

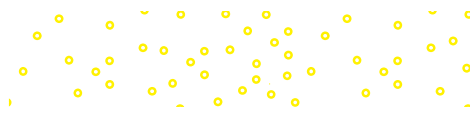


TWELFTH EDITION

THEATRE *BRIEF*

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Robert Cohen
Donovan Sherman



Theatre Brief

Twelfth Edition

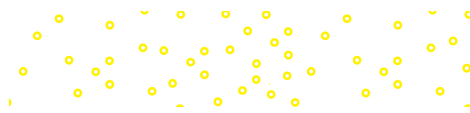
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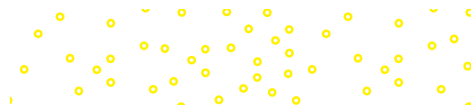
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THEATRE BRIEF, TWELFTH EDITION

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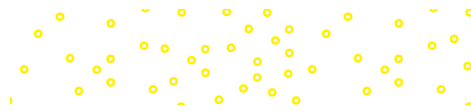
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Preface

Robert Cohen and Donovan Sherman's *Theatre Brief* emphasizes that theatre is a reflection of ourselves, because at the core of any great art is a commentary on the human experience. The authors stress that theatre is not merely entertainment, but a way for people to connect with one another and express important ideas about our culture and society.

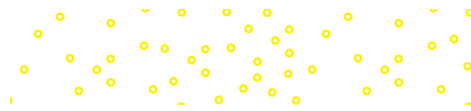
Theatre also immerses its readers in the world of theatre, giving them in-depth descriptions of many job functions and various aspects of a play's production from beginning to end. Through the coverage of design, acting, and directing, students are given a behind-the-scenes look at professional theatre artists performing their craft. The Photo Essay features that appear in multiple chapters include interviews with well-known figures both onstage and offstage. Conducted personally by the authors, they provide readers with firsthand accounts of what it's like to work in the field.

Every culture has developed theatre of some kind, and this edition makes a greater effort to include plays from non-Western countries in its examples. There is also greater attention to individual diversity within the U.S. theatre community. The authors incorporate more examples of women and ethnic minorities in both onstage and backstage roles, including a new profile on Young Jean Lee, the first Asian American woman to have her work staged on Broadway.

The text has also been updated to reflect the latest plays on Broadway, London's West End, and other international locations, as well as the latest trends in theatre production.


In addition to these general additions, the 12th edition includes the following content changes:

- Chapter 1: A new introduction; new coverage on performance as it relates to theatre; a new Spotlight feature "Why Study Theatre?"
- Chapter 2: A new introduction; extensive updating to reflect more traditions and innovations in global theatre.
- Chapter 3: Fully revised content that is more inclusive of global acting techniques.
- Chapter 4: Additional examples from non-Western playwriting traditions; inclusion of additional female and ethnically diverse playwrights; new coverage on devised theatre; a new excerpt from Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming*; new sections on award-winning playwrights Annie Baker, Ayad Akhtar, Young Jean Lee, and Tarell Alvin McCraney; a new Photo Essay feature that includes an exclusive interview with Young Jean Lee.
- Chapter 5: New coverage of selective realism and a focus on new technological advances, such as motion-capture technology.
- Chapter 6: A new section on global directors; a new Spotlight feature "Diversity and Casting"; a new Photo Essay that follows the step-by-step process of putting on a production of *The Tempest*, featuring 28 new images.
- Chapter 7: Updated coverage on the relationship of ritual to theatre.
- Chapter 8: A new introduction to define "modern drama"; a new section "Global Modern Drama"; a new Spotlight feature that includes an interview with Oskar Eustis, artistic director of the Public Theater in New York City; new coverage of different types of stylized theatre: expressionism (using the example of *Machinal* by Sophie Treadwell), contemporary allegory (using the example of *Dutchman* by Amiri Baraka), and postmodern farce (using the example of *Cloud Nine* by Caryl Churchill).
- Chapter 9: New coverage on the cultural phenomenon *Hamilton*.
- Chapter 10: Updated coverage in the "Theatre and Race" and "Theatre, Gender, and Sexuality" sections; new examples that are more global and diverse; a new section "Theatrical Innovators Today," which highlights the work of global theatre luminaries Ivo van Hove, Jesusa Rodríguez, Rimini Protokoll, and Ong Keng Sen.



