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978-0-521-01274-4 - A Short History of Western Performance Space

David Wiles

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A SHORT HISTORY OF WESTERN PERFORMANCE SPACE

This innovative book provides a historical account of performance space within the theatrical traditions of western Europe. David Wiles takes a broad-based view of theatrical activity as something that occurs in churches, streets, pubs and galleries as much as in buildings explicitly designed to be 'theatres'. He traces a diverse set of continuities from Greece and Rome to the present, including many areas that do not figure in standard accounts of theatre history. Drawing on the cultural geography of Henri Lefebvre, the book identifies theatrical performances as spatial practices characteristic of particular social structures. It is not a history of contexts for dramatic literature, but the history of an activity rooted in bodies and environments. Wiles uses this historical material to address a pressing concern of the present: is theatre better performed in modern architect-designed, apparently neutral empty spaces, or characterful 'found' spaces?

DAVID WILES is Professor of Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. His previous publications have been mainly in the field of Elizabethan and Greek theatre, including *Shakespeare's Clown: actor and text in the Elizabethan playhouse* (Cambridge, 1987) and *Greek Theatre Performance* (Cambridge, 2000). This is his seventh book.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521813242

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First published 2003

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Wiles, David.

A Short History of Western Performance Space / David Wiles.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 81324 7 – ISBN 0 521 01274 0 (pbk)

1. Theatre – Europe History. 2. Theatres Europe History. I. Title.
PN2570.W56 2003
792'.094 – dc21 2003043815

ISBN 978-0-521-81324-2 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-01274-4 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2007

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all who have read individual chapters and given me their comments and encouragement: David Bradby, Jacky Bratton, Ali Hodge, Georgia Kallara, Patrick Landskaer-Wilson, Dick McCaw, Fiona Macintosh, Kate Matthews, Maurice Wiles, and Nurit Yaari. Richard Beacham, Hugh Denard, Mary-Kay Gamel, Edith Hall, Gayna Wiles and many others have provided me with bibliographical advice. Students in the Department of Drama and Theatre at Royal Holloway who have taken my course in Theatre Spaces have assisted me with their researches and experimentation. The Department has supported my sabbatical leave, which was supplemented by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The Faculty of Arts at Royal Holloway has assisted with the cost of reproduction rights. Victoria Cooper at Cambridge University Press has been a consistent source of support. I am grateful to my wife Gayna Wiles for many things, but particularly for undertaking the drawings. Without them, this book would have been a much poorer thing.