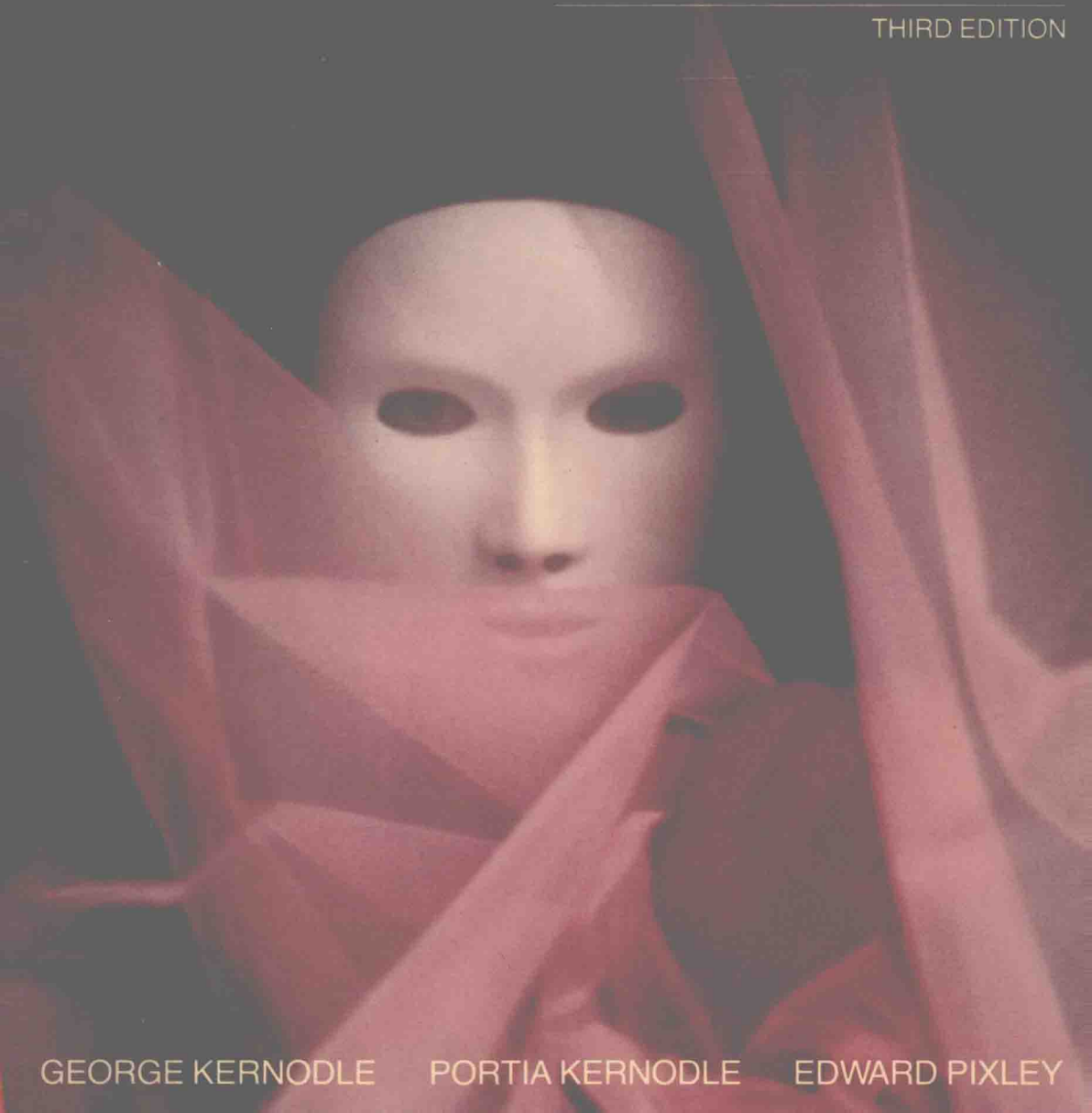


# INVITATION TO THE THEATRE

THIRD EDITION



GEORGE KERNODLE

PORTIA KERNODLE

EDWARD PIXLEY

# INVITATION TO THE THEATRE

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THIRD EDITION

GEORGE KERNODLE  
EMERITUS, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

PORTIA KERNODLE

EDWARD PIXLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ONEONTA



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# INVITATION TO THE THEATRE

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THIRD EDITION

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# PREFACE

When *Invitation to the Theatre* first appeared in hardcover nearly twenty years ago, it quickly became one of the most widely used introductory texts in the field, retaining its considerable popularity through two paperback editions. By emphasizing the impulses that cause people to create and go to the theatre, *Invitation* made it possible for the theatre novice to appreciate a wide variety of theatre genres while discovering the links that connect theatres of the past to those of our time. This new edition retains the core of the earlier editions (the historic-generic chapters, updated and revised), but in keeping with recent teaching trends it places added emphasis on an experiential approach.

Two entirely new chapters in Part I introduce the reader to the theatre from the point of view of the audience. Chapter 1 shows the kinds of configurations in which theatre occurs and the kinds of experiences theatregoing evokes, while Chapter 2, using *The Elephant Man* for detailed illustration, shows the ways in which both play and production structures invite audiences to share the theatre event. Part II, consisting of the historic-generic chapters, reduces somewhat the number of examples, allowing for a more detailed treatment of one play in each chapter to illustrate the ideas developed in the chapter.

In Part III of this edition, a separate chapter is devoted to each of the major theatre artists: playwright, director, designer, and actor. The purpose here is not to provide introductory training in the methods of these artists, but to help the reader appreciate what theatre artists do in bringing the play from the first imaginings of the playwright to the realized performance of actors in the presence of an audience. As in the earlier historic-generic chapters, each chapter focuses on a single play to show just how the artists go about bringing the play to life.

After Chapters 1 and 2, which should be read first, the chapters can be assigned independently—in or out of order—to suit the preferences of individual instructors. Moreover, the chapters of Part III are designed so that they may be assigned along with

chapters in Part II, thus heightening the experiential approach. For example, while reading about tragedy in Elizabethan England in Chapter 4, the students may also study the process of directing *Hamlet* in Chapter 12. Or by reading either Chapter 5 or 7 in tandem with Chapter 14, they may learn about the comic or the realistic theatre and, at the same time, see what an actress might go through in creating the realistic comic role of Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*. Similarly Chapter 11 (on playwriting) coordinates with Chapter 6 (romantic theatre), and Chapter 13 (the designer) could coordinate with either Chapter 8 or 10 (disruption or liberation).