Chapter 11: This chapter title has changed from “The Critic” to “The Audience” to emphasize the critical perspective all audience members can bring to the theatre.

Mastering Concepts

 **SMARTBOOK**® Connect combines the content of *Theatre Brief* with award-winning adaptive tools that help students prepare for their time in class with you. The tools in Connect help students understand and retain basic concepts: parts of the theatre, the creative artists and technicians who make it happen, and the tradition and historical background from which theatre springs. When students successfully master concepts using McGraw-Hill’s Connect, you can spend more class time discussing theatre and theatrical performances, fostering a greater appreciation for the course and inspiring students to become lifelong audience members. Connect is reliable, easy to use, and can be implemented on its own or paired with your school’s learning management system. Contact your McGraw-Hill Higher Education representative to learn more or to speak with instructors who already uses Connect for their theatre courses.

Connect for *Theatre Brief* now includes two ways to read: an eBook and SmartBook. The eBook provides a simple, elegant reading experience, available for offline reading on a tablet. SmartBook creates a personalized online reading experience by highlighting the most impactful concepts that a student needs to learn. Students periodically test their knowledge as they read, and SmartBook adapts accordingly, highlighting content based on what the student knows and doesn’t know. Real-time reports quickly identify the concepts that require more attention from individual students—or the entire class.


Does Your Course Cover Theatre History?

Seven history chapters, formerly included in the comprehensive edition (*Theatre*), are available for instructors who want a greater historical focus in their course:

- The Ancients
- The Middle Ages
- The Renaissance
- The Theatre of Asia
- The Royal Era
- The Modern Theatre: Realism
- The Modern Theatre: Antirealism

These history chapters are available in two ways:

1. In **SmartBook** at no extra cost. Simply order the 12th edition of *Theatre Brief* in SmartBook to get all-digital access to all 18 chapters.
2. Through **McGraw-Hill Create**. Add the history chapters of your choice to the chapters that you will cover in *Theatre Brief* for a tailored print solution.

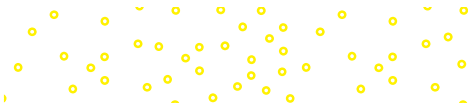
 Also available through SmartBook and Create is a theatregoer’s guide written by Robert and Lorna Cohen called “Enjoy the Play!” McGraw-Hill Create allows you to create a customized print book or eBook tailored to your course and syllabus. You can search through thousands of McGraw-Hill Education texts, rearrange chapters, combine material from other content sources, and include your own content or teaching notes. Create even allows you to personalize your book’s appearance by selecting the cover and adding your name, school, and course information. To register and to get more information, go to <http://create.mheducation.com>.

Acknowledgments

Many scholars, artists, and critics gave invaluable advice as this edition came to fruition. We, the authors, would like to extend our gratitude to Jerry Patch, Oskar Eustis, Young Jean Lee, and Patrick Stewart for letting us speak with them; special mention is owed to the staff at the Public Theater for helping arrange a meeting with Mr. Eustis. A big thanks to the whole team behind the New Swan production of *The Tempest* at University of California, Irvine: the production team of Eli Simon, Keith Bangs, Karyn D. Lawrence, Kathryn Wilson, Dipu Gupta, Vincent Olivieri, Wesley Charles Chew, Miriam Mendoza, and Paul Kennedy, and the actors, Ryan Imhoff, DeShawn Mitchell, Adrian Alita, Anita Abdinezhad, Greg Ungar, and Thomas Varga.

When assessing the current state of theatre and theatre education, we received helpful feedback from a host of scholars and artists; many thanks are especially due to Katrina Bugaj, Kate Elswit, Lindsay Brandon Hunter, Julia Reinhard Lupton, Elise Morrison, William Murray, Vincent Olivieri, Sara O’Toole, Kate DiMarco Ruck, Jon Foley Sherman, and Jonah Spear for their considerable insights.

