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This is the first comprehensive study of the theatre of nineteenth-century Spain, a most important genre consisting of more than 10,000 plays that were written, staged, reviewed, and published during the course of the century. David Gies assesses this mass of material – much of it hitherto unknown – as text, spectacle, and social phenomenon. He shows how theatrical productions reveal the deep concerns of a society which moved from war and dictatorship, through rebellion, reaction, and the growth of a small but powerful middle class. His book sheds light on political drama during Napoleonic times, the theatre of dictatorship (1820s), Romanticism, women dramatists, socialist drama, neo-Romantic drama, the relationship between parody and the dominant literary currents of the day, and the challenging work of Galdós. A chapter on the battle to create a National Theatre reveals the deep conflicts generated by the various interested factions in the middle of the century. This readable account will at last allow students and scholars properly to re-evaluate the canon of texts.

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In memoriam MJ

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So I wish you first a
Sense of theatre; only
Those who love illusion
 And know it will go far:
Otherwise we spend our
Lives in a confusion
Of what we say and do with
 Who we really are.
 W. H. Auden

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Preface

I have many people to thank for what has been a project I have spent many years researching and writing. First, I am grateful for the released time and financial support provided by the University of Virginia, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Spain's Ministry of Culture (Ángeles Gutiérrez Fraile, Director of "Cooperación Internacional," and the at-the-time Subdirector, Javier López Facal), whose assistance enabled me to travel to many libraries and archives in search of materials. I am also grateful for information, materials, and answers to queries provided by Pedro Álvarez de Miranda, Noël M. Valis, Ana Vázquez, John C. Dowling, Russell P. Sebold, Michael Schinasi, Margaret Ballantyne, and my research assistants Jeffrey T. Bersett, Elizabeth Franklin Lewis, Alvin Sherman, and Karen Rauch. My colleague Donald Shaw provided invaluable insights following the reading of various drafts. Additional materials were secured by the impressive Interlibrary Loan Department of the University of Virginia's Alderman Library as well as the librarians at the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, the Hemeroteca Municipal de Madrid, the Biblioteca Municipal de Madrid, New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the University of Pennsylvania Library, the Oberlin Library, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas. I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to my students at the University of Virginia who have been willing to read non-canonical texts with me and to think about them in fresh ways. Two entities have provided generous financial support for the publication of this book: the Program for Cultural Cooperation Between Spain's Ministry of Culture and U.S. Universities, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Finally, Katharina Brett has displayed impressive patience and expert guidance during the editorial process at Cambridge University Press. To all, my most sincere thanks.

A note on the English translations: all translations from the Spanish are mine, unless otherwise indicated. I have attempted to render the often-convoluted prose of the Spanish nineteenth century in a readable and accessible modern English, abandoning stylistic quirks when not relevant

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to the quotation. The reader will often find paraphrases rather than direct translations, but in all cases I have closely followed the spirit and content of the Spanish quote. Citations in verse will appear in prose. Unless otherwise indicated, references to the plays under discussion will be given by Act and Scene (II, 3, for example).

A version of Chapter 1 originally appeared as “Glorious Invalid: Spanish Theater in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Hispanic Review* 61 (1993), 37–60. I am grateful to the Editor for permission to use it here.