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| **Your article** |
| **Archer, William (1856-1924)** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Born in Edinburgh, William Archer served as a London theatre critic from 1881 to 1920. He retired from weekly reviewing when his melodrama *The Green Goddess* was a major success in New York (1920-22) and London (1923-24). His published translations of Henrik Ibsen’s plays began to appear in 1888 and culminated in *The Works of Henrik Ibsen* (12 volumes, 1906-08). He translated and helped to stage the first London productions of *A Doll’s House* (1889), *Ghosts* (1891), and *Rosmersholm* (1892), and in close partnership with the actress Elizabeth Robins, he co-directed the productions of *Hedda Gabler* (1891), *The Master Builder* (1893), *Little Eyolf* (1896), and *John Gabriel Borkman* (1898).  He also translated and published plays by Maurice Maeterlinck and Gerhart Hauptmann. In his advocacy for modern English drama, Archer supported the plays of Arthur Wing Pinero, Oscar Wilde, James Barrie, Harley Granville Barker, and Bernard Shaw. He led the British campaigns against stage censorship and for a national theatre. In 1907, he and Barker published *A National Theatre: Scheme and Estimates*. In the mid-1880s, he and Shaw drafted a play entitled *Rhinegold* that Shaw later transformed into *Widowers’ Houses* (1892), the play that launched his playwriting career. Between 1892 and 1924, Archer wrote well over a hundred articles and reviews on Shaw and his plays. Although he criticized some of the plays, he repeatedly praised Shaw as a modern dramatic genius. Their abiding friendship thrived on their debates about all aspects of modern drama, including Shaw’s plays. In 1923, Archer published *The Old Drama and the New*, a historical survey of British drama with a lengthy (and still argumentative) section on Shaw. |
| Born in Edinburgh, William Archer served as a London theatre critic from 1881 to 1920.  File: William Archer Portrait.jpeg  William Archer Portrait  Source: Available at National Portrait Gallery: <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw146102/William-Archer?LinkID=mp57666&role=sit&rNo=0>  He retired from weekly reviewing when his melodrama *The Green Goddess* was a major success in New York (1920-22) and London (1923-24). His published translations of Henrik Ibsen’s plays began to appear in 1888 and culminated in *The Works of Henrik Ibsen* (12 volumes, 1906-08). He translated and helped to stage the first London productions of *A Doll’s House* (1889), *Ghosts* (1891), and *Rosmersholm* (1892), and in close partnership with the actress Elizabeth Robins, he co-directed the productions of *Hedda Gabler* (1891), *The Master Builder* (1893), *Little Eyolf* (1896), and *John Gabriel Borkman* (1898).  File: Henrik Ibsen receiving William Archer in audience.jpeg  Henrik Ibsen receiving William Archer in  Source: ‘**Henrik Ibsen receiving Mr William Archer in Audience,’ cartoon by Max Beerbohm.**  [This image is available at http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/european/2013/09/page/2/#sthash.UlGZNrUx.dpuf  where the the copyright is given as Museum and Study Collection at Central Saint Martin’s College of Art and Design]  He also translated and published plays by Maurice Maeterlinck and Gerhart Hauptmann. In his advocacy for modern English drama, Archer supported the plays of Arthur Wing Pinero, Oscar Wilde, James Barrie, Harley Granville Barker, and Bernard Shaw. He led the British campaigns against stage censorship and for a national theatre. In 1907, he and Barker published *A National Theatre: Scheme and Estimates*. In the mid-1880s, he and Shaw drafted a play entitled *Rhinegold* that Shaw later transformed into *Widowers’ Houses* (1892), the play that launched his playwriting career. Between 1892 and 1924, Archer wrote well over a hundred articles and reviews on Shaw and his plays. Although he criticized some of the plays, he repeatedly praised Shaw as a modern dramatic genius. Their abiding friendship thrived on their debates about all aspects of modern drama, including Shaw’s plays. In 1923, Archer published *The Old Drama and the New*, a historical survey of British drama with a lengthy (and still argumentative) section on Shaw. List of Works Archer, William. (1894-1898) *The Theatrical World of 1893-1897*, London: Walter Scott.  ----- (1888) *Masks or Faces? A Study in the Psychology of Acting*, London: Longmans.  ----- trans. and ed. (1906-08) *The Works of Henrik Ibsen*, 12 vols., London: Heinemann.  ----- (1912) *Playmaking: A Manual of Craftsmanship*, London: Chapman & Hall.  ----- (1923) *The Old Drama and the New: An Essay in Re-Evalutation*, London: Heinemann.  ----- and H. Granville Barker (1907), *A National Theatre: Scheme and Estimates*, London: Duckworth.  Postlewait, Thomas, ed. (1984) *William Archer on Ibsen*, Westport: Greenwood.  -----, ed. (forthcoming 2015) *Correspondence of Bernard Shaw and William Archer*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press. |
| Further reading:  (Archer)  (Postlewait)  (Whitebrook) |