

BRIEF VERSION

EIGHTH EDITION

THEATRE

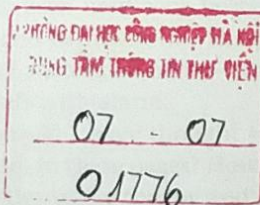
MCGRAW-HILL NOT FOR RESALE
DONATION ONLY 14A SA10



ROBERT COHEN

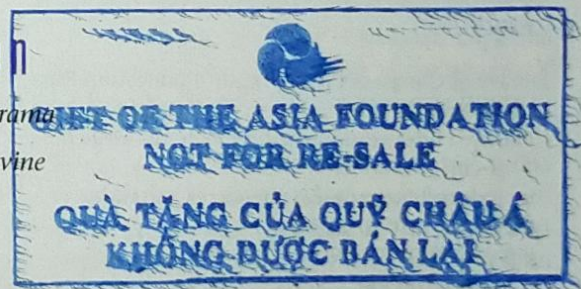
Theatre

BRIEF VERSION | EIGHTH EDITION



Robert Cohen

Claire Trevor Professor of Drama
University of California, Irvine



Boston Burr Ridge, IL Dubuque, IA Madison, WI New York San Francisco St. Louis
Bangkok Bogotá Caracas Kuala Lumpur Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City
Milan Montreal New Delhi Santiago Seoul Singapore Sydney Taipei Toronto

Preface

I AM SITTING IN A DARKENED theatre correcting proof sheets for the book you are about to read. A technical rehearsal for a play I am directing is in progress; I am seated at a makeshift desk in the back of the house, my reading illuminated by a tiny covered gooseneck lamp. Onstage stand several actors, silent and motionless, as light plays over their faces and bodies. Above me, unseen and unheard, technicians operate, adjust, and record the settings for another of the play's one hundred fifty light cues. To the outside observer, it is the dulllest situation imaginable; nothing observable happens for twenty or thirty minutes at a stretch. A pool of light intensifies and then recedes, muffled conversation crackles over headsets, footsteps clang on steel catwalks lacing the ceiling, and a spotlight is carefully repositioned. This has been going on now since eight in the morning, and it is already past dinnertime.

Yet my eye is continually pulled from these pages to the dance of light upon the stage. The violet and amber hues are rich with color, and the sharp shafts of incandescence dazzle with brilliance. I am fascinated by the patient weariness of the actors, alternately glowing in and then shadowed by the lights, endlessly holding the positions that, in performance, they will occupy for only a few transitory seconds. I gaze with admiration at the follow-spot operator, her hands gloved, as she handles her instrument with the precision and sensitivity of a surgeon.

The silence, the stasis, is hypnotic. All is quiet but profound with held-back beats, incipient torrents of passion and exhilaration. The potential is riveting—I am alive with excitement—and I look back to those cold proofs with alarm.

How could I have thought to express the thrill of the theatre in these pages? How could I have hoped to make recognizable the joy and awe I feel in theatrical involvement?

The theatre is not merely a collection of crafts, a branch of literature, a collaboration of technique, or even an all-encompassing art form. It is a life. It is people. It is people making art out of themselves. Its

full reality transcends by light-years anything that could be said or written about it.

What I have tried to do in these pages is not so much to introduce the theatre or to survey it as to *present* the theatre with its liveliness and humanness intact, with its incipient passion and exhilaration always present, with its potential for joy, awe, wisdom, and excitement as clear to the reader as they have been made clear to me.

Features

This is a brief version of a larger book that is published simultaneously. The larger volume includes five chapters on theatrical history that do not appear here and three chapters (instead of two) on the modern theatre. The goal of this brief version is to provide students surveying the theatrical arts and collaborative theatrical crafts—but not dramatic history—with a comprehensive text in the dramatic arts as they exist today.

I have included more than 260 theatre photographs—most in color—collected from five continents. The vast majority are of significant recent stage productions from around the world. Other photos illustrate the processes of theatrical creation or the historical and current contexts of theatre presentation. Completing the book's art are drawings by scholars/architects that illustrate theatres both past and present as accurately as current research and skilled reconstruction can make possible. Extended captions should help readers better appreciate these images of theatre worldwide and make stronger connections to the text examples.

The text offers a number of pedagogical aids. Terms commonly used in theatre and theatre history are defined in the glossary at the back of the book, and further sources of information for the curious can be found in the selected bibliography. To help students enjoy performances and gain more from their theater-going experiences, a variety of materials can be found at the Online Learning Center (www.mhhe.com/

cohenbrief8e). To help students enhance their play-going experience further, the brief guide *Enjoy the Play!* has been revised and now appears online. Coauthored with Lorna Cohen, the guide includes suggestions as to how and where students may attend live theatre—at low cost—either in their own hometowns or in major theatre centers in the United States and abroad. It also includes pointers on how to write a play report. To help busy instructors, there is a Test Bank, written by Marilyn Moriarty, that includes 50 multiple-choice questions and several short-answer or essay questions per chapter. A computerized version of the Test Bank is also available to instructors.

