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978-0-521-50968-8 - The Political Theatre of David Edgar: Negotiation and Retrieval

Janelle Reinelt and Gerald Hewitt

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The Political Theatre of David Edgar

David Edgar's writings address the most basic questions of how humans organise and govern themselves in modern societies. This study brings together the disciplines of political philosophy and theatre studies to approach the leading British playwright as a political writer and a public social critic. Edgar uses theatre as a powerful tool of public discourse, an aesthetic modality for engaging with and thinking/feeling through the most pressing social issues of the day. In this he is a supreme rationalist: he deploys character, plot and language to explore ideas, to make certain kinds of discursive cases and model hypothetical alternatives. Reinelt and Hewitt analyse twelve of Edgar's most important plays, including *Maydays* and *Pentecost*, and also provide detailed discussions of key performances and critical reception to illustrate the playwright's artistic achievement in relation to his contributions as a public figure in British cultural life.

JANELLE REINELT is Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of Warwick. She was President of the International Federation for Theatre Research from 2003 to 2007, and is a former editor of *Theatre Journal*. Her books include *After Brecht: British Epic Theatre, Critical Theory and Performance* with Joseph Roach, *The Performance of Power* with Sue-Ellen Case and *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights* with Elaine Aston. She is the series editor, with Brian Singleton, of *Studies in International Performance*.

GERALD HEWITT is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Political Science at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, and Research Fellow in the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick. He was a founding faculty member of the School of International Studies at the University of the Pacific and Department Chair of the Department of Political Science. His areas of expertise include political theory, jurisprudence and modern European history and politics.

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