

Call For Papers:

‘Charles Macklin and the Making of Georgian Theatre’
Notre Dame London Gateway, 1 Suffolk St, London
22-23 June 2018

Charles Macklin’s involvement with the British and Irish theatres spanned an extraordinary eight decades of the eighteenth century. One of the most lauded and controversial actors of his period, Macklin’s performance as Shylock in 1741 was a seminal moment in the period’s apotheosis of Shakespeare and he can take considerable credit for the rise of naturalistic acting. He also had significant success as a playwright. His comedy *Love à la Mode* (1759) is an important exploration of ethnic stereotyping and its implications for ideas of Britishness while the later *The Man of the World* (1781) is the only eighteenth-century play to be twice refused a performance licence by the Examiner of Plays for its acerbic take on parliamentary politics in the wake of Lord Bute’s premiership. He wrote a number of other plays and he was an important influence for a generation of later playwrights. His appearance in Maria Edgeworth’s *Harrington* (1817) gives us some sense of the resonance of his acting fame in the nineteenth century.

Macklin’s life and career were remarkably eventful. He was involved in a number of high profile legal battles related to the stage. The ‘British Inquisition’, a lecture school he opened in 1753, revealed his interests in public improvement. Later in life, he was a galvanizing figure for Irish patriot networks in London. He travelled and worked in regional theatres, especially Dublin. If the theatre is to be regarded one of the central institutions of the eighteenth-century Irish Enlightenment, as Ian McBride has recently suggested, a more thorough understanding of Macklin’s career is essential to understanding the place of Ireland in the Enlightenment project. Furthermore, over the course of his career, his relationships with central figures in theatre such as James Quin, David Garrick, Margaret Woffington, Catherine Clive, and Samuel Foote make him a vital thread to understanding the tapestry of Georgian theatrical networks over the course of the century.

This conference seeks to unpack the many strands to Macklin’s life and career. His extraordinary longevity and multiplicity of interests and networks suggest that a Macklin-centric focus will offer a stimulating perspective on Georgian cultural life.

Topics might include:

- The development of naturalistic acting
- Celebrity
- Public controversy and disputes
- Maria Macklin/Ann Macklin
- Irishness/Ireland
- Scottishness/Scotland
- Theatre and legality
- Censorship
- Stereotypes
- Macklin’s minor plays
- Representations of Macklin
- Macklin and publication
- Macklin in the media
- Macklin and Foote/Woffington/Garrick/Goldsmith/Clive

Political Macklin
Oratory/elocution/public lectures
Macklin in Dublin/regional Macklin
Macklin and anti-Semitism
Macklin and Enlightenment

Funding will be available to conference speakers. The conference will be in a workshop format consisting of a series of roundtable discussions of pre-circulated papers. Papers will be circulated three weeks before the conference. These will form the basis of a collection of essays that seeks to restore Macklin's place at the heart of eighteenth-century cultural production.

Abstracts (max 500 words) for 3-5,000 word papers should be sent with a short biography to both Ian Newman (inewman@nd.edu) and David O'Shaughnessy (doshaug@tcd.ie) by 31 March 2018.