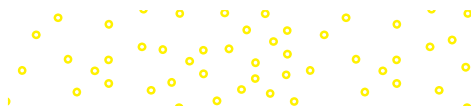# Theatre: The Lively Art

TENTH EDITION

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To Elaine Goldfarb and to the memory of Catherine Wilson

About the Authors

Edwin Wilson attended Vanderbilt University, the University of Edinburgh, and Yale University, where he received an MFA and the first Doctor of Fine Arts degree awarded by Yale. He has taught theatre at Vanderbilt, Yale, and, for over 30 years, at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University. Wilson has produced plays on and off Broadway and served one season as the resident director of the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia. He was the Assistant to the Producer on the Broadway play *Big Fish, Little Fish* directed by John Gielgud, starring Jason Robards, and of the film *Lord of the Flies* directed by Peter Brook. On Broadway, he co-produced *Agatha Sue, I Love You* directed by George Abbott. He also produced a feature film, *The Nashville Sound.* He was the moderator of *Spotlight,* a television interview series on CUNY-TV and PBS, 1989-93, ninety-one half-hour interviews with outstanding actors, actresses, playwrights, directors and producers, broadcast on 200 PBS stations in the United States.

For twenty-two years he was the theatre critic of the *Wall Street Journal.* A long-time member of the New York Drama Critics Circle, he was president of the Circle for several years. He is on the board of the John Golden Fund and served a term as President of the Theatre Development Fund (**TDF**), whose Board he was on for twenty-three years. He has served a number of times on the Tony Nominating Committee and the Pulitzer Prize Drama Jury. He is the also the author or co-author of two other widely used college theatre textbooks in the U.S. The 13th edition of his pioneer book, *The Theater Experience*, was published by McGraw-Hill. The 7th edition of the theatre history textbook, *Living Theatre* (co-authored with Alvin Goldfarb), published previously by McGraw Hill, has been published by W. W. Norton. He is also the editor of *Shaw on Shakespeare,* recently re-issued by Applause Books and a murder mystery, *The Patron Murders,* published by Prospecta Press.

Alvin Goldfarb is President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Western Illinois University. Dr. Goldfarb has also served as Provost, Dean of Fine Arts, and Chair of the Department of Theatre at Illinois State University. He holds a Ph.D. in theatre history from the City University of New York and a master's degree from Hunter College.

He is also the co-author of *Living Theatre* as well as co-editor of *The Anthology of Living Theatre* with Edwin Wilson. Dr. Goldfarb is also the co-editor, with Rebecca Rovit, of *Theatrical Performance during the Holocaust: Texts, Documents, Memoirs,* which was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. He has published numerous articles and reviews in scholarly journals and anthologies.
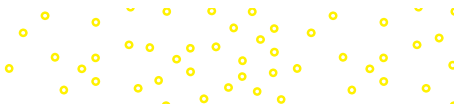
Dr. Goldfarb has served as a member of the Illinois Arts Council and president of the Illinois Alliance for Arts Education. He has received service awards from the latter organization as well as from the American College Theatre Festival. Dr. Goldfarb also received an Alumni Achievement Award from the CUNY Graduate Center's Alumni Association, and another Alumni Award from Hunter College, CUNY.

Dr. Goldfarb currently serves as a member and treasurer of Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Theatre Awards Committee, which recognizes excellence in the Chicago theatre, as well as a board member of the Arts Alliance of Illinois.

About the Authors

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Connect: Enhancing the Theatre Experience

Several qualities set *Theatre: The Lively Art* apart from other introductory texts. A particularly important element is our emphasis on the audience. All students reading the book are potential theatre-goers, not just during their college years but throughout their lives. We have therefore attempted to make *Theatre: The Lively Art* an ideal one-volume text to prepare students as future audience members. It will give them a grasp of how theatre 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, *Theatre: The Lively Art* will also prepare students who wish to continue studies in theatre, as majors, minors, or students from other disciplines who take advanced courses.

MASTERING CONCEPTS

Theatre is not only an art form; it is one of the performing arts. As a result, its quality is elusive because it exists only at the moment when a performance occurs. 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 theatre in a classroom setting. At the same time, the theatre appreciation course can immeasurably enhance an audience's comprehension of theatre. The experience of seeing theatre can be many times more meaningful if audience members understand parts of the theatre, the creative artists and technicians who make it happen, the tradition and historical background from which theatre springs, and the genre.

When students successfully master concepts with McGraw-Hill's Connect, you spend more class time focusing on theatre as a performing art, fostering a greater appreciation for the course, and inspiring students to become life-long audience members. Connect helps students better understand and retain these basic concepts, and allow you to reach your student audience and bring the theatre experience to them. Connect is a highly reliable, easy-to-use homework and learning management solution that embeds learning science and award-winning adaptive tools to improve student results.

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- Easy-to-read reports
- Individual and class performance data
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Theatre: The Lively Art now offers two reading experiences for students and instructors: SmartBook® and eBook. Fueled by LearnSmart, SmartBook is the first and only adaptive reading experience currently available. SmartBook creates a personalized reading experience by highlighting the most impactful concepts a student needs to learn at that moment in time. The reading experience continuously adapts by 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. eBook provides a simple, elegant reading experience, available for offline reading.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TENTH EDITION

Chapters are again ordered logically to make studying as intuitive as possible. As in previous editions, *Theatre: The Lively Art* can be studied in any order the instructor prefers. We listened to instructors who asked us to improve the overall organization by streamlining some material for easier classroom use.

As in previous editions, we provide discussions of the unique nature of theatre as an art form and highlight the multicultural nature of theatre that today's students will experience. In addition, throughout this edition, we focus on the global

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nature of theatre to give students the groundwork for understanding the wide diversity of theatre today.

In Part 1, Theatre in Today's World, we review theatre in everyday life and the theatre audience. The chapters in this part provide a foundation for studying the elements of theatre in Parts 2 and 3.

In Part 2, Creating Theatre: The Playwright, we introduce students to the person or group creating a script, the dramatic structure, and dramatic characters. We then continue with dramatic genres and investigate point of view in a text as expressed in tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, and other genres.

In Part 3, Creating Theatre: The Production, we discuss the people and elements that make theatre possible: the actors, the director, the producer, and the designers who together bring the theatre to stunning life. Important too are the theatre spaces where a production occurs. Design and production techniques (in particular lighting, costume, and makeup) have been updated to include the latest advances in technology.

