

# Preface

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Theater is not only an art form, 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 is uppermost in the minds of those who teach theater in a classroom setting. At the same time, it is also known that an introduction to theater course can immeasurably enhance an audience's comprehension of theater.

The experience of seeing 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 background to make this possible and that it will encourage and inspire students to become lifelong audience members if not actual participants in theater.

In its fourth edition, *Theater: The Lively Art* remains a comprehensive introductory theater text that incorporates a number of elements in one volume: an introduction to the audience's experience of theater, an investigation of the elements of theater, and a study of the important developments in the history of theater.

Several things set *Theater: The Lively Art* apart from other introductory texts. A particularly important element is our emphasis on the audience. All students reading the book, we assume, are potential theatergoers, not just in their college years but throughout their lives. We have therefore, attempted 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, and of the tradition behind any performance they may attend.

In addition to serving as an ideal text for nonmajors, *Theater: The Lively Art* 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 a foundation for further studies in every aspect of theater: acting, directing, design, dramatic literature, history, theory, and criticism.

## Organization

### Part One: Creating Theater

Part One, Creating Theater, introduces students to the people who make theater possible, to the elements of theater, and to significant concepts of theater. We explore first the role of the audience. Not only do audiences form a vital link in any theater event, but students will find themselves in the role of audience members more frequently than in any other.

We then investigate acting and directing, including various acting techniques and methods of training performers, as well as the major approaches to directing. We study design and technical production, including the nuts-and-bolts aspects of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound. We look at the work of the playwright, or the person or group creating a script, particularly in the creation of dramatic structure and dramatic characters.

Following that we investigate point of view in a text as expressed in tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, melodrama, and so forth.

**Getting Started in Theater.** In separate boxes throughout Part One, autobiographical accounts from playwrights, performers, directors, designers, and others explain how various individuals became attracted to theater, received their training, and were given their first opportunities to work in theater. Students should find these firsthand accounts not only informative but insightful, providing them with a genuine sense of what involvement in theater means.

**Plot Summaries.** Summaries of plays, set aside in boxes within individual chapters, provide the necessary context for discussion of both the elements and the history of theater (Parts One and Two). All together, eleven important plays, ranging from Greek to modern and including representative works by Asian, African-American, and women playwrights, are included. The summaries, moreover, are comprehensive accounts of the action of these plays. We have added a new feature to the plot synopses in Part One—questions for consideration at the end of each play summary, which link it to chapter topics.

### Chapter 9: Profile of a Production

This chapter bridges Part One and Part Two. We trace a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* from its inception to the final production, showing how the elements of Part One

intersect with the historical material in Part Two.

### Part Two: Theater Tradition and Theater Today

In Part Two, Theater Tradition and Theater Today, we begin with Greek theater and continue through to the present. This look at the history of theater is not intended to be definitive and in no way should it be viewed as a substitute for advanced courses on theater history. At the same time, we believe that we have covered every important movement, every key figure, and every relevant aspect of the development of theater.

The final three chapters (Chapters 14, 15, 16) are 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—defined the theater we have today. As we point out in Chapter 16, ours is a diverse, eclectic theater, rich in variety and innovation. We look at the many crosscurrents and trends making up the theater that students of today and audiences of tomorrow will be attending.

**Historical Context.** Within the chapters dealing with theater history, each section contains background information on the political, scientific, and cultural milieu in which theater developments unfold.

**Time Lines.** For each period and country, time lines outline landmark events and accomplishments in the social and political arenas on one side and significant theater events on the other.

**Living Histories.** Every period includes a narrative of an actual event, taking the readers back in time so that they have a sense of being present in the audience at a performance of, say, *Antigone* in Athens in 441 B.C., or at the premiere of *Hamlet* at the Globe Theater in London.

## Writing Style

This same sense of immediacy and personalization has been a goal, as well, in our writing style. 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 wherever possible we have avoided “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.

## New to This Edition

This fourth edition of *Theater: The Lively Art* includes extensive revisions and substantive changes from previous editions. These improvements will be of

great benefit, we believe, to both faculty members and students.

## Changes in Content

There are a number of significant changes and additions in the fourth edition of *Theater: The Lively Art*. The material on diversity in today’s theater has been moved from Chapter 1 to the final chapter, where it more appropriately belongs. As a result, Chapter 1 has become a more streamlined discussion of the theater audience, along with a discussion of the critic. In the section on the critic we have added an important feature: two contrasting reviews of the same production, which demonstrate differences in the opinions of even highly respected and well-known critics.

In Chapter 2 we have taken account of important acting teachers of modern theater such as Sanford Meisner, and in Chapter 4 we have added coverage of multifocus events. In Chapters 5 and 6 we have made all headings consistent throughout so that discussions of designers will unfold according to predictable, understandable logic.