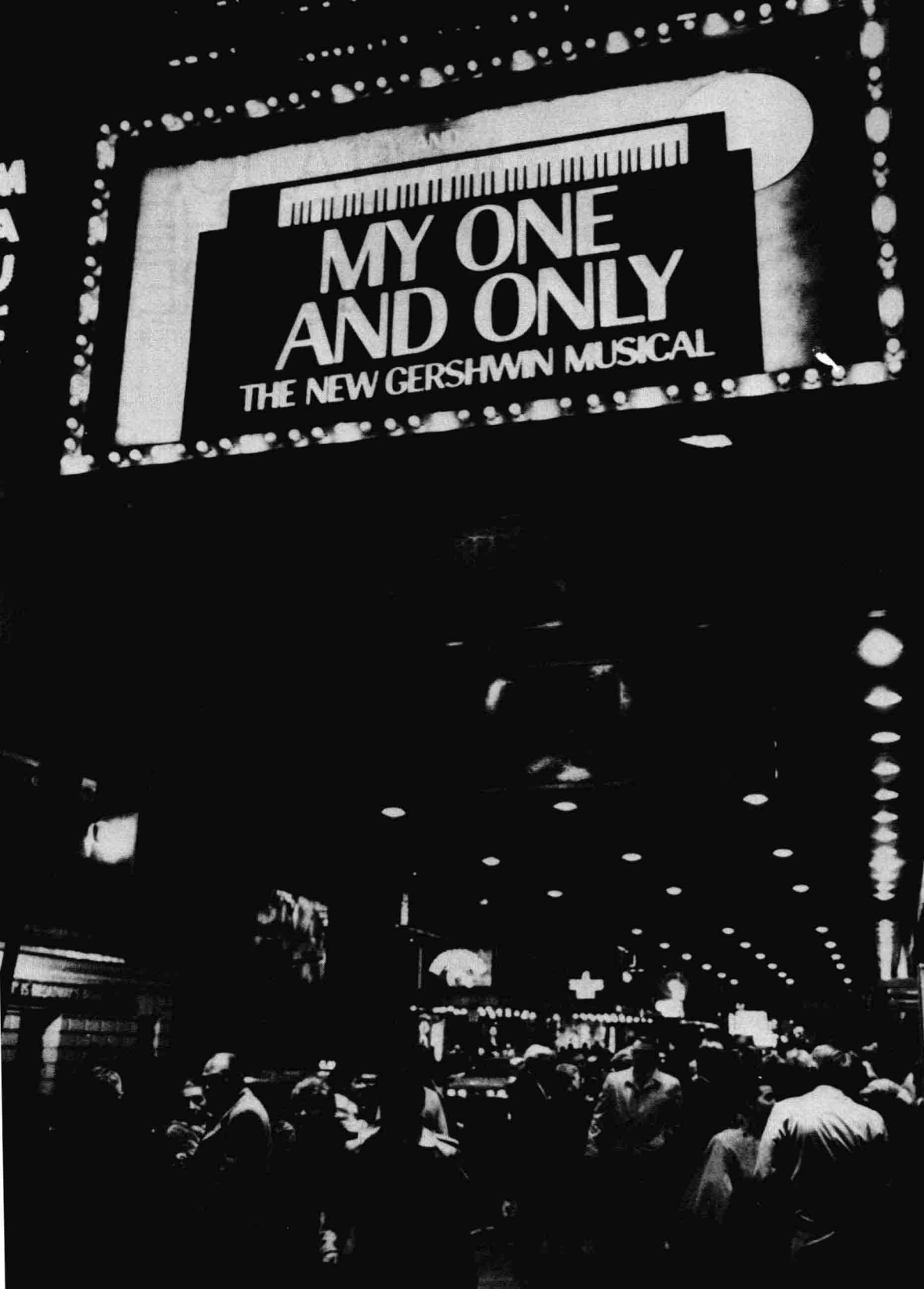
Finally, a glossary has been added in this edition, so that students may quickly find definitions of unfamiliar theatre terms that are used in the text.

To George and Portia Kernodle, for trusting me with this revision and for generous encouragement and suggestions along the way, my indebtedness can hardly be put into words. Being asked to do the revision was an honor; doing it was a joy. I am grateful to Dolly Beechman, Pennsylvania State University, Ogontz; LeRoy D. Haberman, Ventura College; James W. Hawes, Radford University; and Wallace Sterling, University of Akron, for their careful review of the Second Edition and their suggestions for revision; and to William Kuhlke, University of Kansas, Lawrence, and Robert H. Wilcox, Blackburn College, for their thoughtful and perceptive reviews of the manuscript. I am particularly indebted to Fred Miller, Richard Siegfried, Josef Elfenbein, Esther Elfenbein, Muriel Kellerhouse, and Theodore Kottke, my theatre colleagues at the State University College at Oneonta, for advice on individual chapters. Most of all, thanks go to my friend and colleague Junius Hamblin, whose insightful suggestions at the beginning of the project and whose close critical reading of the entire manuscript have been invaluable. Finally, a special thank you to my wife, Kathryn, for her encouragement and her patient insistence on clarity as she read and reread every word at each stage of revision.

Edward Pixley

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THE NEW GERSHWIN MUSICAL



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# CONTENTS

Preface    v

**Prologue: The Theatre Invites You    1**

THE ATTRACTION OF THE THEATRE    4

THE ELEMENTS OF THEATRE    5

## THE AUDIENCE    11

**1 The Audience in the Theatre    15**

THE PERFORMANCE PLACE    16

THE INTENSITIES OF THEATRE    20

Sensory Experience    20

Artistic Appreciation    21

Sympathetic Identification    23

Ironic Experience    24

Synthesizing Experience    25

**2 The Play and the Creative Audience    29**

DRAMATIC ACTION    31

THEATRICAL CONVENTIONS    35

PLOT    37



CHARACTER	40
LANGUAGE	43
PRODUCTION FORMAT	46
THE ACTORS: TEXT AND SUBTEXT	50
AUDIENCE SUBTEXT AND DRAMATIC IRONY	53
THEATRE: A LINK ACROSS HUMANITY	56

