Why do actors get stage fright? What is so embarrassing about joining in? Why not work with animals and children, and why is it so hard not to collapse into helpless laughter when things go wrong? In trying to answer these questions – usually ignored by theatre scholarship but of enduring interest to theatre professionals and audiences alike – Nicholas Ridout attempts to explain the relationship between these apparently unwanted and anomalous phenomena and the wider social and political meanings of the modern theatre. The book focuses on the theatrical encounter – those events in which actor and audience come face to face in a strangely compromised and alienated intimacy – arguing that the modern theatre has become a place where we entertain ourselves by experimenting with our feelings about work, social relations and about feelings themselves.

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Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems

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Acknowledgements

Colleagues in the Research Seminar of the Department of History of Art and Contextual Studies at Wimbledon School of Art created a space of genuine intellectual conversation and investigation in which elements of this project were conceived. Fred Orton and Gail Day, in particular, challenged and encouraged me to get serious.

The School of English and Drama at Queen Mary, University of London has been a congenial and supportive environment for the kind of work that I enjoy. Colleagues in Drama have all contributed in individual ways to making this work a pleasure to do. Maria Delgado’s personal and practical support, in particular, has been invaluable.

The work of Societas Raffaello Sanzio has encouraged me to rethink the meaning and the nature of theatre in ways that continue to astonish me. For their work, their friendship and their hospitality I am particularly grateful to Gilda Biasini, Claudia Castellucci, Romeo Castellucci and Chiara Guidi.

I am especially grateful to Tracy Davis for giving this book a home in her series, and for the clarity and wisdom of her editorial advice. I am indebted, too, to Victoria Cooper and Rebecca Jones at Cambridge University Press for their expert guidance at every stage in its preparation.

Steve Connor read and responded with characteristic generosity to each successive development of this project. Alan Read offered enthusiasm, provocation and dialogue on some of its central concerns. Sophie Nield offered her critical judgement at a crucial stage and has been a constant source of intellectual solidarity. Nicholas Till – who bears some initial responsibility for getting me into the profession of thinking, teaching and writing – has contributed far more than he imagines. Shelley
Trower has read, heard and talked through this work and has been sensitive and steadfast in her support and encouragement. Bridget Escolme has been an inspiration from the beginning and our conversations over many years are part of the foundations of this work. In Joe Kelleher I found, during the course of this work, a friend and collaborator who has made going to the theatre, as well as thinking and talking about theatre, seriously pleasurable.