No study of the theatre can be truly comprehensive without seeing and reading plays. It is my belief that regular play going and play reading, supported by the discussions in these pages and in the classroom, will provide a good foundation for an informed and critical enthusiasm for the art of drama.

What's New?

New to this edition are four photo essays showing major theatrical artists at work: actor Patrick Stewart as he prepares for a London opening night as Antony in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, director/choreographer Susan Stroman as she readies her multiple-award-winning musical, *The Producers*, for its opening at the Paris Las Vegas, playwright Neil LaBute as he revises his script for *Wrecks* prior to its New York opening, and production stage manager Michael McGoff as he sets up the stage for an evening's run of *Butley* at the Booth Theatre on New York's Broadway.

In addition to being updated on practically every page—and in the “Theatre Today” chapter in practically every paragraph—this edition also contains wholly new sections on Restoration dramatist Aphra Behn and on the nineteenth-century Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. A thorough revision of the section on American realism has led to the addition of new material on Clifford Odets and Tennessee Williams, now consolidated with augmented material on Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and August Wilson. In the sections on practical theatre, the entire “Designers and Technicians” chapter has been revised to focus on design processes and on technicians as primary collaborators. The chapter on the director has likewise been substantially revised in order to more fully ex-

plore the process of conceptualization and its implications for the entire artistic collaboration. To make room for these new materials yet keep the book in its manageable size, the “Theatre Today” chapter has been pruned of many of the details that have been accumulating over the past seven editions but are no longer truly representative of what's happening “today.”

We have also reordered Chapters 3 through 6 to achieve a more logical sequence of topics: The Playwright (Chapter 3), The Actor (Chapter 4), The Director (Chapter 5), and The Designers and Technicians (Chapter 6).

In addition to the written text, over 90 new photographs and illustrations have been personally selected by the author from leading theatre photographers around the world to help the reader better visualize—and experience sensually—the theatrical activity referred to in each chapter.

Acknowledgments

In all of these revisions, I have profited from literally hundreds of valuable suggestions from readers, and to no one do I owe a greater debt than theatre historian E. J. Westlake, at the University of Michigan, who gracefully helped me adjust more than a dozen dating and spelling discrepancies in the previous edition and challenged me to rethink several other historical points as well. For the “Designers and Technicians” chapter, I am deeply indebted to the great designer Bob Crowley, who provided storyboard and rendering illustrations of his design process for both *Mary Poppins* and *The History Boys*, and I'm grateful to his assistant Ros Coombes, who probed the files in Crowley's London studio while the designer himself was in New York working on two productions. I was gratified to see Crowley take Tony Awards for both *Mary Poppins* and *Coast of Utopia* (also pictured) at the time this book was in final editing.

I am also extremely grateful to my colleagues Lonnie Alcaraz, Keith Bangs, and most particularly Cliff Faulkner, who closely advised me on the revision of the chapter on designers and technicians, and to the subjects of my new photo essays—the extraordinary Stewart, Stroman, LaBute, and McGoff—as well as to Scott Bishop, assistant to Susan Stroman, who kindly arranged my interview with her in Las Vegas.

To the photographers represented in this new edition I owe, more than ever, a great debt; their artistry

continually astounds me. These include Stephanie Berger, Joan Marcus, Sara Krulwich, Richard Termine, and Michael Casselli in New York, Laurencine Lot in Paris, Geraint Lewis in London, Hsu Pei Hung in Taiwan, Barabás Zsolt in Sf. Gheorghe (Romania), Nina Krieger in Williamstown, Michal Daniel in Minneapolis, and Craig Schwartz, Ed Krieger, Henry DiRocco, Paul Kennedy, and Ken Howard in Los Angeles.

For assistance in acquiring—and in some cases taking—these new photographs, I am grateful to both stage and house management staffs at the Novello Theatre in London, Booth Theatre in New York, and Paris Las Vegas Hotel; and also to literary adviser Czegö Csongor at the Tamási Áron Theatre in Romania, Juliet Flynt at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts, manager Joe Stackel at Mabou Mines, senior publicist Karen R. Nelson at UCLA Live, public relations manager Bryan Matthews at Vari-Light, Caroline Moss at Midas U.S.A., and the press staffs of the Sibiu (Romania) Theatre Festival, the Mark Taper Forum of Los Angeles, and South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California.