In Part 4, Global Theatres: Past and Present, we offer a survey of theatre history, beginning with Greek theatre and continuing to the present. Chapters 15 and 16 are devoted to theatre of the past one hundred years or so. The forces that came into being just a little more than a century ago—in realism and departures from realism, in acting techniques, in the emergence of the director, and in scene and lighting design—define theatre as it exists today. In these final chapters we cover the contemporary theatre scene around the world and the diverse theatres in the United States, including the LGBT, feminist, African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latino theatres.

Connect: Enhancing the Theatre Experience

FEATURES

Based on feedback from instructors and students, the new Tenth Edition of *Theatre: The Lively Art* offers both time-tested and newly revised text features that help students deepen their understanding and appreciation of the theatrical experience.

URLs to Online Plays   Many of the plays referenced in the text that also appear online are highlighted in blue typeface when first mentioned in a chapter. Should you want to read one of these plays, you can refer to the list at the end of the book and find the URL. Titles are listed alphabetically.

Playing Your Part   A revised and expanded set of critical thinking questions and experiential exercises has been added to each chapter as part of an extended peda-gogical program. The feature is divided into two categories: *Playing Your Part: Experiencing Theatre* and *Playing Your Part: Thinking About Theatre*. These
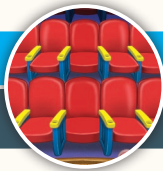
PLAYING YOUR PART:
EXPERIENCING THEATRE

1. Have you ever had to pick someone for a team or for a job? How did you go about making your choice? Is that similar to casting in the theatre? Why? Why not?

2. Have one of your classmates read a short speech from a play. Ask her or him to change the pace or rhythm of delivery. What terms or phrases did you use to make this request? Were your directions understood? How did the change in pace or rhythm affect the delivery of the speech and its impact on those listening?

3. Observe how one of your instructors interacts with the class through his or her movement. How does this movement affect the way in which the class material is delivered? Does your observation of this provide you any insight into the importance of stage blocking?

4. Ask if you can attend a technical rehearsal or dress rehearsal at your university theatre. What insights did you gain from attending those rehearsals?

PLAYING YOUR PART:
THINKING ABOUT THEATRE

1. Imagine that while you are watching a production, one performer is overacting badly, to the point that he or she is quite unbelievable. Another performer is listless and has no energy. In each case, to what extent do you think this is the director's fault, and to what extent the performer's failure?

2. If you get bored or impatient when watching a performance, what do you think the director could have done in preparing the production to prevent this from happening?

3. Is it fair to say, as some critics do, when everything "clicks" in a production, that is, when the acting, the scenery and lighting, and the pace of the action all seem to be beautifully coordinated, that the director's hand is "invisible"?

4. If you have read a play this semester (or sometime in the past), what do you think the spine of that play is? What would your directorial concept be if you were directing a production of that play?

questions and exercises not only help students to think critically about what they have read in the chapter, but also help them to connect what they've read to their own experiences. Playing Your Part exercises can be used as homework assignments or to inspire classroom discussion. These sets of questions invite students to engage in experiences relating to the theatre. They may ask students to attend a performance and write about their reactions to it, or to take on the role of playwright by imagining a play about their own lives. These creative activities help students feel the vitality and immediacy of the theatrical experience.

In Focus These boxes help students understand and compare different aspects of theatre, whether in the United States or around the world. Some highlight specific examples of global influence on theatre. Artists discussed include Peter Brook, Josef Svoboda, Julie Taymor, Bertolt Brecht, and Thornton Wilder. Boxes on legendary theatre artists Augusto Boal, Ariane Mnouchkine, and Tadashi Suzuki are also included.

Other In Focus boxes discuss the audience, the playwright, the actor, and the director, each focusing on a unique issue in the contemporary theatre to engage students in discussion and debate.

And some boxes explore the close relationship between theatre 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.

We have also added new In Focus boxes in every chapter to cover technological developments in theatre (such as discussing technology and the actor) and key issues affecting the contemporary theatre (such as audience etiquette as well as color blind and nontraditional casting).

In addition all of the theatre history chapters now also have new In Focus boxes that help students see the continuing impact of the past on the contemporary theatre. Two examples are the ongoing tradition of theatre festivals and their relationship to the Greek theatre festivals and contemporary religious drama and its relationship to the Middle Ages.

Timelines Timelines are included for each period and country addressed. These timelines have been markedly improved from those in previous editions, with entries much easier to read than before. Each

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IN FOCUS: QUESTIONING THE PLAYWRIGHT'S ROLE

Some contemporary commentators have questioned what they refer to as the "centrality" of the playwright and the play. These critics point out that there have been companies whose performers or directors, sometimes with the assistance of audiences, improvise presentations: They create a presentation while actually performing it. There have also been times when texts were developed by performers or by a director who assembled material from various sources. Some theorists argue, therefore, that an "authorless" theatre exists: theatre in which performers create their own works, sometimes using a traditional text only as a jumping-off point.

Theorists who question the centrality of the text also argue that the playwright's importance has been overstated—that a play is simply a suggestion or starting point and that the artists who create a stage presentation are its true "authors." In addition, they hold that each audience member may create his or her own "reading" of a production; in this sense, the spectator is the "author," and any discussion of a play's theme or meaning is inappropriate. It should be pointed out that this argument seems largely a question of semantics.

If a theatre piece is created by a group of performers or by a director, then these people are in effect operating as playwrights. The playwright's function has not been eliminated; it is simply being carried out by someone else.

As for the matter of the "centrality" of the playwright, this argument, too, does not eliminate the necessity of what we are calling the blueprint that every theatre event requires. Whether the blueprint is a text, a script, an idea, a scenario, an improvisation, or anything similar, it is an indispensable element in the process of creating a theatre production. The work of the playwright or other "authors" need not be "central" or predominant to be essential and irreplaceable. Also, the fact remains that throughout the history of both Western and Eastern theatre, the significant role of the playwright has been widely accepted. Whether it is a dramatist like Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Ibsen in the West, or Chikamatsu—an eighteenth-century Japanese dramatist—in the East, both their own contemporaries and later generations have seen their dramatic texts as foundations on which productions are based.