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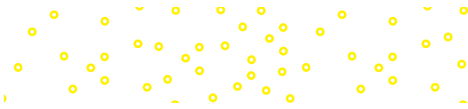


University of Pennsylvania; Mark E. Lococo, Loyola University Chicago; and Lisa McNeil, El Paso Community College, Valle Verde Campus.

The team at McGraw-Hill Higher Education has guided the creation of this edition with care and thoughtfulness. Susan Trentacosti and Lisa Brufloft ably provided assistance to the digital aspects of production, Sarah Remington oversaw the many moving parts of the process with grace and resourcefulness, and Emily Tietz

demonstrated considerable alacrity and inventiveness in researching new photographs. Finally, the authors are deeply grateful to the indefatigable Victoria DeRosa, who provided keen and incisive feedback through every step of the process; her unerring eye has made the text so much stronger and more cohesive.

Finally, we wish to thank Lorna Cohen for her assistance throughout the process.





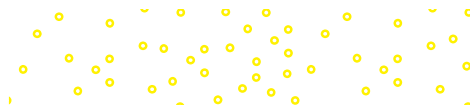
About the Authors

ROBERT COHEN was the founding chair of the drama program at the University of California, Irvine, in 1965 and was the sole creator of the original edition (and nine subsequent editions) of *Theatre* starting in 1981. A prolific theatre scholar, teacher, director, playwright, translator, critic, and acting theorist for over fifty years as professor of drama at UCI, he is the author of twenty-three books (translated into six languages), thirty-six scholarly articles, numerous published and produced plays and play translations, and over four hundred published reviews of plays produced in America and around the world. He has also directed fifteen plays at the Utah and Colorado Shakespeare Festivals and ninety more at both regional and academic theatres in the United States and abroad. In addition to teaching at UCI, Cohen has served multiple times as master teacher at the Actors Center in New York City and at TVI Studios in New York and Los Angeles; he also speaks at and conducts acting workshops regularly, with residencies in Japan, Korea, China, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Poland, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Canada, Romania, Australia, and approximately half the states in the United States. His books include *Shakespeare on Theatre*, *Acting Power: The 21st Century Edition*, *Acting in Shakespeare*, *Acting One*, *Acting Professionally*, *Advanced Acting*, *Creative Play Direction*, *Working Together in Theatre*, *Falling into Theatre*, *Jean Giraudoux: Three Faces of Destiny*, and various plays, translations, and anthologies.

UCI awarded Cohen its highest honor, the UCI Medal, in 1993 and conferred on him a Claire Trevor

Professorship and Bren Fellowship in 2001 and the UCI Distinguished Faculty Award for Research in 2015. He has also received the Career Achievement Award in Academic Theatre from ATHE (the Association for Theatre in Higher Education), the Honoris Causa Professor degree at Babes-Bolyai University in Romania, and—for bringing the great Polish director Jerzy Grotowski to UCI for three years—the Polish Medal of Honor.

DONOVAN SHERMAN is an associate professor of English at Seton Hall University. His research focuses on the drama and performance of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, as well as theatre history, philosophy, and critical theory. Scholarly works include the book *Second Death: Theatricalities of the Soul in Shakespeare's Drama*, published in 2016 by Edinburgh University Press, along with essays on Shakespeare, performance studies, film, and early modern religion and philosophy in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *English Literary Renaissance*, *Upstart*, and *Theatre Journal*. Currently, he is working on a book about portrayals of ancient philosophy in early modern drama. As a theatre artist, Sherman has performed with the Actors Theatre of Louisville, the SITI Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and several other regional theatres in the United States. Donovan received his doctoral degree from the Joint Program of Theatre and Drama at the University of California, Irvine, and the University of California, San Diego.