As always, I am grateful to the distinguished theatre specialists who have offered their advice and suggestions for the continued improvement of this text. In addition to Dr. Westlake, those reviewers include:

Joe Aldridge, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Emily Becher, *James Madison University*

Lon Bumgarner, *University of North Carolina, Charlotte*

Monica Cole, *Eastern Arizona College*

Rick Donnelly, *University of Notre Dame*

Richard Hansen, *Middle Tennessee State University*

Scott Richard Klein, *Cameron University*

Robert Gerald Levy, *Clarion University of Pennsylvania*

Robert Lublin, *University of Massachusetts, Boston*

Jay Malarcher, *West Virginia University*

Maureen McFeely, *Hofstra University*

Diana Polsky, *Cypress College*

Lori Seward, *South Georgia College*

Leo J. Van Dyke, Ph.D., *University of South Alabama*

Sam Zachary, *Northern Kentucky University*

Finally, it has been my great pleasure to work with the terrific—and geographically dispersed—editorial and production team put together by McGraw-Hill: sponsoring editor Chris Freitag in the New York office; editor Nadia Bidwell at Barking Dog Editorial in Madison, Wisconsin; freelance art editor Inge King in New York; production manager Chris Schabow with The Left Coast Group in Redlands, California; senior production editor Anne Fuzellier in San Francisco; managing development editor Nancy Crochiere in Boston; permissions editor Frederick Courtright of The Permissions Company in Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania; and the wonderful and always helpful copyeditor Patricia Herbst in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, who worked on the first edition of this book many years ago. The miracles of e-mail and digital transmission have made all of this coast-to-coast interaction not only possible but convenient, and I am extremely happy to be able to work—if not side by side then keyboard to keyboard—with this exceptionally talented and knowledgeable team of cyber-colleagues.

ROBERT COHEN

Brief Contents

Preface	v
Introduction	1

Glossary	G-1
Selected Bibliography	B-1
Credits	C-1
Index	I-1

Chapter 1	What Is the Theatre?	7
Chapter 2	What Is a Play?	25
Chapter 3	The Playwright	47
Chapter 4	The Actor	75
Chapter 5	The Director	97
Chapter 6	Designers and Technicians	133
Chapter 7	Theatre Traditions: East and West	187
Chapter 8	The Modern Theatre	217
Chapter 9	The Musical Theatre	243
Chapter 10	Theatre Today	261
Chapter 11	The Critic	307

Contents

Preface	v
Introduction	1

Chapter 1 What Is the Theatre? 7

<i>The Theatre Building</i>	8
<i>The Company, or Troupe, of Players</i>	9
<i>The Occupation of Theatre</i>	11
Work	11
Art	14
Impersonation	14
Performance	16
Live Performance	18
Scripted and Rehearsed Performance	22

Chapter 2 What Is a Play? 25

<i>Classifying Plays</i>	26
Duration	26
Genre	26
<i>Dramaturgy: The Construction of Drama and Dramatic Performance</i>	33
Drama's Components: The Vertical Axis	33
Plot	33
Characters	34
Theme	35
Diction	35
Music	36
Spectacle	36
Conventions	36
Drama's Timeline: The Horizontal Axis	38
Preplay	39
Play	40
Postplay	43
<i>Non-Aristotelian Theatre Events</i>	44

Chapter 3 The Playwright 47

<i>We Are All Playwrights</i>	48
<i>Literary and Nonliterary Aspects of Playwrighting</i>	48
<i>Playwrighting as Event Writing</i>	50

<i>The Qualities of a Fine Play</i>	50
Credibility and Intrigue	51
Speakability, Stageability, and Flow	52
Richness	54
Depth of Characterization	55
Gravity and Pertinence	57
Compression, Economy, and Intensity	57
Celebration	60
<i>The Playwright's Process</i>	60
Dialogue	60
Conflict	61
Structure	61
<i>The Playwright's Rewards</i>	61
<i>A Sampling of Current American Playwrights</i>	62
David Mamet	62
Tony Kushner	64
David Henry Hwang	66
Neil LaBute	67
Suzan-Lori Parks	68

Photo Essay: Playwright
Neil LaBute 69

Chapter 4 The Actor 75

<i>What Is Acting?</i>	76
The Two Notions of Acting	76
Virtuosity	81
Magic	83
<i>Becoming an Actor</i>	84
The Actor's Instrument	84
The Physiological Instrument	84
The Psychological Instrument	85
The Actor's Approach	90
<i>The Actor's Routine</i>	91
Audition	91
Rehearsal	92
Performance	93
<i>The Actor in Life</i>	95

Photo Essay: Actor
Patrick Stewart 86

Chapter 5 The Director 97

<i>The Arrival of the Director:</i>	
<i>A Historical Overview</i>	98
Teacher-Directors	98
Realistic Directors	98
Stylizing Directors	99
The Contemporary Director	100

