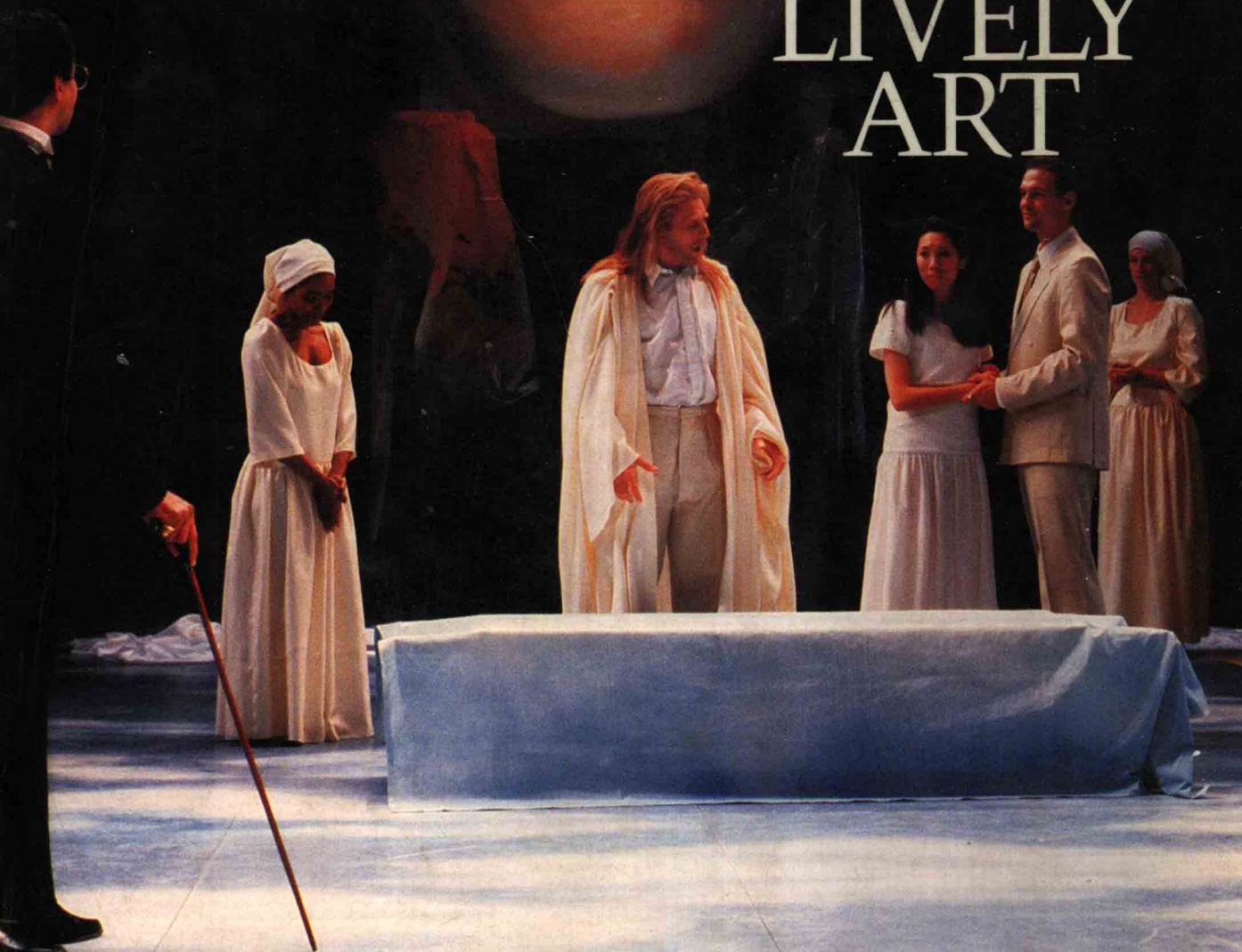




EDWIN WILSON  
ALVIN GOLDFARB

# THEATER THE LIVELY ART





# THEATER

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## THEATER: THE LIVELY ART

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*To our wives,  
Catherine Wilson  
and  
Elaine Goldfarb  
E. W. and A. G.*



## PREFACE

*Theater: The Lively Art* is intended as a comprehensive introductory theater text. By *comprehensive* we mean that it incorporates a number of elements in one volume: an introduction to the audience experience in the theater, an investigation of the elements of theater, and a study of the important developments in the history of theater.