GREECE		
THEATRE	YEAR C.E.	CULTURE AND POLITICS
		Age of Homer (800 B.C.E.)
Arion, harpist and poet, develops the dithyramb (c. 600 B.C.E.)	600	
	575	Thales of Miletus begins natural philosophy (physics) (c. 585 B.C.E.)
		Peisistratus, tyrant of Athens (560 B.C.E.)
Thespis, supposedly first "actor" in dithyramb (mid–sixth century)	550	
Play contests begin in Athens (534 B.C.E.)		
	525	Pythagoras flourishes; Doric temples of southern Italy and Sicily (c. 525 B.C.E.)
		Athenian democracy (510 B.C.E.)
	500	Pindar begins to write odes (500 B.C.E.)
Comedy introduced by Dionysia c. 87 (c. 487 B.C.E.)		Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.E.) — Persian Wars (499–478 B.C.E.)
Aeschylus introduces second actor (c. 471 B.C.E.)	475	Socrates born (470 B.C.E.)
		Sophocles introduces third actor c. 68 (c. 468 B.C.E.) — Hippocrates born (460 B.C.E.) — Pericles begins rise to power: age of Pericles (462–429 B.C.E.)
Aeschylus's Oresteia; introduction of skene (458 B.C.E.)		Prizes awarded for tragic acting 449 (449 B.C.E.)
Dramatic activities incorporated into Lenaia (c. 442 B.C.E.)	450	Beginning of Parthenon; Herodotus flourishes (447 B.C.E.) — Phidias dies (500–435 B.C.E.)
Sophocles's King Oedipus (c. 430 B.C.E.)	425	Peloponnesian Wars (431–404 B.C.E.)
Euripides's Trojan Women (415 B.C.E.)		Athenian fleet destroyed (404 B.C.E.) — Spartan hegemony begins (404 B.C.E.)
Aristophanes's Lysistrata (411 B.C.E.)	400	Trial and execution of Socrates (399 B.C.E.) — Aristotle born (384–322 B.C.E.)
	375	Plato's Republic (c. 375 B.C.E.) — Spartan hegemony ends (404–371 B.C.E.)
Professional actors replace amateurs by Dionysia (c. 350 B.C.E.)	350	Theban hegemony ends (371–362 B.C.E.) — Philip II, king of Macedonia (352 B.C.E.)
Aristotle's Poetics (c. 335–323 B.C.E.)		Alexander succeeds Philip II; in 335 B.C.E., occupies Greece
From this period to c. 100 B.C.E., Greek theatres built throughout Mediterranean (320 B.C.E.)	325	Theater of Dionysus completed (c. 325 B.C.E.) — Hellenistic culture spreads throughout eastern Mediterranean (c. 320 B.C.E.)
		Menander's Dyskolos (316 B.C.E.)
	300	
Artists of Dionysus recognized (277 B.C.E.)	275	

timeline shows landmark events and accomplishments in the social and political arenas on one side and significant theatre events on the other.

Experiencing Theatre History   We present in these boxes narratives of actual events in theatre history, taking the readers back in time so they have a sense of being in the audience at a performance of, say, *Antigone* in Athens in 441 B.C.E., or at the premier of *Hamlet* at the Globe Theatre in London around 1600.

Writing Style   A sense of immediacy and personalization has been a goal in our writing style. We have attempted to write *Theatre: The Lively Art* in the most readable language possible. The book contains a wealth of information presented in a manner that makes it vivid and alive.

Production Photos   As always, the vast majority of the photos in the book are not only in full color but are generously sized to help students see and appreciate the dynamic and dramatic world of the theatre. Also, a number of global theatre productions have been included in this edition. The illustrations we've chosen—both photographs and line drawings—explain and enhance the material in the text.

Experiencing Theatre History
ANTIGONE

Athens, 441 B.C.E. The year is 441 B.C.E. It is a morning in late March in Athens, Greece, and the citizens of Athens are up early, making their way to the Theatre of Dionysus, an open-air theatre on the south side of the Acropolis, the highest hill in Athens. On the Acropolis are several temples, including the Parthenon, a magnificent new temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, which is under construction at this very time.

The Theatre of Dionysus has semicircular seating built into the slope of the hill on the side of the Acropolis. At the foot of the seating area is a flat, circular space—orchestra—where the actors will perform. Behind the orchestra a temporary stage house has been built,

Dionysia festival, an annual series of events lasting several days. During this festival, all business in Athens—both commercial and governmental—comes to a halt. On the day before the plays, there was a parade through the city, which ended near the theatre at a temple dedicated to the god Dionysus, for whom the festival is named. There, a religious observance was held at the altar.

Today is one of three days of the festival devoted mainly to tragedies. On these days, one playwright will present three tragedies and a satyr play. The three tragedies are sometimes linked to form one long play, called a *trilogy;* but sometimes they are three separate pieces—as they are today.

of a woman, appear in the playing area: They represent Antigone and her sister, Ismene. Antigone tells Ismene that she means to defy their uncle, the king, and give their brother Polynices an honorable burial. Ismene, unlike Antigone, is timid and frightened; she argues that women are too weak to stand up to a king. Besides, Ismene points out, Antigone will be put to death if she is caught. Antigone argues, however, that she will not be subservient to a man, even the king.

When the two female characters leave the stage, a chorus of fifteen men enters. These men represent the elders of the city, and throughout the play—in passages that are sung and danced—they will fulfill several

Photo Essays   Students are placed in the audiences of important productions in these pictorial essays to bring to life key elements in the text. These essays provide context for theatre-viewing experiences, while highlighting outstanding performances and designs.

photo essay
Modern Domestic Drama

Serious drama in America came of age in the mid-twentieth century, with plays by Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Lillian Hellman, among others. Though all four experimented with nonrealistic dramatic devices, much of their strongest work was realistic domestic drama. Included here are examples in photographs from recent productions.

Long Day's Journeys Into Night by Eugene O'Neill with Paul Nicholls as the younger son, Edmund, Jessica Lange as Mary Tyrone, and Paul Rudd as James Tyrone, Jr. (©Hans Hollerud/Corbis Entertainment/Getty Images)

Lee Aaron Rosen as Chris Keller, Michael Tisdale as George Deever, and Diane Davis as Ann Deever in *All My Sons*, by Arthur Miller, directed by David Esbjornson at the Huntington Theatre Company. (©T. Charles Erickson)

Gillian Anderson as Blanche Dubois and Vanessa Kirby as her sister Stella in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* in a a production at the Young Vic in London, directed by Benedict Andrews. (©Robbie Jack/Corbis Entertainment/Getty Images)

Seth Numrich, left, and Danny Burstein in a recent Broadway revival of *Golden Boy* by Clifford Odets, directed by Bartlett Sher. (©Sara Krulwich/The New York Times/Redux)

Connect: Enhancing the Theatre Experience

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER CHANGES

In addition to the major changes outlined earlier, we have included significant new material throughout the text, including the following:

Chapter 1: Theatre Is Everywhere
- Updated examples of the relationship between theatre and popular entertainments. A new discussion of the theatrical qualities of cosplay.

