

there is only one performer in a named dance, or when there are so many cast changes that the reader might be confused, our practice is generally to repeat the cast rather than use the reference formula.

On Tuesday 2 December 1729, the opera house opened for the season with Handel's *Lotharius*. The newspaper bill does not mention the singers' names, but we have secured them from the contemporary libretto and listed them in the entry for 2 December. *Lotharius* was continued at the Haymarket on 6, 9, 13, 16, 20, and 30 December, still without mention of the singers. In each of our entries for these nights we say "LOTHARIUS. *Cast not listed*, but see 2 Dec." By this method we ignore the intervening performances (which, as above, the reader can find in the Index) and we refer the reader to where a cast is given.

In laboring to achieve accuracy in transcribing our data, we have not attempted to follow the vagaries of the many eighteenth-century printers, and we have silently omitted *Mr.*, *Signior*, and various other minor matters that we could not include in a work of the present range. The entries are divided as follows: (1) the main play and designated afterpiece, (2) Dancing, (3) Singing, (4) other entertainments, and (5) Comment. In the first part we have given the exact title of the play on its first performance and a short title thereafter throughout the season, shrinking *The True and Antient History of King Leir and His Three Daughters* to *King Lear* in the later entries. Editorial information in the first four sections is placed in brackets, in the last section, *Comment*, only when there is danger of confusion. Quotation marks have been avoided. Statements of sources are placed in the preliminary section before each season, and additional documentation, terminated by a colon, precedes a direct quotation, or, placed in parentheses, follows the quotation.

The reader should be warned against the dangers of easy generalizations to be drawn from the data we present. For one thing, in those seasons where we lack treasurers' account books we can list only the advance announcement that appeared in the daily paper. An examination of the 1740-41 season at Covent Garden and the 1741-42 season at Drury Lane, where we have entries made (presumably) by Richard Cross after the fact, will show how often the advertized play was not performed or another play offered instead. On other dangers involved in evaluating stage history, Emmett L. Avery's critique in *Philological Quarterly*, XXII (April 1944), 158-60, and my article, "The Increase in Popularity of Shakespeare's Plays in the Eighteenth Century: A *Caveat* for Interpreters of Stage History," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, VII (Spring 1956), 189-202, should be consulted.