We assume that all students reading the book are potential theatergoers, not just in their college years but throughout their lives. We have attempted, therefore, to make *Theater: The Lively Art* an ideal one-volume text to prepare students as future audience members. It will give them a grasp of how theater functions, of how it should be viewed and judged, of the tradition behind any performance they may attend.

The book will also prepare students who wish to continue studies in theater, as majors, as minors, or as students from other disciplines who take advanced courses. It provides the foundation for further studies in every aspect of theater: acting, directing, design, dramatic literature, history, theory, and criticism.

The book is divided into an Introduction and three parts. Part One, *Creating Theater*, introduces students to the people who make theater possible, to the elements of theater, and to significant concepts of theater

such as genre and realism and nonrealism. We explore the roles of the performer, the director, the designer, the technical expert, the critic, and—far from the least important—the audience member. Not only do audiences form a vital link in any theater event; students will find themselves in the role of audience members more frequently than in any other role.

In studying the people who collaborate to create theater, we also focus on the elements of theater. We investigate acting and directing, including various acting techniques and methods of actors' training, as well as the major approaches to directing. We look at the script: dramatic structure; the creation of dramatic characters; and the point of view incorporated in tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, melodrama, and so forth. We study design and technical production, including the nuts-and-bolts aspects of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound. We also consider the theoretical aspects of criticism.

In Part Two, Our Theater Heritage, we recreate the significant periods in theater history, both western and eastern. We begin with the Greek theater and conclude with the nineteenth century. Along the way, we investigate Asian theater. This look at the history of theater is not intended to be definitive or complete, and in no way should it be viewed as a substitute for advanced courses which concentrate on theater history. At the same time, we believe that every important movement, every key figure, every relevant aspect of the development of theater is covered.

Part Three, The Contemporary Theater, is devoted to theater of the past hundred years. The forces that began a century ago—in realism and departures from realism, in acting techniques, in the emergence of the director, in scene and lighting design—have defined the theater we have today. As we point out in the final chapter, ours is a diverse, eclectic theater, rich in variety and innovation. We look at the many cross-currents and trends that make up the theater which students of today and audiences of tomorrow will be attending.

The book has a number of features that we hope will be helpful and appealing to teachers and students alike. First and foremost, we have attempted to make the book immediate and alive—just the way theater should be. In the historical sections, for example, every period is introduced with a narrative of an actual event, taking the reader back in time so that he or she has the sense of being present in the audience at a performance of *Antigone* in Athens in 441 B.C., or at the premiere of *Hamlet* at the Globe Theater in London.

This same sense of immediacy and personalization has been a goal, as well, in the writing style of the book. We have attempted to write *Theater: The Lively Art* in the most readable language possible. To this end, we have dispensed with dry, pedantic language, and we have avoided wherever possible "laundry lists" of names, dates, and titles. The book contains a wealth of information, but we hope it is presented in a manner that makes it vivid and alive.



Another feature is approximately 200 photographs, many of them in color, which are directly tied to the text. The illustrations—both photographs and line drawings—do not exist in isolation but explain and enhance the material in the text. Moreover, the photographs have been selected to be dynamic and “dramatic” in and of themselves.

Within the chapters dealing with theater history, there is a “time line” for each period and country, listing landmark events and accomplishments in the social and political arenas on one side and significant theater events on the other. Also, each historical section contains background information on the political, scientific, and cultural milieu in which theater developments unfold.

*Theater: The Lively Art* contains several valuable appendixes: the first is a glossary of technical terms in drama and theater; the second is an explanation and discussion of major theatrical and dramatic forms and movements, such as epic theater, expressionism, and satire; the third contains definitions of historical terms, such as *chorus*, *dithyramb*, and *soliloquy*; the fourth is an easy-to-use pronunciation guide to proper names and important terms in theater and drama; the fifth is a list of plays which can be read and studied in relation to historical periods. Teachers are encouraged to use the appendixes in conjunction with the text and to introduce students to their purpose and value early in the course.

Theater is an art form, and beyond that, it is one of the performing arts. As such its quality is elusive. Theater exists only at the moment when a performance occurs, and to study it in a book or classroom is to be one step removed from that immediate experience. This fact should always be kept in mind in a theater course taught in a classroom setting. Nevertheless, the experience of theater can be many times more meaningful if audience members understand a number of things: the component parts of theater, the various creative artists and technicians who make it happen, the tradition and historical background from which theater springs, and the genre or movement of which a particular play is a part. It is our hope that *Theater: The Lively Art* will provide the knowledge and information to make this possible and that it will encourage and inspire students to become lifelong audience members if not actual participants in theater.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