Photo Essay: Director
Susan Stroman 101

Photo Essay: Making Theatre:
A Play Is Put Together 112

Photo Essay: Scene Designer
Tony Walton 152
Photo Essay: Lighting Designer
Chris Perry 162
Photo Essay: Costume Designer
Patricia Zipprodt 170
Photo Essay: Broadway
Stage Manager
Michael McGoff 182

Directorial Functions 105
Vision and Leadership 105
Play Selection 106
Conceptualizing 107
Designer Selection 111
Director-Designer Collaboration 111
Casting 122
Implementation 123
Staging 123
Actor-Coaching 126
Pacing 127
Coordinating 129
Presenting 129
The Training of a Director 130

Chapter 6 Designers and Technicians 133

The Design Process 134
What Design Does 136
Scenery 138
Scenic Materials 144
The Scene Designer at Work 149
Lighting 155
Modern Lighting Design 156
The Lighting Designer at Work 157
Costumes 161
The Functions of Costume 161
The Costume Designer at Work 168
Makeup 174
Sound Design 177
Special Effects 178
Digital Technologies in Theatre Design 180
The Technical Production Team 181

Chapter 7 Theatre Traditions: East and West 187

The Origins of Theatre 188
Ritual 188
Storytelling 189
Shamanism, Trance, and Magic 190
The Beginnings of Traditional Drama 192
Traditional Drama in Sub-Saharan Africa 192
Egyptian Drama 193

Theatre in the West 193

- Greek Drama 193
- Roman Drama 197
- Medieval Drama 198
- Renaissance Drama 199
- The Royal Theatre 204
- The Romantic Theatre 206

Theatre in the East 206

- Indian Sanskrit Drama 207
- Indian Kathakali 208
- Chinese Xiqu 208
- Japanese Nō 211
- Japanese Kabuki 212

*The Theatrical Tradition Today:
East and West* 215

Chapter 8 The Modern Theatre 217

Realism 218

- A Laboratory 218
- Pioneers of Realism 220
- Naturalism 222

Antirealism 223

- The Symbolist Rebellion 223
- The Era of Isms 225
- Stylized Theatre 227
 - The French Avant-Garde: *Ubu Roi* 227
 - Expressionism: *The Hairy Ape* 229
 - Metatheatre: *Six Characters in Search of an Author* 231
 - Theatre of Cruelty: *Jet of Blood* 232
 - Philosophical Melodrama: *No Exit* 233
 - Theatre of the Absurd: *Waiting for Godot* 234
 - Theatre of Alienation: *The Good Person of Szechuan* 236
 - Comedy of Contemporary Manners:
Bedroom Farce 238
 - Political Satire: *Serious Money* 240

Chapter 9 The Musical Theatre 243

The Role of Music in Theatre History 243

The Development of the Broadway Musical:

America's Contribution 244

- Musical Comedy: Gershwin, Kern, *Darktown*
Follies, and Rodgers and Hart 246
- A Golden Age 247

<i>The Contemporary Musical</i>	249
The Emergence of Choreographer-Directors	249
Stephen Sondheim	251
Black Musicals	254
Foreign Invasions: British, French, Swedish, and Disney	254
Musicals of the Twenty-first Century	256

Chapter 10 Theatre Today 261

<i>What's Happening?</i>	261
A Theatre of Postmodern Experiment	264
A Nonlinear Theatre	266
An Open Theatre	268
A Diverse Theatre	269
A Global Theatre—and Macaronic Drama	272
A Theatre of Difference	274
Nontraditional Casting	275
Spectacular Theatre	276
Verbatim Theatre	277
Dangerous Theatre	280
A Theatre of Community	282
Movement Art and Dance-Theatre	283
Solo Performance	288
<i>Three Leaders in Theatre Today</i>	288
Peter Brook	288
Robert Wilson	291
Julie Taymor	292
<i>Theatre Today: Where Can You Find It?</i>	294
New York City	294
Broadway	294
Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway	295
Regional American Theatre: Not for Profit	296
Boston	296
Chicago	296
Los Angeles	297
Minneapolis	297
Seattle	297
Washington, D.C.	298
Shakespeare Festivals	298
Summer and Dinner Theatres	299
Amateur Theatre:	
Academic and Community	299
International Theatre	300
<i>Conclusions about Theatre Today?</i>	304

Chapter 11 The Critic 307

Critical Perspectives 308

Social Significance 309

Human Significance 310

Artistic Quality 310

Relationship to the Theatre Itself 311

Entertainment Value 312

Critical Focus 313

Professional Criticism 313

Student Criticism 316

We Are the Critics 316

Glossary G-1

Selected Bibliography B-1

Credits C-1

Index I-1