Chapter 2: The Audience
- New and expanded discussion on "where and how we see theatre." New and expanded discussion of participatory and immersive theatre as well as the history of theatre etiquette.

Chapter 3: Creating the Dramatic Script
- Updated the In Focus box on Writing for Theatre, Film, and Television.

Chapter 4: Theatrical Genres
- New In Focus box on Additional Forms and the Debate over Categorization.

Chapter 5: Acting for the Stage
- More extensive discussion of contemporary acting techniques and actor training.
- New In Focus box on Technology and the Actor.

Chapter 6: The Director and the Producer
- Expanded discussion of the responsibilities of the stage manager and the casting director.
- New In Focus box on Color Blind and Nontraditional Casting.

Chapter 7: Theatre Spaces
- Description of the transformation of the Broadway Imperial Theatre for the musical *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812* as an example of how space is a key element of a production.
- The discussion of stage direction has been moved to this chapter from "Scenery" to help students better understand the proscenium theatre.

Chapter 8: Scenery
- Enhanced discussion of video and projection design.
- New In Focus box on projection design.
- Enhanced discussion of the use of technology to assist the scene designer.

Chapter 9: Stage Costumes
- New In Focus box on Technology and Costume Design.

Chapter 10: Lighting and Sound
- New In Focus box on Rock Concert and Theatre Lighting.
- New discussion of Assistive Listening Devices for hearing impaired audience members under the Sound Design discussion.

Chapters 11 through 16: Today's Diverse Global Theatre
- Updated coverage in many of the history chapters, particularly citing recent discoveries (such as the excavation of the Curtain in the English Renaissance section).

- Updated examples in the final two chapters, such as references to *Fun Home* and *Hamilton* in the review of musical theatre and multicultural theatre.
- Discussion of additional multicultural theatres and artists in the final chapter.
- In Focus boxes in each chapter that help the students understand the continuing influence of theatre history on our theatre.
- Questions on how to evaluate a production of a historic play as well as how to evaluate a production of a new or contemporary play.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Phyllis W. Seawright, Ph.D., Mississippi College
Claremarie Verheyen, School of Theatre and Dance-University of Houston
Gaye Jeffers, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Stephen Thomas, Tarrant County College Northeast
Shannon Walsh, Louisiana State University
Dr. Lawrence James, Tennessee State University
Michael Detroit, University of Memphis
Rachel Dickson, University of Houston Downtown
Edward Muth, Houston Community College
Lofton L. Durham, Western Michigan University
Courtney Young, University of Houston and Lone Star College
Nicholas Basta, University of North Carolina Wilmington

For the first nine editions of *Theatre: The Lively Art*, the amazing photo expert and researcher Inge King located and helped us select every photograph. Though she did not work on this edition, it is impossible to thank her adequately for the contribution she has made through the years to the continuing success of this textbook. We are well aware that she has always played an indispensable role in making its acceptance so widespread and over such a long period of time.

Acknowledgments

Theatre: The Lively Art

PART

1

Theatre in Today's World

THE AUDIENCE SALUTES THE ARTISTS

The essence of theatre is a live audience in the presence of actors performing a dramatic script. Today, there is more live theatre available to audiences than perhaps at any time in history, with a wide variety of theatre sites and an impressive variety of the types of theatre offered. Central to the theatre experience is the interaction between audience members and live performers. Here we see the audience giving a standing ovation as cast members take their curtain call. (©Eddie Linssen/Alamy Stock Photo)

THEATRE IS EVERYWHERE

As you begin your introductory theatre course, some of you may be asking: Why should I study theatre? For those of you who are theatre majors, you could be asking: Why am I studying theatre? I just want to learn how to be an actor, director, playwright, designer, or to work in production. The answer is knowledge of the basics of theatre is essential to anyone who wishes to pursue a theatre career. For those of you who are not majoring in the subject, this is perhaps an elective for your general education. For you, it should be pointed out that having a general understanding of theatre and its history is important to anyone who has never before gone to live theatre as well as someone who already enjoys attending the theatre and wishes to enhance that experience, an experience that will be with you the rest of your life.

In our textbook we will explain the elements that make up live theatre—acting, directing, design, playwriting, as well as briefly survey its history—but before we turn to specifics we should be aware of two significant facts. One is the longevity and endurance of theatre, and the other is its widespread popularity, the fact that despite the pervasive competition of electronic, digital, and other forms of dramatic entertainment, there is today in the United States more widespread engagement in live theatre than perhaps at any time in its history. To begin with let us explain what we mean by the term "live theatre," and then turn to how various competing media and popular entertainments have borrowed from it and challenged it in the last 100 years.

THEATRE TODAY

Prior to the modern period, for more than 2,000 years in the West and 1,500 years in Asia, the only way audiences could see theatre of any kind was to attend a live performance. Spectators left their homes and went to a space where a theatrical

◀ **THE PERVASIVENESS OF THEATRE**

Symbolic of the far reach of theatre today is the performance of this production of Fous de Bassin*, created by the French company Ilotopie, on the water canals around the Puerto Madero neighborhood as part of the opening of the IX Buenos Aires' International Festival in Argentina in 2013.* (©Natacha Pisarenko/AP Images)

event was taking place where they joined others to watch a production. If people wanted to see a tragedy, with kings and queens, heroes and villains, or a comedy making fun of human foibles, they would have to become audience members to watch a live performance.

Then, after all those centuries, at the beginning of the twentieth century, everything began to change. In rapid succession a series of technological innovations offered alternative ways to hear and observe drama. First, there was radio, and then silent film, and after that, movies with sound. Black-and-white film soon gave way to movies in color and not much later, film was joined by television, first in black and white and after that in color. Film and television now also use 3D technology as well as computerization to create amazingly realistic effects. Today, the computer and a series of hand-held electronic devices, including smartphones and tablets, allow viewers to watch films, television shows, and digitized performances anywhere. With all of these inventions, arriving in quick succession, viewing drama has become much more accessible and much less expensive.

With the development first of radio and silent film, there were predictions that such inventions would sound the death knell of live theatre. Surely, it was argued, with the advent of sound film and television, especially when color came in, live theatre was doomed. Consider what had happened to both film and television: talking pictures eliminated silent film, just as later, color television obliterated black-and-white TV. It seemed likely, therefore, that drama on film and television, and even more, on computers and other digital devices, might well eradicate live theatre.

The term for live theatre that is not observed through an electronic medium is *nonmediated theatre*. Contrary to the predictions, nonmediated theatre, or *live theatre*, has not only survived but has thrived. In fact, today it is more vibrant, more widespread, and more accessible than at almost any time in history.