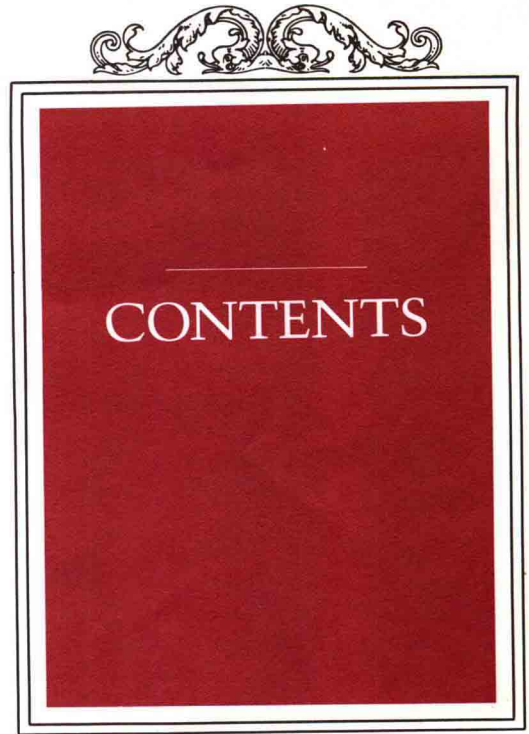
There is a long list of colleagues and others who have helped to make this book possible and to whom we are deeply grateful. We thank Prof. J. Thomas Rimer and Prof. James V. Hatch for providing invaluable material on Asian theater and African American theater respectively. J. K. Curry assisted with the preparation of the manuscript and is responsible for the index. Scott Walters developed the Instructor's Manual. Jana Bar-

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*Edwin Wilson  
Alvin Goldfarb*



*Preface*

xv

**INTRODUCTION**

	1
The Diversity of Modern Theater Experiences	3
Theater as an Art Form	3
<i>What Is Art?</i>	6
<i>The Art of Theater</i>	8
Summary	13

**PART ONE  
CREATING THEATER**

**CHAPTER 1 THE PERFORMERS AND THE DIRECTOR**

	17
Acting for the Stage	18
<i>The Performer's Responsibilities</i>	18
<i>The Outer Aspect of Acting: Special Skills</i>	20
<i>The Inner Aspect of Acting: Making Characters Believable</i>	25
<i>Combining the Inner and Outer Aspects of Acting</i>	32
The Director	34
<i>The Evolution of the Director</i>	34
<i>The Director at Work</i>	37
<i>The Director's Collaborators</i>	40
Summary	41

CHAPTER 2 THE AUDIENCE AND THE CRITIC	43
The Theater Audience	44
<i>The "Audience Factor"</i>	44
<i>How the Audience Participates</i>	45
<i>Audience Variety: Past and Present</i>	47
The Theater Critic	48
<i>Critics and Reviewers</i>	49
<i>Preparing for Criticism</i>	50
<i>Criteria for Criticism</i>	50
<i>Descriptive versus Prescriptive Criticism</i>	52
Summary	53
 CHAPTER 3 THEATER SPACES	 55
The Proscenium or Picture-Frame Stage	56
The Thrust Stage	60
The Arena Stage	65
Created or Found Space	69
Summary	71
 CHAPTER 4 THE DESIGNERS: SCENERY AND COSTUMES	 73
Scene Design	74
<i>The Scene Designer's Objectives</i>	74
<i>Physical Aspects of Stage Design</i>	79
<i>The Scene Designer's Collaborators</i>	85
Costume Design	86
<i>The Costume Designer's Objectives</i>	87
<i>Elements of Costume Design</i>	90
<i>The Costume Designer's Collaborators</i>	94
Summary	95
 CHAPTER 5 THE DESIGNERS: LIGHTING AND SOUND	 97
Stage Lighting	98
<i>Lighting in Theater History</i>	98
<i>Objectives of Lighting Design</i>	99
<i>Qualities of Stage Lighting</i>	102
<i>The Lighting Designer's Resources</i>	104
<i>The Lighting Designer's Collaborators</i>	105
Sound Design	107
<i>Sound Effects</i>	107
<i>Speech Reinforcement</i>	109
<i>Blending Sound</i>	109
Special Effects	109
Summary	111
 CHAPTER 6 THE PLAYWRIGHT: FOCUS, PURPOSE, AND POINT OF VIEW	 113
Dramatic Focus	114
Dramatic Purpose	115

