



**Anne Charlotte Leffler and Modernist Drama:
True Women and New Women on the Fin-de-siecle
Scandinavian Stage (Studies in Nordic Literature
and Film)**

Lynn R. Wilkinson

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Anne Charlotte Leffler (1849-1892) was Europe's most important woman playwright during the last decades of the 19th century. Together with Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, she was also one of the Scandinavian pioneers of modern and modernist drama. This book is the first full-length study of Leffler's dramatic productions. It argues that Leffler's plays deserve to be read and performed today alongside those of Ibsen and Strindberg, as they indeed were during her lifetime. The book will serve as a welcome resource for new productions of her plays and studies of her work. Born the same year as Strindberg, Anne Charlotte Leffler was a far more successful playwright in Scandinavia and elsewhere during her lifetime. After her death, however, literary histories dismissed her work as an example of the propagandistic literature of Sweden's 1880s. But, beginning in the 1970s, revivals of her plays in theaters and on television have rekindled an interest in Leffler and her work. Scoring her first theatrical success in 1873 with a play about a young actress who rejects marriage for a career on the stage, Leffler wrote 14 plays that were either published or performed in theaters throughout Scandinavia and Europe - often to considerable critical acclaim. All address the situation of women in a range of styles, but often in connection with other issues, such as the exploitation of the working classes or the repressiveness of European culture. Leffler's works include her feminist classic, the realist *True Women*, which centers on the conflicts that arise in one household when a daughter opposes her spendthrift father's claim to the last of his wife's money. It premiered together with the avant-garde one-act *A Saving Angel*, which depicts in the form of a dance the unsettling effects of urban sexuality on a group of young women. And Leffler's last play, *The Ways of Truth*, is a dream play that draws on flaneur narratives to show the wanderings of an intellectual heroine and her companion through scenes from late 19th-century European life. (Series: Studies in Nordic Literature and Film)

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