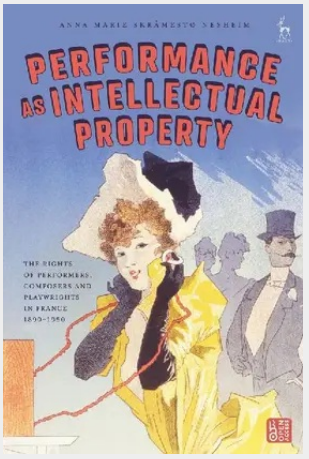
Nesheim

Performance as Intellectual Property

The Rights of Performers, Composers and Playwrights in France 1890-1950



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This open access book offersa cultural history of lawsuits that traces the development of French performance rights from la Belle Époque, throughthe Roaring Twenties, and into thePost-War period. It does so by analysing the ways in which performers, composers, and playwrights took to French courtrooms, sought attention in mass media, and participated in political debates to claim their rights to create and control musical and theatrical performance. In 19th-century France, composers and playwrights organised in member-run societies that successfully used authors' rights legislation to curb the power of theatre managers. By the turn of the 20th century, these so-called collective management organisations had transformed French cultural industries by building out structures of royalty collection and improving litigation practices. From the café-concert culture in 19th-century Montmartre and the rise of modern celebrity culture, to mass media and radio entertainment, the book traces precedent-setting litigation that defined who creates and controls performance. The book challenges previous narratives that centre the individualisation of authors in the expansion of the international copyright regime while neglecting performers. Instead, it reveals the ways in which the personality and individuality of performers have played a constitutive role in discourses about genius, technology, and legal categories. Performance as Intellectual Property is for anyone interested in the emergence of modern European cultural industries and the relationships between intellectual property systems, creativity, and art. The ebook editions of this book are available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence on Bloomsbury Collections Open access was funded by the European Research Council.

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