Point of View: Dramatic Genre	116
<i>What Is Genre?</i>	116
<i>Tragedy</i>	118
<i>Comedy</i>	122
<i>Heroic Drama</i>	128
<i>Melodrama</i>	129
<i>Domestic Drama</i>	130
<i>Tragicomedy</i>	133
<i>The Significance of Genre</i>	136
Summary	137
 CHAPTER 7 DRAMATIC STRUCTURE AND DRAMATIC CHARACTERS	139
Structure in Drama	140
<i>The Significance of Structure</i>	140
<i>Essentials of Dramatic Structure</i>	141
<i>Creating a Dramatic Structure</i>	144
<i>Two Basic Types of Structure</i>	145
Creating Dramatic Characters	153
<i>Types of Dramatic Characters</i>	154
<i>Juxtaposition of Characters</i>	157
Summary	158
 CHAPTER 8 CREATING A PRODUCTION	161
The Theater	162
The Play	162
The Business Manager, Publicity Director, and Dramaturg	163
The Director and the Designers	164
The Performers: Casting and Rehearsals	168
Opening Night	170
Summary	171
 <b>PART TWO</b> <b>OUR THEATER HERITAGE</b>	
 CHAPTER 9 THE THEATER OF GREECE	175
Background: The Origins of Theater	177
Theater and Culture in Greece	179
<i>The Golden Age of Greece</i>	179
<i>The Greek Theater Emerges</i>	181
<i>Theater and Religion</i>	182
<i>Theater and Myth</i>	183
Greek Tragedy	183
<i>The Tragic Dramatists: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides</i>	184
<i>The Structure of Greek Tragedy: Pattern and Plot</i>	186
<i>The Continuing Tradition: Classical Tragedy</i>	190
Greek Comedy	192
Theater Production in Greece	194
Dramatic Criticism in Greece: Aristotle	196



Later Greek Theater	197
Summary	198
CHAPTER 10 THE THEATERS OF ROME AND THE MIDDLE AGES	201
The Roman Theater	203
<i>Background: The Roman Republic and Empire</i>	203
<i>Theater and Culture in Rome</i>	206
<i>Roman Comedy: Plautus and Terence</i>	208
<i>Roman Tragedy: Seneca</i>	208
<i>Dramatic Criticism in Rome: Horace</i>	210
<i>Theater Production in Rome</i>	211
<i>The Decline of Roman Theater</i>	214
The Medieval Theater	217
<i>Background: The Middle Ages</i>	217
<i>Secular Theater in the Middle Ages</i>	220
<i>Liturgical Drama in the Middle Ages</i>	221
<i>Mystery, Miracle, and Morality Plays</i>	222
<i>The Decline of Religious Drama</i>	230
Summary	230
CHAPTER 11 THE THEATERS OF ASIA	233
An Introduction to Asian Theater	235
The Theater of India	237
<i>Sanskrit Drama</i>	237
<i>Indian Dramatic Criticism</i>	238
<i>Later Indian Drama</i>	238
The Theater of China	240
<i>Chinese Theater in the Yuan Dynasty</i>	241
<i>Chinese Theater in the Ming Dynasty</i>	242
<i>The Peking Opera</i>	244
The Theater of Japan	245
<i>Noh Theater</i>	246
<i>Bunraku: Puppet Theater</i>	249
<i>Kabuki</i>	251
Eastern and Western Theater: Cross-Cultural Exchanges	253
Summary	254
CHAPTER 12 THE THEATERS OF THE RENAISSANCE: ITALY, ENGLAND, AND SPAIN	257
The Theater of the Italian Renaissance	258
<i>Background: The Renaissance</i>	258
<i>Italian Theatrical Forms</i>	259
<i>Italian Dramatic Rules: The Neoclassic Ideals</i>	262
<i>Italian Theatrical Production</i>	263
The Theater of the English Renaissance	270
<i>The Renaissance in England: The Elizabethan Age</i>	273
<i>Elizabethan Drama</i>	274
<i>Elizabethan Playwrights</i>	275
<i>Elizabethan Theater Production</i>	279
<i>Jacobean and Caroline Theater</i>	284
<i>The End of the English Renaissance</i>	286

