

RESEARCH GUIDE

Theater

George Mason University Libraries

This research guide focuses primarily on locating biographical information on playwrights, directors, actors, and designers, etc.; finding criticism on and reviews of specific plays and productions; researching the technical aspects of theatre such as costume and lighting design; and finding plays and monologues for auditions and scene work.

Works on theater in general will be classified in the **PN** class of call numbers. However, the actual texts of plays can be found in the call numbers assigned to the literature of different countries. For example, American plays can be found in the **PS** call number range, British plays in the **PR** class, etc, Romance language plays in the **PQ** range, etc. Most of the resources in this guide will be found in the Fenwick Reference Room (designated **Ref.**), however some electronic resources have been included. Reference also found in the Johnson Center Library are designated with an "**".

To find information in allied fields such as Music, Dance, Art, and History, see those specific Research Guides.

I. Subject Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

These are good resources to consult when you are beginning your research. They will provide information about famous plays, the history of theatre in a particular country or time period, theater movements, important artists, as well as definitions of terms. Some of the works will also provide bibliographies of additional research resources.

American Theatre: A Chronicle of Comedy and Drama

1860-1914 * **PN2256 .B6 1994**

1914-1930 * **PN2266.3 .B67 1995**

1930-1969 **FENWICK REF. AND STACKS PN2266. B64 1996**

1969-2001 **REF. PN2277. N5 N57 2001**

History of non-musical theatre on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and Off-Off Broadway. For each play, the authors supply a synopsis, opening date, production information, and quote the responses of drama critics.

The Cambridge Guide to Theatre
REF. PN2035. C27 1995

A comprehensive handbook of the history and present practice of theatre in all parts of the world covering personalities, techniques, issues, and various topics.

Dictionary of the Theatre
REF. PN2035 .P2913 1998

Theatre terms covering dramaturgy, text and discourse, genres and forms, staging, structural principles and aesthetic questions, reception of the performance, and semiology.

The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre
JOHNSON CENTER LIBRARY MUSIC REF. ML102 .M88 G3 1994 V1-2

A comprehensive source of international musical theatre data with lists of names, dates, palaces, figures, facts, and explanations.

International Dictionary of Theatre
REF. PN2035 .I49 1992 V.1

Excellent source of information on plays. Extensive bibliography included.

McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama
REF. PN1625 .M3 1984

Covers playwrights and their works, national, regional, and ethnic drama, influential theaters and companies, dramatic genres, important directors, and non-Western dramatic tradition.

Oxford Companion to American Theatre
REF. PN2220 .B6 1992

Comprehensive view of the history of American theatre.

Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance
REF. PN2035. O94 2003 V. 1-2

Focuses on contemporary theatre and performance studies. Contains signed entries on concepts and theories, styles and movements, historical themes, cities, regions, and linguistic traditions, organizations and institutions, buildings, natural elements, media issues, and biographies.

World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre
REF. PN1861 .W67 1994 V. 1-5

Volumes cover contemporary theatre in the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Arabic World, and Asia/Pacific. Includes information on significant playwrights as well as important plays and theatre companies.

II. Biographical Information

These resources will cover important playwrights, directors, actors, designers, and other persons associated with theatre. This is a select list of resources. Other reference works will be found in the same call number area as the ones listed. Also consult the Subject Encyclopedias and Dictionaries.

American Women Playwrights 1900-1950
REF. PS338. W6 S48 1995

Biographical/critical essays on 35 playwrights with a list of resources in the back of the book.

American Women Playwrights 1964-1989: A Research Guide and Annotated Bibliography
REF. PS338. W6 G38 1993

Annotated entries on books and articles that discuss contemporary American women playwrights and feminist theatre. For individual playwrights the production and publication histories are given for selected plays; also citations for profiles and interviews, and reviews of plays.

Contemporary African American Female Playwrights
REF. PS338. N4 W55 1998

Annotated entries on selected resources including anthologies with plays written by African American female playwrights; general criticism and reference books with substantive reference to African American female playwrights and their plays; and primary and secondary resources for individual playwrights who have published at least one play since 1959.

