Staging Consciousness

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Theater and the Materialization of Mind

William W. Demastes

Ann Arbor

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For Jean and Erin

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In many ways this book is a celebration of ten years of teaching at Louisiana State University. During that decade dedicated students pushed me to find better and more relevant explanations of what was going on in works by such varied artists as Oscar Wilde and Antonin Artaud, Samuel Beckett and Peter Shaffer. What I have discovered in fits and starts is that the notion of consciousness pervades all theater in ways I feel has yet to be articulated. I thank my students for whatever success this book may find.

I am also very much in debt to two anonymous readers. Through several drafts they offered encouraging and incredibly insightful advice. I really can't thank them enough, though, if they reveal themselves, I will try. In the same vein I must thank LeAnn Fields at the University of Michigan Press. She stuck with me as I found what I wanted to say even when it wasn't entirely clear that I would get to that point. Thanks, LeAnn. And Mike Vanden Heuvel, devil in my ear, hovers over my shoulder throughout this work.

It's always a treat to say, finally, that none of this would have been possible without the support and encouragement of my family, Jean and Erin. To them this book is dedicated.