Nonmediated or live theatre Theatre that is not observed through an electronic medium.

The Unique Quality of Theatre

In the face of the formidable competition that has arisen from all forms of electronic media, why do we continue to go to the theatre? There are a number of reasons, but the most important single reason can be found in the title of this book. We call theatre the *lively art* not only because it is exciting, suspenseful, and amusing, but also because it is alive in a way that makes it different from every other form of dramatic presentation. It is this live quality of theatre that makes it so durable and so indispensable.

The special nature of theatre becomes more apparent when we contrast the experience of seeing a drama in a theatre with seeing a drama on film or television. In many ways the dramas presented are alike. Both offer a story told in dramatic form—an enactment of scenes by performers who speak and act as if they are the people they represent—and film and television can give us many of the same feelings and experiences that we have when watching a theatre performance. We can learn a great deal about theatre from watching a play on film or television, and the accessibility of film and television means that they have a crucial role in our overall exposure to the depiction of dramatic events and dramatic characters.

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the two experiences, and we become aware of that difference when we contrast theatre with movies. This contrast does not have to do with technical matters, such as the way films

can show outdoor shots made from helicopters, cut instantaneously from one scene to another, or create interplanetary wars or cataclysmic events by using computer-generated special effects. The most significant difference between films and theatre is the *relationship between the performer and the audience.* The experience of being in the presence of the performer is more important to theatre than anything else. No matter how closely a film follows the story of a play, no matter how involved we are with the people on the screen, we are always in the presence of an *image,* never a living person.

We all know the difference between an image of someone and the flesh-and-blood reality. How often do we rehearse a speech we plan to make to someone we love, or fear: We run through the scene in our mind, picturing ourselves talking to the other person—declaring our love, asking for help, asking the boss for a raise. Sometimes we communicate with them via text messages, imagining them in our mind. But when we meet the person face-to-face, it is not the same. We freeze and find ourselves unable to speak; or perhaps our words gush forth incoherently. Seldom does the encounter take place as we planned.

Like films, television seems very close to theatre; sometimes it seems even closer than film. Television programs sometimes begin with words such as "This program comes to you live from Burbank, California." Recent televised musicals have had titles such as *Hairspray Live!* But the word *live* must be qualified. Before television, *live* in the entertainment world meant "in person": not only was the event taking place at that moment; it was taking place in the physical *presence* of the spectators. Usually, the term *live television* still means that an event is taking place at this moment, but "live" television does *not* take place in the presence of all of the viewers. In fact, even if there is a live studio audience, it is generally far removed from the vast majority of the viewing audience, possibly half a world away. In television, like film, we see an image—in the case of TV, on a screen—and we are free to look or not to look, or even to leave the room.

Our fascination with being in the presence of a person is difficult to explain but not difficult to verify, as the popularity of rock stars attests. No matter how often we as fans have seen a favorite star in the movies or heard a rock singer on a CD, computer, tablet, smartphone, or other digital device, we will go to any lengths to see the star in person. In the same way, at one time or another, each of us has braved bad weather and shoving crowds to see celebrities at a parade or a political rally. The same pull of personal contact draws us to the theatre.

At the heart of the theatre experience, therefore, is the performer–audience relationship—the immediate, personal exchange whose chemistry and magic give theatre its special quality. During a stage performance the actresses and actors can hear laughter, can sense silence, and can feel tension. In short, the audience itself can affect, and in subtle ways change, the performance. At the same time, as members of the audience we watch the performers closely, consciously or unconsciously asking ourselves questions: Are the performers convincing in their roles? Have they learned their parts well? Are they talented? Will they do something surprising? Will they make a mistake? At each moment, in every stage performance, we are looking for answers to questions like these. The performers are alive—and so is the very air itself—with the electricity of expectation. It is for this reason that we speak of theatre as the lively art. It is for this reason, as well as a number of others, that we study theatre as an art form.

THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDS
The audience is an integral, indispensable part of any theatre performance. Here, the audience watches a performance of a classical theatre piece in the outdoor theatre of Regents Park in London, England. (©Eric Nathan/VisitBritain/Getty Images)

In the next chapter, we will examine in detail the dynamic of the actor–audience relationship. Before we do so, however, other qualities of live theatre are worth exploring. One, as we've suggested, is the astonishing popularity of live theatre in the face of the competition it faces. Another is the amazing way in which theatre permeates every aspect of our lives, in ways of which we are often not even aware.

The Range and Accessibility of Theatre

One measure of the amazing health of live theatre today is the astounding range of opportunities we have of attending theatre, with locations, not only in the United Sates but throughout the world, presenting a greater variety of theatre offerings perhaps than ever before. For a long time Broadway in New York City was the fountainhead of live theatre in the United States. Though it is still thriving, and Broadway shows, particularly popular musicals, regularly tour to major and mid-size cities throughout America, theatre that originates on Broadway is not as predominant as it once was. Performing arts complexes in all parts of the country that continue to present productions of Broadway shows, in addition, often have other spaces which feature different types of live theatre. These might include 1,000-seat, 500-seat, or 200-seat theatres that offer new plays, revivals, intimate musicals, and other kinds of dramatic entertainment.

As we shall see, in New York, as in other cities throughout the United States and the world, there are also smaller spaces and companies that focus on more cutting edge dramas or experimental works. In addition, we shall also discuss the many theatre companies that focus on underrepresented groups.

At the same time, during the last half-century there has been a burgeoning of what are known as *regional theatres*: permanent, professional, nonprofit theatres that offer a season of first-class productions to their audiences each year. Their association, the League of Resident Theatres, lists a total of 74 such theatres scattered across the country. Added to the above are approximately 120 Shakespeare theatres found in virtually every state in the United States that feature, especially in the summer months, high-quality productions of Shakespeare and the classics as well as modern plays.

Regional theatres
Permanent, professional, nonprofit theatres offering first-class productions to their audiences.

Another important component of today's theatre landscape is the many college and university theatres found in every one of the fifty states, as well as Canada and elsewhere. Many colleges have not one but perhaps two or three theatre spaces in which students and guest artists perform. There might be, for instance, a 500- or 600-seat theatre, a smaller 200-seat theatre with a different configuration, and a 100-seat "black box" for more experimental or intimate productions.

Finally, in every corner of the United States, there are an astonishing 7,000 so-called *community theatres*. These are semiprofessional and experienced amateur groups who present a series of plays each year that appeal to their audiences. It might surprise many of us to learn that these several thousand theatres present roughly 46,000 productions each year to audiences that number in the millions. Obviously, taken together, the total number of theatre events presented each year in the United States is a staggering, almost unbelievable figure.