Contemporary Dramatists
REF. PR737.C57 1988

Dramatists writing in English throughout the world.

**Drama Criticism*

JOHNSON CENTER LIBRARY REF. PN1601. D59 v.1-11

Critical opinions, biographical sketch, bibliography, and chronological list of works for some of the most important international dramatists past and present.

**International Dictionary of Theatre*

REF. PN2035 .I49 1992 v.2-3

Critical analysis of playwrights, actors, directors, and designers with major works listed and publications by and about the individual included.

III. Play Indexes

Use these resources to find plays in collections, anthologies, periodicals, etc.

Play Index

PN1655. P6 v.1-9

Plays published individually and in collections. There are author, title, subject, and cast indexes (i.e. the number of women and men).

Index to Plays in Periodicals 1977-1987

PN1721. K466 1990

Older volumes shelved at **Ref. PN1721. K46 (1979)**.

Ottemiller's Index to Plays in Collections

PN1655. 08 1988

An author and title index to plays published in collections between 1900-1985.

Inter-Play

www.lib.pdx.edu/systems/interplay/

Inter-Play is online index to plays in collections, anthologies, and periodicals. Most of the plays are not indexed in *Ottemiller's* or *Play Index*.

IV. Choosing Plays/Monologues

Listed below are guides to monologues and scenes. However, books of monologues both by one author and in collections may be found in the catalog by performing a subject search for "monologues".

Actors' Guide to Scenes (Index)
Ref. PN1655. G78

Actors' Guide to Monologues (Index)
Ref. PN4321. 86 1974

Contemporary Stage Roles for Women: A Descriptive Catalogue
Ref. PN2054. H49 1985

V. Indexes

To find citations to theatre books, journal articles, play and performance reviews, dissertations, etc. Some of the databases contain full-text articles and reviews.

International Bibliography of Theatre
REF. PN1851. I53

Annotated bibliography of theatre books, dissertations, journal articles, and other documents published in the previous year. Includes subject, author, and geographical-chronological indexes. Set stops at 1997.

International Index to the Performing Arts
library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

Covers a broad spectrum of the arts and entertainment industry-including dance. Content is drawn from more than 200 scholarly and popular performing arts periodicals, and also indexes a variety of documents such as biographical profiles, conference papers, obituaries, interviews, discographies, reviews and events. Selected full-text coverage.

Arts and Humanities Citation Index
REF. INDEXES A13. A63
library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

A citation index of over 900 arts and humanities journal, also good for tracking scholarly comment on "classic" articles or books. Coverage includes broad range of the humanities. AHCI in print begins in 1976; the electronic version covers 1987 to the present.

AH Search

library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

Indexes more than 1,300 of the world's leading arts and humanities journals. Includes citations from *TDR*, *Essays in Theatre*, *Theater Haute*, and *Theatre Survey*.

Expanded Academic ASAP

library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

Use this database to find full-text journal articles on Astronomy, Religion, Law, History, Psychology, Humanities, Current Events, Sociology, and the General Sciences.

Humanities Abstracts

library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

Indexes (since 1984) and abstracts (since 1994) 400 periodicals in archaeology, art, classics, film, folklore, journalism, linguistics, music, the performing arts, philosophy, religion, world history and world literature.

Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe

library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

Provides access to a wide range of news (includes New York Times, Washington Post, LA Times). Full-text reviews of plays can be found by accessing the "Arts and Sports" section of the "General News" section.

MLA Bibliography

library.gmu.edu/resources/databases.html

Indexes scholarly works (journal articles, monographs, book chapters, dissertation abstracts, and series) on literature, languages, linguistics and folklore. Does not include articles on technical theatre or reviews.

VI. Reviews and Criticism

Citations to reviews and criticism also appear in biographical resources and bibliographies and research guides. Also remember to consult periodical indexes such as *Expanded Academic ASAP* for current reviews and criticism. The print resources listed below primarily deal with classic plays and productions prior to the mid 1980's.

