



Ira Aldridge: Performing Shakespeare in Europe, 1852-1855 (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora)

Bernth Lindfors

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Ira Aldridge: Performing Shakespeare in Europe, 1852-1855, the third volume of Bernth Lindfors's award-winning biography, traces the American-born black classical actor's itinerary on his first Continental tour. Starting in Brussels and following Aldridge up the Rhine to Basel, on to Berlin and Vienna, and cities in Prussia and Hungary, Lindfors recounts the major performances and analyzes audience responses to them. Because European audiences wanted to see this "African" actor in Shakespearean roles rather than in the melodramas and farces that were popular in Britain, Aldridge concentrated almost exclusively on performing as Othello, Shylock, Macbeth, and Richard III. He performed the roles in English even when acting with local companies who spoke in German, Hungarian, or another European language. Aldridge's impressive manner of interpreting these characters won him many honors, awards, and medals, some bestowed by heads of state or by national academies. Drawing on myriad reviews, playbills, and letters, many of them penned by Aldridge himself, Lindfors examines in detail Aldridge's interpretations of these timeless characters and shows why these were Aldridge's glory years. Bernth Lindfors, professor emeritus of English and African Literatures, University of Texas at Austin, is the author of *Ira Aldridge: The Early Years, 1807-1833* and *Ira Aldridge: The Vagabond Years, 1833-1852*, both published by the University of Rochester Press in 2011.

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