

Eleventh Edition

# the Theatre EXPERIENCE | Edwin Wilson



# **The Theatre Experience**

ELEVENTH EDITION

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## McGraw-Hill Higher Education

### THE THEATRE EXPERIENCE

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# **| The Theatre Experience**

## I About the Author

Teacher, author, and critic, Edwin Wilson has worked in many aspects of theatre. Educated at Vanderbilt University, the University of Edinburgh, and Yale University, he received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Yale Drama School, as well as the first Doctor of Fine Arts degree awarded by Yale. He has taught at Yale, Hofstra, Vanderbilt, Hunter College, and the CUNY Graduate Center. At Hunter he served as chair of the Department of Theatre and Film and head of the graduate theatre program. At CUNY he has been Executive Director of the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center.

Edwin Wilson was the theatre critic of *The Wall Street Journal* for 22 years. In addition to *The Theatre Experience*, he is coauthor with Alvin Goldfarb of *Living Theatre: A History*, *Theater: The Lively Art*, and the *Anthology of Living Theater*, also published by McGraw-Hill, and he was responsible for the

volume *Shaw on Shakespeare*. He was the president of the New York Drama Critics Circle and served several times on the Tony Nominating Committee and the Pulitzer Prize Drama Jury, most recently in 2003. He is on the boards of the John Golden Fund and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. He served for many years on the board of the Theatre Development Fund, of which he was also president.

Before turning to teaching and writing, Edwin Wilson was assistant to the producer for the film *Lord of the Flies*, directed by Peter Brook, and the Broadway play *Big Fish, Little Fish*, directed by John Gielgud. He produced several off-Broadway shows and coproduced a Broadway play directed by George Abbott. He also directed in summer and regional theatre, serving one season as resident director of the Barter Theatre in Virginia.

about the author

■ To my wife, Catherine

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## Preface

*The Theatre Experience* introduces students to the art of theatre from the perspective they are most familiar with: that of an audience member. When I first set out to write the text in this way, it was the result of my feeling that there was a void in the introductory text market; every text that I was familiar with approached theatre from the standpoint of either the historian or the practitioner. I knew, however, that the vast majority of students taking a course in theatre for the first time would be primarily audience members. Some students might go on to major in theatre, and a few might become performers, playwrights, or designers. But first and foremost, these students would experience theatre most closely as part of the audience. Since that time, the audience perspective has remained my vision for this text, allowing students to become familiar with all of the various elements of theatre while encouraging them to attend theatre for the rest of their lives. Interestingly, the audience-centered approach has never seemed more fitting than in today's global, diverse theatre, where the one aspect of a theatrical performance that remains constant is our ability to be an audience member. This perspective unites us as theatregoers even amid the varied productions that are being performed all over the world.

### ORGANIZATION

#### Chapter 1

The eleventh edition embraces the global world of theatre and presents an introduction to theatre from all regions of the world right at the start, in Chapter 1. The new content on global theatre has been combined with material that was in the former Introduction, and this chapter has been more accurately renamed, signaling its importance.

Right from the start, students are given the groundwork for understanding the many far-reaching influences of theatre, how theatre surrounds us in everyday life, and the wide diversity of theatre today.

These parts follow Chapter 1.

- Part One: The Audience, whose members see the event and respond to it.
- Part Two: The Performers and the Director, about the people who bring the event to life and the director, who guides them.
- Part Three: Creating the Play: The Playwright, about the creation of the play by the dramatist, and how the action is constructed and characters are developed.
- Part Four: The Designers, about the important role of the visual and audio effects of the event.

- Part Five: The Theatre Landscape Today, fully explores the rich, diverse, and complex avenues of theatre, globally and in America, from historical roots to our contemporary world.

## FEATURES

### Boxes

A program of boxes or sidebars is integrated into the text, with the addition of new types to fully complement the students' learning experience with the text. The boxes included are as follows.