The Theater of the Spanish Renaissance	286
<i>The Spanish Golden Age</i>	289
<i>Spanish Dramatic Forms</i>	289
<i>Theater Production in Spain</i>	291
<i>The Close of the Golden Age in Spain</i>	292
Summary	293
 CHAPTER 13 THE THEATERS OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE AND THE ENGLISH RESTORATION	295
French Theater in the Seventeenth Century	297
<i>Seventeenth-Century France: The Neoclassical Era</i>	297
<i>French Neoclassical Dramatists</i>	297
<i>Theater Production in France</i>	303
THE THEATER OF THE ENGLISH RESTORATION	305
<i>The Return of the English Monarchy</i>	305
<i>The Revival of English Theater</i>	307
<i>Restoration Drama</i>	307
<i>Audiences in the Restoration</i>	310
<i>Theater Production in the Restoration</i>	310
Summary	315
 CHAPTER 14 THE THEATERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES	317
Eighteenth-Century Theater	318
<i>The Eighteenth Century: A Time of Transition</i>	318
<i>Eighteenth-Century Drama: A Departure from Neoclassicism</i>	321
<i>Theater Production in the Eighteenth Century</i>	325
Nineteenth-Century Theater	333
<i>The Nineteenth Century: A Time of Change</i>	333
<i>Theater in Nineteenth-Century Life</i>	336
<i>Dramatic Forms in the Nineteenth Century</i>	338
<i>Theater Production in the Nineteenth Century</i>	341
Summary	349
 <b>PART THREE</b> <b>THE CONTEMPORARY THEATER</b>	
 CHAPTER 15 REALISM	353
The Modern Theater Begins	356
<i>Background: The Modern Era</i>	356
<i>Theater in the Modern Era</i>	359
Theatrical Realism	360
<i>What Is Realism?</i>	360
<i>Henrik Ibsen</i>	361
<i>August Strindberg</i>	366
<i>Anton Chekhov</i>	367
Naturalism	367
Producers of Realism	368
<i>Independent Theaters in Europe</i>	368
<i>Realistic Theater after 1915</i>	371
Summary	379

CHAPTER 16 DEPARTURES FROM REALISM	381
Early Challenges to Realism	382
<i>Symbolism</i>	382
<i>Ibsen and Strindberg as Antirealists</i>	384
<i>Antirealist Designers: Appia and Craig</i>	385
<i>Russian Theatricalism: Meyerhold</i>	388
<i>The Eclectics</i>	390
Departures from Realism: 1915–1945	391
<i>Expressionism</i>	393
<i>Futurism and Dada</i>	394
<i>Surrealism</i>	395
<i>Antirealistic Theorists</i>	395
Totalitarianism, the Second World War, and the Theater	400
Departures from Realism: 1945–1980	401
<i>Existentialism</i>	402
<i>Theater of the Absurd</i>	403
<i>Experimental Theater Practices</i>	404
<i>Postwar Eclectics</i>	406
Summary	407
CHAPTER 17 DIVERSITY AND ECLECTICISM	409
Contemporary Theater: An Overview	410
Musical Theater	411
<i>Antecedents of the American Musical</i>	411
<i>The American Musical from 1900 to 1940</i>	412
<i>A Golden Age of the American Musical</i>	415
<i>The American Musical after 1965</i>	416
Alternative Theaters	418
Postmodernism in the Theater	420
African American Theater	422
<i>Background: The Nineteenth Century</i>	422
<i>African American Theater from 1900 to 1950</i>	424
<i>African American Theater after 1950</i>	425
International Trends	429
Today and Tomorrow: A Look Ahead	430
Summary	432
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	
APPENDIX 1 TECHNICAL TERMS	435
APPENDIX 2 MAJOR THEATRICAL AND DRAMATIC FORMS AND MOVEMENTS	443
APPENDIX 3 HISTORICAL TERMS	451
APPENDIX 4 PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO HISTORICAL TERMS AND NAMES	459
APPENDIX 5 RELATED PLAYS	463
<i>Index</i>	467



## INTRODUCTION

What happens when we go to the theater? How does the experience unfold?

First, we hear or read about a play we would like to see; then we make plans to go, alone or with someone else. Perhaps we are invited by a friend or taken as part of a group such as a college or high school class; in any case, someone makes arrangements to buy tickets.

On the day of the performance, we go to the theater, which may be part of an arts center or a separate building with distinctive architecture—either traditional, along the lines of an old theater with a marquee, or a modern building. When we go inside, we enter a lobby area, which may be furnished elegantly, with chandeliers and other plush furnishings,

**Theater: A living art form** *Performers, masks, costumes, lights—these elements combine with the script and other aspects of theater to produce a unique experience. Each moment in theater is a live encounter between the members of the audience and what is happening onstage. The scene shown here is a production of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus at the Stratford Festival in Ontario, Canada. The performers are (left to right): Andrew Jackson, Nicholas Pennell as Titus, Goldie Semple, and Juan Chioran.*

*(Michael Cooper)*