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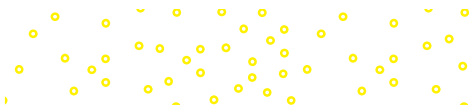
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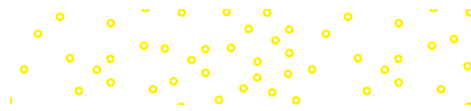
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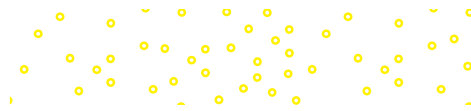
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Appendix: Enjoy the Play!





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Introduction

IT IS EVENING IN MANHATTAN. On Broadway the mar- quees light up, and “Performance Tonight” signs appear in front of double doors. Beneath a few box-office win- dows placards announce, “This Performance Com- pletely Sold Out.” At Grand Central Station and Penn Station, trains release eager suburbanites from Green- wich, Larchmont, and Trenton; students from New Haven and Philadelphia; and day-trippers from Boston and Washington. Out of the Times Square subways pour mobs of locals, inhabitants of the bustling island and the neighboring boroughs. They head to the TKTS booth to line up and buy the discount tickets that go on sale a few hours before curtain time for shows with seats yet to be filled. Now, converging on these few midtown blocks of America’s most populated city, come buses, cars, taxis, and limousines, whose drivers search for a curbside slot to deposit their riders among the milling throngs of pedestrians. Wall Street bankers, college students, teenagers gazing at their smartphones, sleek executives in expensive suits, Brooklyn hipsters, arm-in-arm widows, out-of-town tourists and conventioners, celebrities, honeymooners, old and young, people of all different cultures, classes, and identities—all commingle in this bizarre mass that is the New York Broadway audience. Even during (and perhaps especially during) troubled times in this vibrant city, it is as bright, bold, and varied a crowd as is likely to assemble at any single place in America.

It is eight o’clock. In close to forty theatres within two dozen blocks of each other, houselights dim, cur- tains rise, and spotlights pick out performers who have

fervently waited for this moment to arrive. Here a hot new musical, here a star-studded revival of an American classic, here a contemporary English comedy from Lon- don’s West End, here a new play fresh from its electrify- ing Seattle or Chicago premiere, here a one-woman show, here an experimental play that has transferred to larger quarters, here a touring production from eastern Europe, and here the new play everyone expects will capture this year’s coveted Tony Award. The hours pass.

It’s 10:30. Pandemonium. All the double doors open simultaneously, as if on cue, and once again the thou- sands pour out into the night. At nearby restaurants, servers stand by to receive the after-theatre onslaught. In the private upstairs room at Sardi’s restaurant, an opening-night cast party gets under way; downstairs, the patrons rehash the evening’s entertainment and sneak covert glances at celebrities. Actors sip their drinks while impatiently awaiting the reviews that will determine whether they will be employed next week or back on the street looking for new jobs.

Now let’s turn back the clock. It is dawn in Athens, the thirteenth day of the month of Elaphebolion in the year 458 B.C.E. From thousands of low mud-brick homes in the city, from the central agora, and from temples and agricultural outposts, streams of Athenians and visitors converge on the south slope of the Acropol- is, Athens’s great hill and home of its grandest temples. Bundled against the morning dampness, carrying break- fast figs and flagons of wine, they pay their tokens at the entrance to the great Theatre of Dionysus and take their places in the seating spaces allotted them. They have





Plays were often the sources of films in the early days of cinema, but now major films are increasingly turned into plays—mostly musicals—and very successful ones (for example, *The Lion King*, *The Producers*, *Once*). This scene is from the 2012 Broadway hit *Newsies*, adapted by Disney from its 1992 film of that name; the musical won Tony Awards for both its score and choreography. ©Sara Krulwich/The New York Times/Redux

gathered for the City Dionysia festival, which celebrates the rebirth of the land and the long sunny days that stretch ahead. It is a time for revelry and for rejoicing in fertility and all its fruits. And it is above all a time for the ultimate form of Dionysian worship: the theatre.