Community theatres
Semiprofessional and experienced amateur groups that present plays that appeal to their specific audiences.

It is not, however, just the vast range and number of annual productions that is surprising, it is the diversity of offerings. First, there is the rich mixture of traditional theatre from the past with the latest theatre offerings of today. Theatre from the past begins with the Greek theatre, the foundation of all Western theatre, and moves through Shakespeare in the Elizabethan era, the Spanish playwright

1. Locate as many theatre venues in your area as you can—professional, amateur, college theatres. Also, locate theatres that may be in nearby cities or towns. (The Internet can be helpful in this search.)

2. Find out the size and shape of the theatres you have identified in your area and surrounding area.

3. Learn what kinds of productions each of the theatres presents: musicals, comedies, classics, new plays, and so forth.

4. Make plans to attend a production at one or more of the nearby theatres. (This could be incorporated into a class assignment.)

Site specific theatre
Theatre presented in a nontraditional setting so that the chosen environment helps illuminate the text.

Performance art   Most often refers to a solo performance created by the performer but also can be a work that mixes visual arts, dance, film, and/or music.

Lope de Vega from the same era, through the French playwright Molière in the seventeenth century, the great playwrights at the beginning of the modern era—Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov—through the outstanding American playwrights of the twentieth century—such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and August Wilson. The works of these playwrights, along with many others, are being offered year in and year out by professional nonprofit, community, and university theatres.

Alongside these plays from the past there is a constant stream of new plays from young playwrights, both in traditional and experimental forms. The latter includes experimental and avant-garde theatre of all kinds. Two such approaches are site-specific theatre and performance art. ***Site-specific theatre*** offers presentations in nontraditional theatre settings, such as warehouses, churches, firehouses, street corners and public parks. The idea is that the unusual locale together with a fresh approach in the material will make audiences conscious in a different way of what they are seeing and experiencing. ***Performance art*** is usually highly individual and presented by only one person but never by more than a small number. The content is usually quite personal, and may be combined with art, dance, film or music. We will discuss both of these forms later in our review of contemporary theatre.

Global and Multicultural Theatre

Two additional types of theatre should be mentioned when we speak of the wide diversity of theatre available to today's audiences. One is *global theatre,* which means theatre not just in the Western tradition, but theatre from around the world. As in the West, there is a rich tradition of theatre in Asia. In India theatre began more than 2,000 years ago, and Chinese theatre, a few centuries after that, while Japanese theatre was established by 800 C.E. In other parts of the world, in Africa, in pre-Columbian Latin America, and in the Native American cultures of North America, there are rich traditions of rituals and ceremonies that have recognizable elements of theatre: costumes; song and dance; and impersonation of people, animals, and divinities.

The various ways in which we see theatrical traditions from different nations and cultures influence one another today were relatively rare prior to 1900. Today we live in a world where such cross-cultural relationships are extremely easy, owing to modern transportation and communication. Thomas Friedman, in his acclaimed book *The World Is Flat,* analyzes how globalization has affected business and

DIVERSE OFFERINGS
Today's theatre offers a wide choice in the places where we see theatre and in the types of theatre we can enjoy. One important aspect involves the many diverse and multicultural theatre experiences that are available. An example would be the scene above from the Bale Folclorico Da Bahia in a performance of *Sacred Heritage* at the Sunset Center in Carmel.
(©Education Images/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

industry in contemporary society. One can no longer tell whether a product is made by a company in a specific country since most major corporations are multinational. The automobile industry clearly reflects the trend toward industrial globalization, as does the technology industry. A car created today by a Japanese, Korean, or German manufacturer may be fully or partially assembled in the United States. A PC, cell phone, or tablet may be manufactured in China and sold in the United States, but the 24-hour help desk may be located in India. The same is true in today's theatre. Theatre artists cross national boundaries to stage their works with artists of other countries. Popular works tour the world and cross-pollinate other theatrical ventures. International theatre festivals bring artists of various nationalities to interact with those in the host community. In addition, traditional theatrical techniques from differing countries may be fused together to create a unique contemporary work.

People throughout the world are becoming aware of the multiracial and multicultural aspects of our society, as are Americans themselves. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the United States was known as a "melting pot," a term implying that the aim of many foreign-born people who came here was to become assimilated and integrated into the prevailing white, European culture (and we might add, male, as women during this era still had to fight for basic rights, such as the right to vote). In recent decades, however, it has come to be seen that such a homogeneous culture has many biases; as a result, we find a trend to recognize, maintain, and celebrate our differences. This consciousness of diversity has been reflected in theatre. Many organizations have emerged that present productions by and for groups with specific interests including feminism; gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered points of view; and many others relating to diversity in politics, race, gender, ethnic background, and sexual orientation. Again, we will discuss global and multicultural theatre more fully when we survey our contemporary theatrical landscape.

THEATRE, TELEVISION, AND FILM

Theatre is the fountainhead of all drama in whatever form it appears: film, television, computer, tablet, or theme park. The ancient Greeks, 2,500 years ago, established the categories of tragedy and comedy that are still used today. They also developed dramatic structure, acting, and theatre architecture. Roman domestic comedies are the prototype of every situation comedy we see in the movies or on television. In other words, though we may not be aware of it, each time we see a performance we are taking part in theatre history. Wherever theatre or other media arts occur, their foundation, their roots, are always found in historical forerunners and antecedents.

When audiences watch a performance of a Shakespearean play in an outdoor theatre—for example, at the Shakespeare festival in Ashland, Oregon, or at the Old Globe in San Diego, California—they are not only watching a play by a dramatist who lived 400 years ago but are also sharing in an environment, a configuration of audience and stage space, that goes back much farther to the ancient Greeks.

In the same way, when an audience sees a drama by the French playwright Molière, they are partaking not only of a theatrical tradition that traces its roots to seventeenth-century France, but also of a tradition that goes back to Italian commedia dell'arte, which came to prominence a century earlier. And the theatre space in which it is performed goes back to the proscenium stage, which originated during the Italian Renaissance in the early seventeenth century. Similarly, at a

college production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan,* the audience members are not only seeing a play by one of the most innovative playwrights of the twentieth century; they are seeing a play that was strongly influenced by techniques of ancient Asian theatre.

And, as we noted, whenever we watch films or television shows, on whatever electronic device we choose, we are seeing popular works clearly influenced by these traditions, practices, and forms of theatre.