## THE PLAY IN ITS TIME 59

### 3 The Theatre of Exaltation: Greek Tragedy 63

THE TRAGIC VISION	64
Purpose	65
Passion	66
Perception	67
THE CLASSIC AGE OF TRAGEDY	68
The Chorus	71
Greek Tragic Dramatists	74
<i>Antigone</i> : A Model Greek Tragedy	78
GREEK TRAGEDY ON THE MODERN STAGE	83
THE MODERN FESTIVAL THEATRE	85

### 4 The Theatre of Exaltation: From Medieval Drama to Modern Tragedy 89

CHRISTIAN DRAMA OF THE MIDDLE AGES	90
TRAGEDY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND	94
Romantic Tragedy of the Heroic Individual	95
Shakespeare and the Majesty of Elizabethan Tragedy	97
The Elizabethan Stage	97
Tragic Patterns in <i>King Lear</i>	100
NEOCLASSIC TRAGEDY	106
MODERN TRAGEDY	109
Three Kinds of Tragic Characters	110
Poetry in Modern Tragedy	116

## 5 The Theatre of Laughter: Farce and High Comedy 123

THE WAYS OF COMEDY 124

COMIC TRADITIONS OF THE PAST 126

FARCE, OR "LOW" COMEDY 129

The Elements of Farce 130

The Popularity of Farce 133

HIGH COMEDY 135

High Comedy in the Seventeenth Century 138

The Achievement of Moliere 139

The Golden Age of High Comedy 141

High Comedy in *The School for Scandal* 142

High Comedy in the Modern Theatre 145

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAGICOMEDY 146

## 6 The Theatre of the Romantic 151

THE BIRTH OF THE ROMANTIC IDEALS 152

ROMANCE IN THE MODERN THEATRE 155

Structure of the Romantic Play 156

A Picture Stage for Romance 158

*Cyrano de Bergerac*: A Romantic Play 160

MELODRAMA: ROMANCE SIMPLIFIED 162

ROMANCE IN THE MOVIES 163

GRAND OPERA AND ROMANTIC DANCE 165

Mozart and Italian Opera 166

Wagnerian Opera 168

Romantic Dance 170

The Development of Ballet 170

A RIVAL: MODERN DANCE 172

THE MUSICAL 174

Song and Dance in the Musical 175

The Musical Celebration of America 178

*Guys and Dolls*: A Romantic Musical 183

ROMANCE AS PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE 184

<b>7</b>	<b>The Theatre of Realism</b>	<b>187</b>
	NATURALISM	189
	IMPRESSIONISM: A METHOD OF DEPICTING REALISM	192
	Theatrical Impressionism: <i>The Three Sisters</i> and <i>Trifles</i>	194
	NEW THEATRES AND A NEW ACTING METHOD	196
	Directing and Acting in the Realistic Theatre	198
	FACTUAL REALISM ON SCREEN AND STAGE	200
	The Film Documentary	200
	Theatre of Fact	202
	American Realism of the 1950s: <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	204
	FILM REALISM AFTER WORLD WAR II	209
	New Realism in Italian Films	209
	Belated Realism in American Movies	210
	REALISM ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN	213
<b>8</b>	<b>The Theatre of Disruption</b>	<b>217</b>
	SYMBOLISM AND THE INNER DRAMA	219
	Exploration of the Mind: Strindberg and Pirandello	219
	EXPRESSIONISM	222
	The Techniques of Expressionism	224
	The Influence of Expressionism	227
	EXISTENTIALISM IN THE THEATRE	229
	A Philosophy of Disillusionment	229
	Some Existentialist Playwrights	230
	THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD	232
	Role-playing	234
	Desolation and Despair: Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i>	234
	Intrusion and Menace: Pinter and Shepard	238
	PROMISE OF RECONSTRUCTION	242
<b>9</b>	<b>Realism Transformed</b>	<b>247</b>
	THEATRICAL BLENDS	248
	Realism and Romance	248
	Realism and Comedy	251
	SELECTED REALISM	253