Major changes have been undertaken in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. We have reversed much of the material in these two chapters to reflect current thinking. Chapter 7 is now devoted to the playwright, or to other artists who prepare a text, including the development of

dramatic structure and dramatic characters. Chapter 8 covers the text itself, especially in terms of genre.

Chapter 9 features a new stage production, with more photographs—and especially more color photographs—than appeared in the previous edition.

In Chapter 11, the material on Asia now precedes medieval theater—a plan that is more logical and understandable historically.

Chapter 16 has been considerably updated, and (as noted above) the extensive material on modern diversity and multiculturalism formerly found in Chapter 1 has been placed here, within its historical context.

## Production Shots

Another feature of this new edition is more than 200 photographs, most 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.

Not only are there more photographs, but the entire book has been redesigned to create more visual interest and to make the material easier to understand and assimilate. The new design and the extended photo program make for a bolder and more vibrant text.

## Making Connections

A key addition to the fourth edition of *Theater: The Lively Art* is a special feature called “Making Connections.” This segment examines the close relationship of theater and other forms of popular entertainment through the ages, from the mimes and jugglers of ancient Rome to the circuses and vaudeville of the nineteenth century to the rock concerts and theme parks of today.

## Theater on the Web

In response to the expanding community of theater sites on the World Wide Web, we have added to the conclusion of each chapter a boxed feature: “Theater on the Web.” This entirely new section guides students in exploration of chapter topics on the Internet. Links to reliable, up-to-date sites tie the content of each chapter to the World Wide Web and are complemented by essay questions available on the book’s Online Learning Center [www.mhhe.com/livelyart](http://www.mhhe.com/livelyart).

## Support for Instructors

*Please note: The supplements listed here and below in Support for Students may accompany this text. Please contact your local McGraw-Hill representative for details concerning policies, prices, and availability, as some restrictions may apply. If you are not sure who your representative is, you can find him or her by using the Rep Locator at [www.mhhe.com](http://www.mhhe.com).*

### Instructor’s Manual

McGraw-Hill offers an Instructor’s Manual to all instructors who adopt *Theater: The Lively Art* for their courses. Each chapter of the Instructor’s Manual includes:

- Overview and outline of the text chapter
- List of significant names and terms found in the chapter
- Questions for student essays or discussions
- Suggestions for demonstrations and exercises for class involvement
- Play recommendations for the chapter

The last section of the Instructor’s Manual contains a sample test bank, organized by chapter, for in-class quizzes and testing.

### Computerized Test Bank

The test questions from the Instructor’s Manual are available on MicroTest CD, a powerful but easy-to-use test-generating program that runs on both Windows and Macintosh personal computers. With MicroTest, you can easily view and select the test item, file questions, and then print a test and answer key. You can customize questions, headings, and instruction; you can add or import questions of your own; and you can print your test in a choice of fonts allowed by your printer.

### Online Learning Center: [www.mhhe.com/livelyart](http://www.mhhe.com/livelyart)

The website and online Learning Center is an internet-based resource for students and faculty. Instructor’s Resources are password-protected and offer the complete text of the Instructor’s Manual, a correlation guide for *Anthology of Living Theater* and *Theater: The Lively Art*, and a link to our customizable database of plays. To receive a password for the site, contact your local sales representative or e-mail us at [theater@mcgraw-hill.com](mailto:theater@mcgraw-hill.com).

Additionally, the online Learning Center offers chapter-by-chapter quizzes for testing students. These brief quizzes are separate from those offered in the Instructor’s Manual and generate instant grades; the results can be e-mailed directly to the instructor with the click of a button (see Student Resources below). This special quizzing feature is a valuable tool for the instructor who requires a quick way to check reading comprehension and basic understanding without using up valuable class time.

## Student Resources

### Making the Grade CD-ROM

This CD-ROM, packaged free with the text, provides students with an excellent resource that offers enrichment, review, and self-testing. The following components are included:

- Internet Primer
- Study skills primer
- Guide to electronic research
- Multiple-choice questions for each chapter—graded automatically
- Learning assessment
- Link to the book's website.

### McGraw-Hill Theatergoer's Guide

A recently revised *Theatergoer's Guide* is packaged with every copy of the text. The guide is an excellent introduction to the art of attending and critiquing a play, from making theater reservations and knowing when to applaud to evaluating a performance and doing research on the Internet.

### Online Learning Center: [www.mhhe.com/livelyart](http://www.mhhe.com/livelyart)

McGraw-Hill offers extensive Web resources for students with Internet access. Students will find the Online Learning Center of particular use with *Theater: The Lively Art*. For each chapter, it offers glossary terms, chapter objectives, discussion questions, and online testing. In addition, the site offers links to promote getting involved in theater and conducting research on the web. Visit [www.mhhe.com/livelyart](http://www.mhhe.com/livelyart).