American Drama Criticism

REF. PS332. E44x, E44x Suppl.1, A647 1989

Covers criticism up until the mid 1980's. Citations for books, periodicals, and dissertations. Includes performance reviews as well as critical reviews.

Critical Survey of Drama
REF. PR623 .C75 1994 v.1-7

Historical and contemporary English language playwrights are covered. Signed articles include a biography, critical analysis of career and important works, and a bibliography of resources. Essays on various special topics such as Elizabethan drama and experimental drama are contained in the last volume.

Critical Survey of Drama: Foreign Language Series
REF. PN1625. C74 1986 v.1-6

Historical and contemporary Foreign language playwrights are covered. Signed articles include a biography, critical analysis of career and important works, and a bibliography of resources. Essays on various special topics such as African drama and Japanese drama are contained in the last volume.

Drama Criticism
REF. PS332. C6 D7

Separate volumes for American and British plays and Classical and Continental drama. Primary citations for criticism published between 1940 and the mid 1960's. Performance reviews are not included.

Dramatic Criticism Index
REF. PN1861. B7 D7

Critical commentaries on playwrights and their plays from books, periodicals, and dissertations for primarily 20th century playwrights although a few 19th century writers are included. Some performance reviews are cited for foreign playwrights for whom little critical material is available in English or for plays too recent to have generated critical material.

European Drama Criticism 1900-1975
REF. PN1707. P3 E8

Criticism and reviews from books and periodicals. Emphasis is more on critical reviews rather than performance reviews.

*Guide to Critical Reviews: American Drama 1909-1982; The Musical 1909-1989;
Foreign Drama 1909-1977*
REF. PN1707. S3

Performance reviews from American and Canadian periodicals including the *New York Times* and the *New York Theatre Critics Reviews* which reprinted reviews from eight New York City papers for plays produced since 1940.

New York Times Theater Reviews
REF. PN2266 .N48

Reprints of theater reviews from 1870 until the mid 1990's. Primarily covers New York City productions, although productions in Boston, New Haven, and elsewhere in the northeast may be reviewed.

Shakespearean Criticism
PR2965 .S43 v.1-53

Excerpts from published criticism, both historical and contemporary, of Shakespeare's plays and poetry.

Aislesay.com
<http://www.aislesay.com>

Regional theatre reviews including Washington DC, LA, NYC, and Boston.

Backstage
<http://www.backstage.com/backstage/showguide/index.jsp>

Reviews to current shows on Broadway, Off-Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, and the West Coast.

Curtain Up
<http://www.curtainup.com/goingall.html>

Current reviews On and Off-Broadway; also has back file of reviews from regional theatre including DC.

Off-Off Broadway Reviews
<http://www.oobr.com/top/currentRevs.shtml>

Reviews of shows currently on Off-Off Broadway; also has an archive.

VII. Bibliographies and Research Guides

Use these resources to find bibliographies of resources and research guides for theatre. [Note: Bibliographies are lists of resources relating to a particular subject, period, or author; often annotated with descriptive or critical notes on the resources. You can identify additional bibliographies by performing a guided keyword search in the catalog and searching for 1) theatre (theater) or drama as a subject term and 2) bibliography as a subject term. You can also search for bibliographies of a particular aspect of theatre, such as costume or lighting.]

American Theater and Drama Research: An Annotated Guide to Information Sources, 1945-1990

REF. PN2266.3. S53 1991

Annotated entries providing factual descriptions and critical and comparative commentary. General and alternate theatre sources given including periodicals, databases, and organizations.

Bibliography of Theatre Technology: Acoustics and Sound, Lighting, Properties, and Scenery

REF. PN2091. S8 H68X

Bibliography of publications and print materials; entries not annotated.

The Performing Arts: A Guide to the Reference Literature

REF. PN1584. S56 1994

Information on guides, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, directors, etc.; covers dance, theater, film, costuming, music, visual arts, literature and rhetoric.

Theatrical Costume: A Guide to Information Sources

REF. PN2067. K47X

Bibliographies, encyclopedias, glossaries, and other reference resources on historical costume, costumes of specific countries, and accoutrements, as well as design-related topics such as the textile industry, fashion designers, etc.