Theatre and Television

The characters of film and television—the heroes, the villains, the victims, the comic figures—all come straight from predecessors in theatre. The way stories are structured—the early scenes, the succession of crises, the withholding and revealing of information—were there first, hundreds of years ago, in the theatre. In other words, the structure, the dynamics, the subject matter of both television and film can be traced directly to antecedents in theatre.

On television, we can see a wide range of dramatic offerings that have a clear counterpart in theatrical prototypes. Daytime soap operas present a variety of domestic crises in family and other relationships. These dramas use many theatrical devices to ensure our continued viewing. A suspenseful moment concludes each segment; heightened music and emotions capture our attention. Recognizable character types—young lovers, difficult parents, doctors, lawyers, and criminals—inhabit the world of the all daytime soap operas.

Nighttime hospital and police shows, as well as earlier popular westerns, present the thrills and suspense of traditional melodrama. The stereotypical characters, including the heroes and villains; the focus on the spectacular and the grotesque; and the neat and happy resolutions are all related, as we shall see, to nineteenth-century melodrama. The popularity of *CSI, Chicago PD, Chicago Fire, The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones* is related to their use of traditional characteristics of the suspenseful melodramas staged in the theatres of earlier eras.

Situation comedies depict young as well as middle-age characters in farcical and humorous encounters. These comic television shows have, throughout the history of the medium, focused on domestic situations, language filled with sexual double meaning, physical humor, exaggerated characters, and recognizable situations. Classic situation comedies, such as *I Love Lucy*, *Will & Grace*, *Seinfeld, Modern Family, Big Bang Theory, Transparent,* and *Black-ish,* all reflect comic traditions, techniques, characters, and structures developed earlier in theatre.

Popular television variety shows throughout the medium's history have all been influenced by earlier popular theatrical forms that we will discuss later, such as minstrelsy, burlesque, and vaudeville. The long-running format of *Saturday Night Live,* which combines take-offs of serious films or literature, satire of political figures, exaggerated fictional characters, and popular musical acts, is a close replica of vaudeville, a popular theatre form of the early twentieth century.

The NBC network has also televised live stage musicals annually, frequently casting major film, theatre, TV, pop music, and stage stars. To reflect the desire to emulate an actual musical theatre experience, the shows all have *Live* attached at the end of their traditional titles. Those staged for TV productions include: *The Sound of Music* (2013), *Peter Pan* (2014), *Hairspray* (2016), and *Bye, Bye, Birdie* (2017), featuring Jennifer Lopez.

On television, even news documentaries are framed in dramatic terms: a car crash in which a prom queen dies; a spy caught because of an e-mail message; a

high government official or corporate officer accused of sexual harassment. Extremely popular reality shows are also staged like theatrical events. Many of the shows focus on highly dramatic situations and turn the real-life individuals into theatrical characters. And we all know that the reality shows are theatrically manipulated to create a sense of dramatic tension, ongoing suspense, and heightened conflict among the participants.

Theatre and Film

Film has been influenced by theatre even more clearly than television has. Movies provide dramatic material of many kinds: science fiction; romantic and domestic comedies; action-packed stories of intrigue; historical epics; and even film versions of classical plays, such as Shakespeare's **Hamlet**, **Othello**, and **Romeo and Juliet**. And we should note that there is a combination of film and video when we watch movies at home on a DVD, a Blu-ray, or streamed through our smart 4K Ultra HDTV, Blu-ray player, game console, tablet, smartphone, or other device. Various types and categories of theatrical offerings have been appropriated by film. Successful film musicals, such as *Into the Woods* (2014)*,* are movie versions of hugely successful stage musicals. As mentioned earlier, classical and contemporary plays are frequently adapted into movies, such as the Pulitzer Prize winning *Fences.*

In addition, most film genres borrow from past theatrical traditions. For example, popular cinematic melodramas, such as the films based on comic book heroes, reflect the characteristics of the theatrical genre and earlier theatrical innovations. We shall see that the intense interest in creating awe-inspiring special effects was as prevalent in nineteenth-century theatre as it is in twenty-first-century film.

FILM AND THEATRE

From the beginning theatre has had a profound effect on film, as well as on other media. Stories, characters, even dialogue are lifted straight from theatre and put on film. The scene above is from a popular film of 2016, *Fences,* which is based on a play written by August Wilson in which Denzel Washington, seen above, also appeared previously on Broadway. Playing his wife in the film, as she did in the Broadway production, is Viola Davis. (©Joan Marcus)

At the same time, since the inception of commercial film, there has been a great deal of crossover by theatre and film artists. As we shall see, many film stars began their careers in theatre. For that matter, Hollywood frequently raided the New York theatre for actors, directors, and writers during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Many current film and television stars began their careers in theatre and return to it on occasion; one example is Denzel Washington, who won a Tony Award for a Broadway revival of *Fences* in 2010, which he made into a critically acclaimed film in 2016. And many playwrights, from the earliest days of film and television, write for these media. Sam Shepard, David Mamet, Tony Kushner, Neil LaBute, Theresa Rebecki, Sarah Treem, and Beau Willimon are examples of successful theatre, screenplay, and teleplay authors.

In recent years, many movie and television stars, whose entire careers have been in these media, have performed onstage as an artistic challenge. For example, Daniel Radcliffe, from the *Harry Potter* movies, starred in London and Broadway

productions, including the musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (2011), *The Cripple of Inishmann* (2014), *Privacy* (2016), and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (2017). In 2013, the film stars Daniel Craig, a recent James Bond, and his wife Rachel Weisz, also a film star, appeared on Broadway in Harold Pinter's *Betrayal;* Craig, along with stage and movie actor David Oyelowo, also starred in *Othello* (2016) off-Broadway. Among other well-known film actors to star in Broadway productions are Tom Hanks, James Franco, and Scarlett Johansson. What attracted audiences to these, and many other examples, were the production's media stars.

And just as film stars are admired for their wealth and status, while at the same time their personal lives are viewed suspiciously—for example, consider the constant attention on their romantic breakups—so, too, were theatrical stars from the earliest times on. This obsession with the lives of stars is reflected today in the popularity of such tabloids and magazines as *Star, National Enquirer,* and *People* as well as Hollywood gossip television shows, including *TMZ;* and in just the same way, there were earlier theatrical publications that reported about the lives of stage personalities.

THEATRE IS EVERYWHERE

The connection between theatre and both television and film probably does not come as a surprise to most people. On the other hand, most of us would no doubt be surprised at the great extent to which theatre permeates and informs so many other aspects of our lives. Think of how often we use theatre as a metaphor to describe an activity in daily life. We say that someone is melodramatic or highly theatrical or acts like a "prima donna." When we don't believe children, we say that they are play-acting. We refer to the battleground on which a war is fought as a "theatre." Clearly, theatre is an activity that we use to describe how we live.