### McGraw-Hill Guide to Electronic Research in Theater

This brief booklet is designed to assist students in locating theater sites on the Web, evaluating on-site information, and referencing on-line sources. This supplement can be packaged free with the text.

## Acknowledgments

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## Reviewers

The following people, who read and commented on the manuscript in various stages of development, made important contributions to the final result: B. J. Bray, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; Beverly Byrd, Mesa Community College; Edward Douglas, Glendale Community College; Julia Gagne, Valencia Community College; Michael Gravois, University of Memphis; Lani Johnson, Central Connecticut

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## Questionnaire Respondents

Barbara Alkofer, *Southeastern Oklahoma State University*  
David Allen, *Midland College*  
John Anglin, *East Central College*  
Scott Blanks, *Benedict College*  
John Brokaw, *University of Texas at Austin*  
Malcolm Callery, *California University of Pennsylvania*  
Lou Campbell, *Belhaven College*  
Jack Carroll, *Darion College*  
Joyce Cavarozzi, *Wichita State University*  
Thorne Compton, *University of South Carolina*  
Marcia Cook, *Sewanee—The University of the South*  
Michael Corriston, *Southeast Community College*  
Renee Dobson, *Ohio Northern University*  
Kathleen Downs, *Tennessee Wesleyan College*  
Charles Falcon, *San Antonio College*  
Greg Fiebig, *Southwest Baptist University*  
James Filippelli, *Dominican College*

James Fisher, *Wabash College*  
Carol Fisher, *Highland Community College*  
Steven Folstein, *University of Wisconsin–Mamtowoe*  
John Galyean, *Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College*  
Joanna Goff, *Blue Mountain Community College*  
Judyth Gonzalez, *Delta College*  
Kiki Gounaridou, *Smith College*  
Albert Harris Jr., *University of Louisville*  
Brad Hellwig, *University of Georgia*  
David Hoover, *University of New Orleans*  
Clark Hutton, *Volunteer State Community College*  
Patrick Immel, *Northwest Missouri State University*  
Joe Jeffreys, *SUNY at Stony Brook*  
Robin Johnson, *Capital University*  
Arnie Johnston, *Western Michigan University*  
Jasmin Lambert, *College of William and Mary*  
David Magidson, *Wayne State University*  
Mark Mallett, *Morehead State University*  
Nancy McCoy, *College of the Canyons*  
Susan McCully, *Worcester State College*  
Bill McPherson, *Nunez Community College*  
Michelle Michael-Lippens, *Erie Community College North*  
James Moore, *University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown*  
Paul Msoczka, *Plymouth State College*

Sara Nalley, *Columbia College*  
Harold Nichols, *Georgia Southwestern State University*  
Debra Otte, *Long Island University*  
John Pereira, *Nassau Community College*  
Cindy Peterson, *Mid-American Nazarene University*  
Richard Pettengill, *DePaul University*  
Tony Piazza, *Allen County Community College*  
Rick Plummer, *West Shore Community College*  
Anne Pluto, *Lesley College*  
Kimberly Poppiti, *Dowling College*  
Norman Roberts, *Northampton Community College*  
John Rude, *Victor Valley College*  
Frances Ruoff, *Kingsborough Community College*  
Belinda Russell, *Northeast MS Community College*  
Pam Saalfeld, *Northeast Community College*  
Albin Sandau, *Black Hills State University*  
Jan Savage, *University of West Florida*  
Robert Schweitzer, *Edinboro University*  
Brian Simmons, *Cascade College*  
Mary Jo Sodd, *Central College*  
Janet Speer, *Lees-McRae College*  
Robin Stone, *St. Louis Community College–Forest Park*  
Frank Thornton, *Duquesne University*  
Rebecca Thrash, *University of Central Arkansas*

Eric Trumbull, *Northern  
Virginia Community College*  
Patrick Vaughn, *Angelina  
College*  
Daniel Watermeier, *University of  
Toledo*  
Cynthia Watts, *Atlanta  
Metropolitan College*  
Kevin Wetmore, *Denison  
University*  
F. Larry Wheeler, *Hardin-  
Simmons University*  
John Wilk, *City College of San  
Francisco*  
Bob Willenbrink, *University of  
Central Arkansas*

L. K. Williamson, *University of  
Texas at Dallas*  
Antoinette Winstead, *Our Lady  
of the Lake University*  
Sallie Wolfe, *Arapahoe  
Community College*  
John Woodtin, *University of  
Missouri*  
Robert Yowell, *Northern  
Arizona University*

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