- Photo Essays: pictorial presentations of important aspects of theatre.
- Global Cross-Currents: highlighting specific examples of global influences on theatre.
- Making Connections: focusing on the similarities and differences between theatre and other forms of popular media, such as television and film.
- Historical Perspectives: helping to bring historical context where appropriate.
- Dynamics of Drama: newly named boxes (formerly presented without a title) illustrating some of the more difficult theatre concepts in a way that is easier for beginning students to understand.
- A Life in the Theatre: The Artist Speaks: renamed versions of the earlier Getting Started in Theater boxes, giving students insight into the personal perspectives of theatre artists in various fields.

### Part Openers

The expanded part openers, which were first introduced in the Tenth Edition, were warmly received and have been retained. These sections provide a rich, photographic introduction to the concepts that will be discussed in each part. They offer visual connections between the elements of theatre and the everyday world, and can be used as a lecture starter.

### Play Synopses

One-page play synopses provide detailed summaries act-by-act of well-known plays, and are accompanied by questions for critical thinking. The play synopses are grouped in Appendix A at the end of the text, for easy reference and assignment.

## NEW CONTENT IN THE ELEVENTH EDITION

In addition to the new boxed material discussed above, there have been a number of content changes in and improvements to the Eleventh Edition.

Chapter 1, Experiencing Today's Global, Diverse Theatre. This new chapter combines content from the previous Introduction along with new material on the influence of our global culture on theatre. By bringing the multicultural world of theatre to the forefront of the book, we are exposing students to the truly international factors that are integral to studying theatre.

Chapters 6 and 7, on acting. In response to reviewers' suggestions, these chapters have been revised in order to make them more useful for today's introductory student.



The most commonly utilized methods and techniques are presented, in a way that is more useful to nonmajoring students and theatre majors alike.

Chapter 8, The Director and the Producer. After suggestions from many reviewers, the role of the stage manager has now been given proper importance in this chapter.

Part 4, The Designers (Chapters 14, 15, and 16). This entire part has been extensively revised, with the assistance of a technical theatre expert, Professor Jeff Entwistle at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. Techniques and processes have been updated, outdated references have been removed, and references to current technology have been included. Students will find that this section reflects the high-tech world of which theatre “design and production” are now a part.

Chapter 17, Global Theatre. This new chapter includes brief historical background on all the theatrical centers of the world, and discusses how these different regions have affected theatre in other areas. In addition, current happenings in all of these areas are discussed. Theatres discussed include those in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Australia, North America, and Europe.

### ONLINE LEARNING CENTER: [WWW.MHHE.COM/TE11](http://WWW.MHHE.COM/TE11)

The Online Learning Center is an Internet-based resource for students and faculty members alike. The Online Learning Center is an Internet-based resource for students and faculty members alike. Instructor's Resources are password protected. To receive a password, contact your local sales representative. You can use the rep locator at [www.mhhe.com](http://www.mhhe.com) to find the appropriate name and contact information. Resources for Students and Instructors include:

- Chapter-by-chapter quizzes for testing students.
- Correlation Guide for *The Anthology of Living Theatre*.
- Weblinks and Internet Exercises for each chapter.
- Instructor's Manual and Test Bank.
- *EZ Test Computerized Test Bank*: McGraw-Hill's EZ Test is a flexible, easy-to-use electronic testing program. The program allows instructors to create tests from specific items in the text. It accommodates a wide range of question types, and instructors may add their own questions. Multiple versions of the test can be created, and any test can be exported for use with course management systems such as WebCT, BlackBoard, or PageOut. The program is available for Windows and Macintosh.

The Online Learning Center also has the content that was on the previous Student CD-ROM, which includes:

- Video Clips of plays, organized by chapter, along with overview text, essays, and multiple-choice questions for each clip.
- Historical Outlines, organized by nation and time period, listing theatrical events on one side and developments in society, politics, science, etc., on the other.
- Additional Play Synopses for *Macbeth*, *The Crucible*, and *Angels in America*.
- *The Theatergoer's Guide*, a handy resource for students on the art of attending and critiquing a play.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first developed many of the ideas in this book while teaching a course in Introduction to Theatre at Hunter College of the City University of New York. To my former students and colleagues at Hunter, I express my continuing appreciation.

