Theatre and Empowerment

*Theatre and Empowerment* examines the ability of drama, theatre, dance and performance to empower communities of very different kinds, and it does so from a multicultural perspective. The communities involved include disadvantaged children in Ethiopia and the Indian subcontinent, disenfranchised Native Americans in the USA and young black men in Britain, people caught in cycles of violence in South Africa and Northern Ireland, and a threatened agricultural town in Italy. The book asserts the value of performance as a vital agent of necessary social change, and makes its arguments through the close examination, from ‘inside’ practice, of the success – not always complete – of specific projects in their practical and cultural contexts. Practitioners and commentators ask how performance in its widest sense can play a part in community activism on a scale larger than the individual, ‘one-off’ project by helping communities find their own liberating and creative voices.

**Richard Boon** is Professor of Performance Studies at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds. **Jane Plastow** is Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies at the Workshop Theatre, School of English, University of Leeds. They are also the editors of *Theatre Matters: Performance and Culture on the World Stage* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).
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Volumes for Cambridge Studies in Modern Theatre explore the political, social and cultural functions of theatre while also paying careful attention to detailed performance analysis. The focus of the series is on political approaches to the modern theatre with attention also being paid to theatres of earlier periods and their influence on contemporary drama. Topics in the series are chosen to investigate this relationship and include both playwrights [their aims and intentions set against the effects of their work] and process [with emphasis on rehearsal and production methods, the political structure within theatre companies, and their choice of audiences or performance venues]. Further topics will include devised theatre, agitprop, community theatre, para-theatre and performance art. In all cases the series will be alive to the special cultural and political factors operating in the theatres examined.

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Theatre and Empowerment

Community Drama on the World Stage

Edited by
Richard Boon and Jane Plastow
For Kitty Burrows
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Sounds and Gestures of Recollection, edited by Richard Cândida Smith, offer analyses of cultural responses to South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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