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## A History of German Theatre

Covering German-language theatre from the Middle Ages to the present day, this study demonstrates how and why theatre became so important in German-speaking countries. Written by leading international scholars of German theatre, chapters cover all aspects of theatrical performance, including acting, directing, playwriting, scenic design and theatre architecture. The book argues that theatre is more central to the artistic life of German-speaking countries than almost anywhere else in the world. Relating German-language theatre to its social and intellectual context, the History demonstrates how theatre has often been used as a political tool. It challenges the idea that German-speaking countries were a theatrical wasteland in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, provides a thematic survey of the crucial period of growth in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and discusses modern and contemporary German theatre by focusing in turn on directors, playwrights, designers and theatre architecture.

SIMON WILLIAMS is Professor and Chair of the Department of Theater and Dance at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has published widely in the fields of European continental theatre, the history of acting, Shakespearean performance, and operatic history. His major publications include *German Actors of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1985), *Shakespeare on the German Stage, 1586–1914* (Cambridge, 1990), *Richard Wagner and Festival Theatre* (1994), and *Wagner and the Romantic Hero* (Cambridge, 2004). He has contributed numerous articles in his fields of speciality to edited volumes and leading periodicals. He was co-editor of the 'Lives of the Theatre' series. He is also an active director and reviewer of opera.

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To the memory of Adolf Dresen (1935–2001)

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