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978-0-521-87299-7 - Modernism, Drama, and the Audience for Irish Spectacle

Paige Reynolds

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THE AUDIENCE FOR IRISH SPECTACLE

Employing previously unexamined archival material, Paige Reynolds reconstructs five large-scale public events staged in early twentieth-century Ireland: the riotous premiere of J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907; the events of Dublin Suffrage Week, including the Irish premiere of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, in 1913; the funeral processions of the playwright and Lord Mayor of Cork Terence MacSwiney in 1920; the sporting and arts competitions of the Tailteann Games in 1924; and the organized protests accompanying the premiere of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* in 1926. The book provides attentive readings of the literature and theatre famously produced in tandem with these events, as well as introducing surprising texts that made valuable contributions to Irish national theatre. This detailed account revises pessimistic explanations of twentieth-century mass politics and crowd dynamics by presenting a more sympathetic account of national communities and national sentiment.

PAIGE REYNOLDS is an Associate Professor in the English department of The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. She has published and lectured on Irish literature and theatre, as well as on modernism and on the audiences for literary texts, theatre, film, and sport. Her work has appeared in *Twentieth Century Literature*, *Modernism/Modernity*, and *Irish University Review*, among other publications, and she was awarded the 2003 Roger McHugh Award for outstanding learned essay in *New Hibernia Review*.

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In the forthcoming pages, I will argue that engaged audiences help to make creative work better. That claim has certainly proven true in the production of this book.

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