

OVERTURE



Writers' Bios

Hi. We're Tom and Linda. We're two people who have made a happy life in the theatre and who've enjoyed teaching theatre for a long time. We wrote this book in the first person instead of in the vague, third-person voice of most textbooks because in addition to sharing the solid information and facts we've learned over the years, we wanted to include our opinions and observations and a lot of behind-the-scenes stories. And because we're exuberant theatre folks who enjoy nothing better than a good laugh (even at our own expense), we really needed to tell those stories in the first person. Also, we know that standing side by side we look like a comedy team. Tom's 6'2" and Linda is 5'1"—one tall, one short, just like Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, Penn and Teller, Bullwinkle and Rocky. You need a sense of humor if you're going to sustain a life in the theatre.

We take our *work* very seriously, but not ourselves. We're not celebrities or famous scholars, so you may wonder why you should pay attention to our observations and opinions. Since we've had one foot in the academic world and the other foot in the professional theatre (that's the foot with the banana peel under it), it's a fair question. Let us introduce ourselves.

I'm Tom Markus. I've been a professional director and actor for more than forty years and a professional educator for even longer. I'm not a celebrity face or a household name, but I've been able to make a living doing what I love. I have acted in films, on TV shows including *Touched by an Angel* and *Everwood*, and on stage with some of the major actors of our time—I've even acted on Broadway. Being in a Broadway show is the career goal for most actors. It's like a singer cutting a major-label CD or a basketball player making an NBA team. You may not be at the top o' the heap, but not very many have done what you've achieved. I've been there—as an actor, a director, and a professor who has taught at Yale, at the University of California, and as far away as Flinders University in Australia. I have an alphabet soup of letters after my name—B.A., M.F.A., Ph.D.—but I use the title “doctor” only when I phone for a reservation at a trendy restaurant.

I'm Linda Sarver, the short one with the long hair—Tom's the tall guy with the beard. Tom can tell a string of theatre anecdotes that keep people continually chuckling, but I'm the quiet one who lets fly with the zinger that pops his balloon. Aside from cooking dinner for some famous theatre artists, I've earned my living as a costume designer—in Canada, in Hong Kong, and for professional theatres and Shakespeare festivals across America. I've also

worked on TV shows and feature films. I was part of a team that won an Emmy Citation for costuming the TV miniseries *North and South*. I've worked from coast to coast as a dramaturg (that's a fancy name for someone who contributes historical and literary research to the production of a play), and I've been an educator for twenty-five years. I have a Master of Fine Arts degree, and I've enjoyed teaching at Florida State University and Marquette University. Tom and I each have a long pedigree of theatre awards and scholarly publications that we don't brag about. I've always believed that if we're not having fun then we're doing something wrong, and we had fun writing this book. Rest easy—you're in good hands.

We met working on a play in Florida. Ten years later, after collaborating at many theatres and after writing the first edition of this book, we got married. Tom always said he started acting in college plays because it was a good way to meet girls. It turns out he was right.

The Second Edition

Writing the second edition of *Another Opening, Another Show* has been like rewriting a musical during its out-of-town tryout—revising and refining until it's ready to open on Broadway. Entire songs are cut from musicals, new dances are inserted, characters are added, dialogue is changed, and the plot is rearranged time after time. Even the recent Broadway revival of the classic musical *Kiss Me, Kate* was revised and updated, though it retained the anthem to show business that gave this book its title:

Another op'nin', another show
 In Boston, Philly, or Baltimoe
 A chance for stage folks to say "hello"
 Another op'nin' of another show.

Instead of reading the reviews of out-of-town critics while we were rewriting, we heeded the reviews of more than a dozen educators and the comments of hundreds of students. This second edition embraces their suggestions, and we're thankful that writing it has given us stage folks another chance to say "hello."

Classics from the first edition came from consulting students and learning what they wanted in a textbook for an introductory theatre course:

- A book that doesn't cost a lot
- A book that is fun to read
- A book that helps them understand and enjoy theatre
- An insider's look at theatre, not a scholar's critique of it
- An opportunity to learn about plays on a stage rather than plays on a page
- Pictures that illustrate the ideas in the text instead of just decorating it

Previews of this second edition:

- An opening by Aristotle
- Entirely new coverage on how to write about theatre
- A chance to be side by side with us as we work at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival
- Entertaining exercises at the end of each chapter
- Enriched discussions of cultural diversity in American theatre
- Up-to-date examples throughout the text—even a mention of Brad Pitt
- Dozens of new photos of current productions, including *Urinetown*, *Take Me Out*, *Hairspray*, and *The Producers*
- Entirely new coverage of the hidden world of backstage
- A greatly expanded glossary
- A reorganization of the text that allows you to read chapters in any order

All-New, Flexible Structure

We expect that many readers will follow the advice the King of Hearts offers in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*: “Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; then stop.” However, we recognize that some instructors will assign chapters in an order that best serves their unique approach to the subject, so we’ve followed their suggestions and have created a flexible structure. For example, if students are going to attend a play in the early weeks of the semester, they might be assigned chapters 11 and 12 right away. If an instructor likes to begin a course with an overview of theatre history, then chapter 15 might be the first assignment. We have ensured that each chapter can “stand alone,” and we expect instructors to have fun and arrange the chapters to suit their own teaching style. *Another Opening, Another Show* is divided into five acts:

- *Understanding and Evaluating Theatre* begins by exploring what theatre is and then examines three established ways to analyze, understand, and evaluate theatre; it concludes with a description of how both beginning students and professional critics write about theatre. This should prepare students to write any papers that are assigned.
- *The Creative Process* discusses the work of playwrights, actors, directors, and designers and then describes a “case study” of how theatre artists create a production.
- *The Audience Joins In* brings students back into the action. It provides helpful hints about how to attend the theatre and what to look for when the curtain goes up, and it describes the wide variety of work people do in the theatre.
- *Theatre History* is the fourth act, and it includes a great many photos and drawings that illustrate how theatre was presented in the past as well as the variety of theatres students might attend today.

- *Theatre in America Today*, the fifth and final act, is where we explore the business of theatre; how theatre enriches our intellectual, political, and cultural lives; and the way theatre reflects the rich diversity of American society. The final chapter, on the American musical, celebrates what many people feel is America's unique and most exciting contribution to world theatre.

Special Features

- Sidebars are brief remarks written in *italics* and found in the margins of the pages. They comment on the main topic in the accompanying text.
- Boxes contain information that augments the main topics. Four kinds of boxes contain four different kinds of information:

Asides are fun stories that illustrate a point.

Foreshadowing prepares for what follows, usually in the form of a list.

Exposition is background information that will enrich understanding of a topic.

Review is a look back at what was just discussed, often in the form of a checklist to ensure that you didn't miss any important information.

Encore! Supplementary Material

We're very excited about the Online Learning Center for *Another Opening, Another Show*, www.mhhe.com/markus2. It provides multiple choice study quizzes and essays for each chapter, Internet Exercises related to the topics in the book, Web links for doing additional research, and other helpful items.

For educators, we've written an Instructor's Manual that includes sample syllabuses for fifteen-week and ten-week terms, a chapter-by-chapter list of new terms, suggestions for exercises ranging from field trips to Internet searches, and a list of audiovisual materials related to the content of the chapter. The Instructor's Manual also includes an extensive test bank of multiple-choice, true/false, and essay questions.

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