The open stone seats carved into the hillside fill up quickly. The crowd of seventeen thousand comprises not only the majority of Athenian citizens but also thousands of tradesmen, foreign visitors, slaves, and resident aliens. Even paupers are in attendance, thanks to the two obols apiece provided by a state fund to buy tickets for the poor; they take their place with the latecomers on the extremities of the theatre, as this first of theatre buildings is called. Now, as the eastern sky grows pale, a masked and costumed actor appears atop a squat building set in full view of every spectator. A hush falls over the crowd, and the

actor, his voice magnified by the wooden mask he wears, booms out this text:

I ask the gods some respite from the weariness of this watchtime measured by years I lie awake . . .

The entranced spectators settle in, secure in the knowledge that today they are in good hands. Today they will hear and see a new version of a familiar story—the story of Agamemnon’s homecoming and his murder; the revenge of that murder by his son, Orestes; and the final disposition of justice in the case of Orestes’ act—as told in the three tragedies that constitute *The Oresteia*. This magnificent trilogy is by Aeschylus, Athens’s leading dramatist for more than forty years. The spectators watch closely, admiring but critical. Tomorrow they or their representatives will decide by vote whether the festival’s prize should go to this work, or

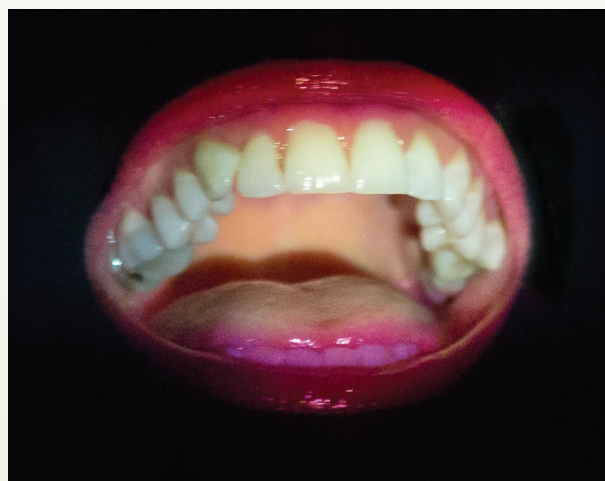


Singer, songwriter, guitarist, thumb pianist, and now playwright, Jonatha Brooke, wrote and performed her one-woman play, *My Mother Has 4 Noses*, to great success off-Broadway in 2014, basing her play on the last years of her own mother's life—and playing both her mother and herself. ©Sandrine Lee

whether the young Sophocles, whose plays were presented in this space the day before, had better sensed the true pulse of the time.

Let's zoom ahead in time. It is noon in London, and Queen Elizabeth I sits on the throne. Flags fly boldly atop three of the taller buildings in Bankside, across the Thames, announcing performance day at The Globe, The Rose, and The Swan theatres. Boatmen have already begun ferrying theatregoers across the river, where The Globe will present a new tragedy by Shakespeare (something called *Hamlet*), and The Rose promises a revival of Christopher Marlowe's popular *Dr. Faustus*. North of town, The Fortune and The Curtain are likewise opening their gates for new plays of their own.

Now at The Globe, two thousand spectators have arrived for the premiere. A trumpet sounds, then sounds again, and then builds into a full fanfare. Members of the



Theatre is not always grandiose. Samuel Beckett virtually revolutionized the theatre in 1958 with his *Waiting for Godot*, which basically shows two men under a tree waiting for a man who never comes. It was ridiculed at first, but by 2000 was cited as the greatest play of the century. From there his plays were steadily reduced in characters and actions until, in his 1972 *Not I*, there was but one performer—whose mouth, eight feet above the stage, is all the audience sees. This 2014 performance was performed by Lisa Dwan at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Harvey Theatre. ©Sara Krulwich/The New York Times/Redux



Some plays never die. This Pulitzer Prize–winning 1936 production of Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman’s farce *You Can’t Take It With You* flooded the stage with fireworks in its 2014 Broadway revival, directed by Scott Ellis.
©Sara Krulwich/The New York Times/Redux

audience, standing on the ground before the stage or seated in bleachers overlooking it, exchange a few final winks with their friends old and new before turning their attention to the platform stage. Through a giant door a guard bursts forth, lantern in hand. “Who’s there?,” he cries, and across from him another guard hollers, “Nay! Answer me!” In two thousand imaginations, the bright afternoon has turned to midnight, London’s Bankside has given way to the battlements of Denmark’s Elsinore, and a terrified shiver from the onstage actor has set up an answering chill among the audience members. A great new tragedy has begun its course.

