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978-0-521-88076-3 - The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933-1945

Gerwin Strobl

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## The Swastika and the Stage

Based on extensive archival research, this is the first full-length study in English of theatre in the Third Reich. It explores the contending pressures and ambitions within the regime and the Nazi party, within the German theatre profession itself and the theatregoing public. Together, these shaped theatrical practice in the Nazi years. By tracing the origins of the Nazi stage back to the right-wing theatre reform movement of the late nineteenth century, Strobl suggests that theatre was widely regarded as a central pillar of German national identity. The role played by the stage in the evolving collective German identity after 1933 is examined through chapters on theatre and Nazi ethnic and racial policy, anti-religious campaigns, on the *Thingspiel* and the uses of history. The picture is completed by chapters on the role of theatre in Nazi repression, propaganda and the regime's self-representation at home and abroad. The book thus traces the evolving fortunes of theatre in the Third Reich, from the financial constraints of the Great Depression, via the ostentatious lavishness of the late 1930s, to the years of 'total war', and the resulting physical destruction of most German playhouses.

GERWIN STROBL is Lecturer in Modern History at Cardiff University. He is the author of *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), and has published articles in journals including *New Theatre Quarterly*, *German Life and Letters* and the *Journal of Contemporary History*.

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This book is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents Franz and Marie, Herbert and Emmi, who loved the theatre and supported it actively in good times and bad; and to my parents Werner and Dity, who passed on to me their own great enthusiasm for the stage; to Borgi, who shares it and has been communicating it to her students; and to Guido and Filip who, we hope, will also grow to relish *Theaterluft*.

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