STYLIZED REALISM	254
ORIENTAL INFLUENCES ON REALISM	257
EPIC REALISM	262
American Epic Theatre in the Thirties	263
The Epic Realism of Bertolt Brecht	266
Epic Techniques in the Theatre Since Brecht	268
REALISM: THE PERSISTENT VIEW OF OUR AGE	271
ETHNIC THEATRE AND THE REALISTIC IMPULSE	275
The Irish Renaissance	275
Yiddish Theatre	276
Black Ethnic Theatre	277
National Theatre of the Deaf	280

<b>10 A Liberated Theatre</b>	283
BLACK LIBERATION	285
RESIDENT NONPROFIT PROFESSIONAL THEATRE	288
LIBERATION OF THEATRICAL FORM	289
The Theatre of Confrontation	291
A Return to Theatre's Roots	294
Experimental Groups of the Eighties	299
DANCE IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE	305
Modern Trends in Ballet	305
New Relationship of Ballet and Modern Dance	306
Post-Modern Dance	309
Recent Dance Blends	311
LIBERATION THROUGH <i>Spell #7</i>	313

## THE PLAY IN PRODUCTION 321

<b>11 The Playwright</b>	325
THE PLAYWRIGHT AT WORK	327
<i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i> : A Play Wrought for Production	327
Creating an Action	327

Building the Scenes Through Loaded Events	329
Writing for the Other Theatre Artists	333
A Form for the Playwright's Vision	334
Credibility and Astonishment	335

## 12 The Director 339

THE DIRECTOR AT WORK	341
The Director's Concept or Vision	341
The Production Conference	342
Casting and Rehearsals	343
Working with the Actors	343
Controlling the Action in Space	345
Moving the Action in Time	347
The Director as Coach	351
The Director as Ideal Audience	353
DIRECTING <i>Hamlet</i>	353
The Director's Concept	356
The Production Conference	358
Casting and Rehearsing <i>Hamlet</i>	359
Staging <i>Hamlet</i> : The Use of Space and Time	359
Pulling It All Together	363

## 13 Designing the Production 365

STAGE DESIGN AND THEATRICAL ILLUSION	366
The Expressive Function of Design	368
Theatre Space and Illusion	368
THE DESIGNER AT WORK	373
Working Out the Details	374
DESIGNING <i>The Elephant Man</i>	383
Developing a Production Concept	385
Working Out the Details	386

## 14 The Art of the Actor 391

THE MYSTERY OF THE ACTOR	392
ACTOR TRAINING	396
The Stanislavsky Method	396
Training for Nonrealistic Acting	398

ACTING IN <i>Pygmalion</i>	401
Creating the Role	402
Discovering Eliza's Character Through the Play	403
The Character Discovered Outside the Play	405
Working Out the Details	406
<b>Epilogue: The Pleasure of Your Company</b>	<b>413</b>
Theatre as Therapy	414
Theatre as a Connection to Our Past	415
Theatres in Our Time	415
The Critic and the Review	421
In the Long Run	422
Glossary	424
Bibliography	439
Index	449

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# PROLOGUE: THE THEATRE INVITES YOU

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The lure of Broadway—the marquee of the St.  
James Theater, New York City.





Night after night, year in and year out, blazing marquees and tantalizing advertisements throughout the world extend their invitation: Come To The Theatre! For more than twenty-four centuries, ever since the ancient Greeks began exporting culture to the rest of the Mediterranean world, theatres of one form or another have been sending out their invitations, and willing audiences have gladly responded to their call.

For the citizens of Athens in the fifth century B.C., there must have been a special magic in going to the theatre. They had often heard poets recite the stories of the ancient battles of Troy and marveled at the days when gods talked with men and men walked like heroes over the land. For the annual festival of drama, the shops would close, all government business would cease, and the priests would lead the procession to the magnificent theatre, carved out of a hillside, with its altar dedicated to the life-renewing spirit of the god Dionysus. For months the best poets had been polishing their work, the most gifted actors, singers, and dancers had been rehearsing, and now they would don heroic robes and tragic or comic masks to recreate before the eyes of the entire city the inspiring legends of their ancestors.

Or imagine the excitement in a sixteenth-century rural French cottage at the

Theatre comes to the audience—a *commedia dell'arte* group of Players arriving in town.