It is midnight in a basement in the East Village, or in a campus rehearsal room, or in a coffee shop in Pittsburgh, Seattle, Sioux Falls, or Berlin. Across one end of the room, a curtain has been drawn across a pole suspended by wires. It has been a long evening, but one play remains to be seen. The author is unknown, but rumor has it that this new work is brutal, shocking, poetic, and strange. The members of the audience, by

turns skeptical and enthusiastic, look for the tenth time at their programs. The lights dim. Performers, backed by crudely painted packing crates, begin to act.

What is the common denominator in all of these scenes? They are all theatre. There is no culture that has not had a theatre in some form, for theatre is the art of people acting out—and giving witness to—their most pressing, illuminating, and inspiring concerns. Theatre is a medium through which a society displays its ideas, fashions, moralities, and entertainments, and debates its conflicts, dilemmas, yearnings, and struggles. Theatre has provided a stage for political revolution, social propaganda, civil debate, artistic expression, religious conversion, mass education, and even its own self-criticism. It has been a performance ground for priests, shamans, intellectuals, poets, painters, technologists, philosophers, reformers, evangelists, jugglers, peasants, children, and kings. It has taken place in caves, fields, and forests; in circus tents, inns, and castles; on street corners and in public buildings grand

and squalid all over the world. And it goes on incessantly in the minds of its authors, actors, producers, designers, and audiences.

Theatre is, above all, a *living* art form. It consists not only of plays but also of playing, and a play is not simply a series of acts but a collective ritual of acting. Just as *play* and *act* are both noun and verb, so theatre is both a thing and a happening, a result and a process: it is fluid in time and rich in feeling and human experience.

Above all, then, theatre is live and alive: an art that continually forms before our eyes and is present to an audience even as it is presented by its actors. In fact, this very quality of “presentness” (or, in the actor’s terminology, “stage presence”) defines every great theatrical performance.

Unlike the more static arts, theatre presents us with a number of classic paradoxes:

- It is spontaneous, yet it is rehearsed.
- It is real, yet it is simulated.

- It is unique to the moment, yet it is repeatable.
- The actors are themselves, yet they play characters.
- Audience members believe in the characters, yet they know they are actors.
- Audience members become emotionally involved, yet they know it is only a play.

These paradoxes comprise the glory of theatre. The actors may “live in the moment” during their performances, yet they have carefully studied, planned, and rehearsed the details of their roles beforehand. And audience members respond to their performance by rooting for their characters to achieve their goals, and then applauding the actors who play those roles during the curtain call. But this is also how we live our own lives, which we both experience and, at various points, present to others. The theatre shows us to ourselves in all of our human complexity.

And so this book about the theatre is also, ultimately, a book about ourselves.

Chapter

1

What Is Theatre?



©Evgenia Eliseeva

WHAT IS THEATRE? To start, let's look at the origin of the word. *Theatre* comes from the Greek *theatron*, or “seeing place.” So on a basic level, a theatre is a place where something is seen. Already, with this simple definition, we gain an important clue about what theatre is. For something to be seen, after all, there must be people to do the seeing. So the theatre involves those who watch and those who are watched—the audience and the actors onstage.

Theatre depends on a separation of the viewer and the viewed. This separation need not be literal, however. In fact, some of the most powerful theatre happening today happens very intimately, with performers mere inches away from the audience. Rather, the separation of the theatre is something abstract, a feeling of distance between the viewer and what is seen. Theatre can simply be the result of a change in the attitude of the

spectator: If I take on the attitude that I am watching life around me *as if* it were onstage, the everyday can suddenly take on a magical quality.