This edition of *The Theatre Experience* builds on editions of the past, and to those professors and other experts who contributed to prior versions, I also express deep appreciation. For this particular edition I wish to thank Alexis Greene, Naomi Stubbs, and Susan Tenneriello, for their research and for the special sections each one has written. I also thank Professor Laura Pulio Colbert of Harper College for her helpful suggestions on the teaching of acting.

Above all, I express my gratitude to Professor Jeff Entwistle for his prodigious contribution to the chapters on design: scenic, costume, lighting, and sound. Many of Professor Entwistle's ideas and much of his actual writing has been incorporated in this latest edition of *The Theatre Experience*.

Additionally, a number of professors submitted reviews of the text, which helped to shape our revision. I am grateful for their suggestions and hope they will find that the Eleventh Edition has benefited extensively from their input.

Jerry Beal, William Paterson University of New Jersey  
Richard Donnelly, University of Notre Dame  
Jeff Entwistle, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay  
Kelly Gordon, University of North Carolina—Greensboro  
Jacqueline Holmes, Middle Tennessee State University  
Alicia Kae Koger, University of Oklahoma  
Holly McDonald, University of Central Florida  
Brook McGinnis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Peter Savage, Western Carolina University  
Carlton Ward, Jacksonville State University  
E. J. Westlake, University of Michigan

Through twenty-three editions of my three textbooks published by McGraw-Hill, Inge King, the amazing photography expert, has discovered every photograph that has appeared in every edition of every text, including this edition of *The Theatre Experience*. For each photograph selected, Inge has presented four, five or six alternative choices, so that through the years she has located and shown me and my editors well over 25,000 photographs. There is no way to adequately acknowledge her industry, her incredible taste, her loyalty to the project, and her creativity. Also with us on the previous nine editions of *The Theatre Experience*, as well as the other two texts, is the incomparable and irreplaceable copy editor, Susan Gamer.

At McGraw-Hill I express my gratitude to my terrific editors, Nancy Crochiere and Caroline Ryan, for their insight, their foresight, and their dedication. Also at McGraw-Hill I thank Chris Freitag, Chanda Feldman, Robin Mouat, and Tandra Jorgensen.

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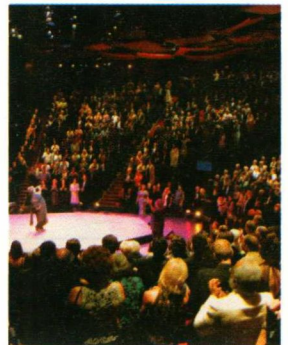
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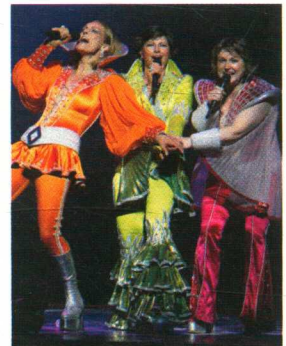
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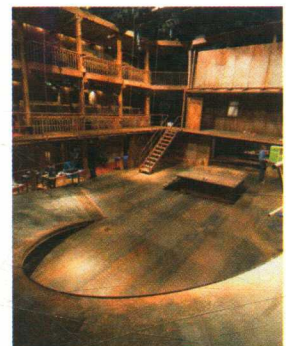
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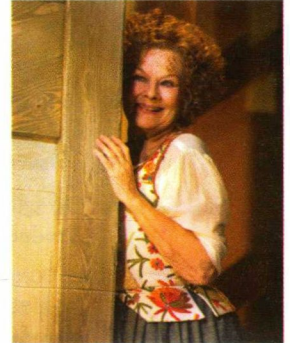
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