book is to bring fully and sympathetically to life the vulnerable woman and the working actress who is so generally submerged beneath the myth that was created about her. At the same time he provides a continually

fascinating commentary on the theatrical and cultural history of her time: on touring troupes in Ireland; on the late Georgian theatre in London; on the different acting styles and traditions in England and France; on the economics of the theatre and the composition of the audiences; on the intellectual background to Shakespeare's belated acceptance in France; on French translations of Shakespeare and contemporary French critical essays and reviews; on the leading figures who frame Harriet's story - actors, painters, writers, and musicians (most notably, of course, Berlioz himself). Holding all together is the complex figure of Harriet - a talented actress, and who for a brief but crucial period in French cultural history became a symbol and an ideal of the new, Romantic spirit.