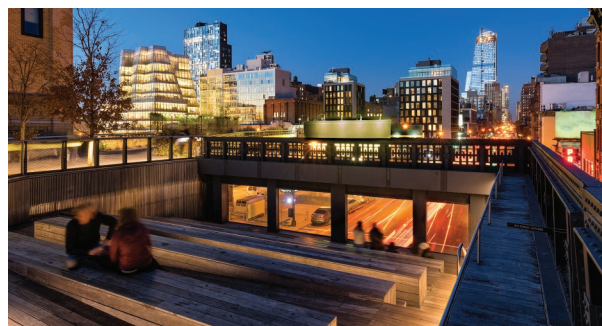
This kind of theatre—we might call this a theatre of perception—is demonstrated beautifully by a section of the High Line, a public park in New York City built on old railroad tracks elevated above the bustling city streets. In one section of the park, pedestrians can enter an “urban theatre”—a set of benches and aisles in front of a stage. But this “stage” is not typical: it's a big window that frames a busy intersection. Walkers on the High Line can sit on a bench and watch the spectacle of people rushing to work, hailing a cab, talking on their phones, laughing with their friends, and otherwise carrying on with their lives. When viewed as if they were on a stage, these actions take on a new sense of importance. Their circumstances are

heightened. They might not realize it, but they are performing!

Another kind of theatrical separation can exist when audience members might not realize they are an audience. The “invisible theatre” of the Brazilian activist and director Augusto Boal often used this technique. Boal’s actors would stage an altercation on the street, only to reveal to onlookers afterward that they were, in fact, just performing. Suddenly passersby became audience members, where before they were bystanders. And these audience members were forced to question their own “performances” in the play that took place: Did they help the person under attack? Or did they just watch or even inch away?

Most of the time, though, audiences and performers know that they are part of a theatrical event. They have a mutual understanding. The audience will watch and react to the play, and the performers will put on a show. Everyone knows that what happens will be different than everyday life. Even if the play attempts to emulate everyday life—and some of the theatre we will examine in this book does exactly that—it still does so in circumstances that make it, in some way, extraordinary.

To summarize our description thus far, *theatre* describes a set of heightened circumstances that depend



At the High Line park in New York City, spectators can sit at the “urban theatre” section to witness the ongoing play of the city itself. ©Francois Roux/Shutterstock

on a separation (whether acknowledged or not) of audience and performer. But we also use the word to refer to the physical space in which theatre often takes place. Theatre can occur in a theatre. It could also exist elsewhere, though. In this book, we will examine theatre that takes place in streets, in homes, in abandoned weapons factories, and in quarries—just to name a few examples. But even then, we refer to these spaces as a *theatre*. They transform, just as the performers do, from ordinary to exceptional.

Spotlight

Why Study Theatre?

Perhaps you are reading this book because you have a deep passion for theatre. However, chances are that some of you are also reading this book because you are just curious about theatre, or perhaps simply to get college credit. These are all perfectly fine reasons. One of the book’s aims is to show you how knowledge of theatre can help you in many different settings, not just onstage. Regardless of your reasons for reading this book and of how frequently you engage with theatre afterward, knowing more about theatre can help you in both your professional and personal life.

This thought might give you pause. You might think, “Isn’t theatre a lofty occupation?” It is, but it is also a highly pragmatic one. As we will discuss, it is first and foremost *work*. While studying theatre can be enormously rewarding for abstract reasons—for instance, it gives us an appreciation of culture and history—it also helps improve your occupational skills. And you do not even need to work in theatre to capitalize on your theatre studies. Theatre skills are crucial for work in law, education, and business. After all, if you study

and participate in theatre, you know how to work as a team, listen to other opinions, collaborate across different skill sets, and learn how to speak in front of a crowd.

People who have theatre degrees, or who have studied theatre in college, draw on their skills constantly. If you have to give a speech to your coworkers or superiors, if you have to devise a project with a group of people you don’t know well but with whom you must collaborate, if you have an encroaching deadline and need to find a creative solution to a problem, or if you have to analyze a document and share your interpretation, then you are using theatre skills. You’re not that different from an actor stepping onto the stage, a director meeting for the first time with an artistic team, or a performer picking up a script minutes before an audition.

