

## MUSSOLINI'S THEATRE

Benito Mussolini has persistently been described as an “actor” – and also as a master of illusions. In her vividly narrated account of the Italian dictator’s relationship with the theatre, Patricia Gaborik discards any metaphorical notions of *Il Duce* as a performer and instead tells the story of his life as literal spectator, critic, impresario, dramatist and censor of the stage. Discussing the ways in which the autarch’s personal tastes and convictions shaped, in fascist Italy, theatrical programming, she explores Mussolini’s most significant dramatic influences, his association with important figures such as Luigi Pirandello, Gabriele D’Annunzio and George Bernard Shaw, his oversight of stage censorship, and his forays into playwriting. By focusing on its subject’s manoeuvres in the theatre, and manipulation of theatrical ideas, this consistently illuminating book transforms our understandings of fascism as a whole. It will have strong appeal to readers in both theatre studies and modern Italian history.

PATRICIA GABORIK teaches at the University of Calabria and has been fellow of the American Academy in Rome (FAAR ’06). She has been visiting scholar at Stanford, UCLA, and Columbia University. She is the editor-translator of Massimo Bontempelli’s *Watching the Moon and Other Plays* (2013) and editor of the forthcoming *Pirandello in Context*.

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# MUSSOLINI'S THEATRE

*Fascist Experiments in Art and Politics*

PATRICIA GABORIK



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*For Edward Muir,  
whose lectures on Galileo and Garibaldi led me to Rome*

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*One who regards as trifling the question what kind of music a statesman loves has failed to understand the art of mental analysis, for in truth such matters exert a decisive influence upon action.*

– Emil Ludwig,  
Talks with Mussolini

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*Fascist Organizations and Offices,  
 Acronyms, and Titles*

AOI:	Africa Orientale Italiana (Italian East Africa)
DG:	Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo (Theatre Directorate/previously Inspectorate)
GUF:	Gruppi universitari fascisti (Fascist University Groups)
INDA:	Istituto Nazionale del dramma antico (National Institute of Ancient Drama)
MinCulPop:	Ministero della cultura popolare (Ministry of Popular Culture)
OND/Dopolavoro:	Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (National Leisure Organization)
Performing Arts Corporation:	Corporazione dello Spettacolo
PNF:	Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party)
SIAE:	Società italiana di autori e editori (Italian Society of Authors and Editors)
UCT:	Ufficio Censura Teatrale (Theatre Censorship Office)

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