Experiencing theatre gives us confidence, and it is not, contrary to some understandings of the word, a fake or negative kind of confidence. As we discuss in this book, theatre is about pursuing the truth, not artifice. It’s an effort of a group of people trying to create something new—and can’t the same be said for nearly every line of work? Studying theatre gives us what theatre scholar Nancy Kindelan calls “artistic literacy”—a fluency in thinking creatively in a variety of settings. Theatre skills help us constantly because theatre, in some form, is everywhere.

In addition to a theatre building, there's yet another way we can use the word *theatre*: the collection of artists who create the theatre. We call this collection the *company*. So the theatre can be a physical place, what happens in that place, and the people who create what happens in that place. To take one example, when we refer to the Guthrie Theater, we refer to (1) the actual building in Minneapolis called the Guthrie Theater; (2) what happens in that building—the performed actions and the audiences who watch them; and (3) the artists and administrators who create these occurrences.

Finally, we also use the word *theatre* to summon the professional occupation—and often the passion—of thousands of men and women all over the world. It is a vocation and sometimes a lifelong devotion. If someone says, “I work in theatre,” they are telling you that they work in

a theatre, they participate in the activity of theatre, they collaborate with other theatre artists, and—perhaps most importantly—that they are inspired by theatre. Theatre is an occupation and an art. To work in the theatre is not just to labor, but also to create.

We have already discussed one definition of theatre—the separation of actor and audience—so let's now examine the three other main definitions: theatre as a building, a company, and an occupation.

The Theatre Building

When you picture the space of the theatre, you probably imagine a big room with seats, a stage, and maybe a curtain. A theatre building is not always an enclosed structure, however. The most ancient Greek *theatron* was probably no



Shakespeare's Globe has been meticulously reconstructed near its sixteenth-century location on the South Bank of London's Thames River. The reconstruction was spearheaded by the late Sam Wanamaker, an American actor who labored many years to acquire the funding and necessary permits (the theatre has the first thatch roof laid in London since the Great Fire of 1666). This is scholarship's best guess as to the specific dimensions and features of The Globe in Shakespeare's time. Since its 1997 opening, this Globe has produced a summer repertoire of the plays of Shakespeare's age, seen on a stage much like the stages for which they were written. ©Robert Cohen



National theatre buildings in many European countries, generally supported by their governments, are often palatial. The National Theatre in Cluj, Romania, is regarded as the most beautiful building in this Transylvanian capital.

©Robert Cohen

more than a circle of bare earth where performers chanted and danced before a hillside of seated spectators. The requirements for building such a theatre were minimal: find a space to act and a space to watch and hear.

As theatre grew in popularity and importance, and spread out into different cultures and geographical locations, its structures grew larger and more elaborate. The theatre's producers had to seat larger and larger numbers of people, so the hillside soon became an ascending bank of seats, each level providing a good view of the acting area. And as the theatre grew, attention had to be paid to its *acoustics*, or sound quality (derived from the Greek *acoustos*, "heard"), so the sounds coming from the stage could be heard by the audience (from the Latin *audientia*, "those who hear").

Often, theatre spaces can be easily defined. The basic relationship set up in ancient Greece can still apply to

theatres all over the world: the audiences are out in the seats, the actors are up on the stage. Occasionally, though, the spaces are merged together so that the actors mingle—and sometimes interact—with the audience.

Theatre buildings may also be complex. Greek theatres of the fourth century B.C.E.—the period immediately following the golden age of Greek playwrights—were gigantic stone structures, some capable of holding up to 17,000 spectators. Magnificent three-story Roman theatres, complete with gilded columns, canvas awnings, and intricate marble carvings, were often erected for dramatic festivals in the later years of the Republic. Grand, free-standing Elizabethan theatres dominate the London skyline in illustrated sixteenth-century pictorial maps of the town. Opulent theatres were built throughout Europe and in the major cities of the United States in the eighteenth