Religious and civic ceremonies and rituals also have theatrical qualities. (We shall see in the chapters "Early Theatres: Greek, Roman, and Medieval" and "Early Theatre: Asian" how the origins of theatre may be connected to religious rituals and ceremonies.) Weddings, funerals, other religious ceremonies as well as family and society celebrations have strong elements of theatre in them. Costumes, a set script, various roles to be played: all of these are similar to counterparts in theatre.

In addition, as we will note in a later chapter, acting is part of our everyday lives. We describe the role-playing we do in our professional and personal spheres as if we were performers on the stage of life. Children and adults imitate behaviors that they admire in the same way that actors and actresses mimic behavior. As we go through our college careers, we play many roles, such as student, friend, romantic partner, organization member, and student government leader. As adults we also play a number of roles: doctor, lawyer, engineer, nurse, parent, teacher, spouse, political figure.

Theatre is incorporated in our lives in other ways. Taken in its broadest sense, it is everywhere around us. A Thanksgiving Day parade, a trial in a courtroom—all of these have recognizable theatrical elements: costumes or uniforms, a formal structure, performers, and spectators. The same is true of such activities as a presidential nominating convention, a Senate hearing, or a White House press conference. Even seemingly spontaneous, unrehearsed events, such as a high-speed automobile chase or a gunman holding hostages in a suburban home, have been imbued with theatrical qualities by the time they are broadcast on television. The person holding the television camera has framed the "shots" showing the

THEATRICAL ELEMENTS IN RITUALS AND CEREMONIES
Weddings, funerals, other religious ceremonies as well as family and society rituals have strong elements of theatre in them. Costumes, a set script, various roles to be played: all of these are similar to counterparts in theatre. Shown here is a wedding ceremony with the bride and groom in appropriate attire, and a presiding official. Often the one officiating is a priest, minister, or rabbi. (©Stewart Cohen/Getty Images RF)

event; and for the evening news, the people who edit and report a segment on a real-life tragedy have taken great care to present the story as a brief drama, with an attention-grabbing opening followed by a suspenseful or shocking revelation and then a closing quotation, perhaps from a relative or neighbor. We even encounter drama in seemingly real-life reports on television: not only the evening news but documentaries and so-called "reality" shows.

Among our popular activities and institutions, rock concerts, amusement parks, museums, sporting events, and digital media all display and rely on strong theatrical components.

Theatre and Rock Music

When we turn from electronic and digital media to live performance, we see that theatre has pervaded and influenced a popular music form with which we are all familiar: rock. Throughout its history, rock has appropriated theatrical elements. The singer and dancer Lady Gaga is a perfect example. Her extravagant outfits and

over-the-top visual effects are directly derived from theatrical antecedents, as are her lighting and special effects. The purpose, of course, is to draw attention to the performer. "One of my greatest art works," she has said, "is the art of fame." Her "Monster Ball (2009–2011)" and "ArtRave: The Artpop Ball (2014)" tours were highly staged theatrical events. For that matter, a *New York Times* article describing her Monster Ball performance at Radio City Music Hall was entitled, "For Lady Gaga, Every Concert Is a Drama." The same is true of the highly theatrical performances of many other contemporary pop stars.

Numerous other rock stars have created theatrical characters for their performances. Beginning with Little Richard and Elvis Presley in the 1950s, and continuing with the Beatles in the 1960s, through punk rock, glam rock, rap, hip-hop, and other forms, popular musical performers have used exaggerated characterizations, gender-bending personas, costumes, props, and makeup to create theatrical characterizations. The actual performers were often less recognizable than their stage personae.

The connection between rock performance and theatre is also illustrated by the many rock stars who have acted in films, television, and stage. For example, the hip-hop and rap star Mos Def has appeared on Broadway and in numerous movies.

The popularity of music videos also reflects the integration of theatrical elements into rock and roll. These videos turn many songs into visual, dramatic narratives.

As noted earlier, current rock concerts are also highly theatrical events, using live performers, lights, sound, projections, and properties in ways that are like multi-media presentations. For example, Beyonce's 2016 *Formation* tour incorporated all of these elements almost blurring the distinction between rock concert and theatrical spectacle. Other pop stars such as Justin Timberlake and Christina

THEATRICALITY IN ROCK MUSIC PERFORMANCES
Good examples of the crossover of theatrical elements between the popular arts and traditional theatre are the elaborate, outsize presentations of individual performers and music groups in their live stage presentations. Extravagant costumes, spectacular lighting, sound and scenic effects are the hallmark of these performances. A good example was Lady Gaga's performance at the Super Bowl in 2017. (©Timothy A. Clary/AFP/Getty Images)

Aguilera have staged their concerts like theatre performances, with spectacular lighting effects and gymnastic-like dance routines. Even classic rock groups have added highly visual theatrical elements to their touring shows to appeal to more contemporary fans. Each year, the Grammy Awards becomes a more theatrical event, showcasing incredibly spectacular lighting, costuming, multimedia, and special effects to enhance the show.

Acoustic and less spectacular tours by some well-known rock stars are a reaction against these intensely theatrical concerts and reflect a desire to return the focus to the live performer, stripping away much of the stage effects. We shall see that some contemporary theatrical theorists and experimental artists also argue for diminishing spectacular scenery and using fewer special effects, to reestablish the primacy of live performance.

In the past few years, there has also been a new phenomenon in musical theatre: the use of previously recorded rock and pop music as the score for musicals. The most popular example of such musicals is *Mamma Mia!* (1999), which used the songs of a group from the 1980s, ABBA. Other examples include *All Shook Up* (2005), which used Elvis Presley's hits; *Jersey Boys* (2004), which traced the career of a pop group of the 1960s, the Four Seasons; *Rock of Ages* (2006), which used 1980s rock music; *American Idiot* (2009), adapted from Green Day's concept album; *Motown* (2013), which used the 1960s pop music by African American performers from Detroit; and *Beautiful* (2014), based on the early life and music of Carole King.

Some rock composers have also composed scores for musicals, including Elton John for *Aida* (1998) and *Billy Elliott* (2005), David Bryan, keyboardist for Bon Jovi, for *Memphis* (2009), Bono and Edge of U2 for *Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark* (2011), Cindy Lauper for *Kinky Boots* (2012), and Sarah Bareilles for *Waitress* (2016). We will discuss the influence of rock on the American musical more fully later when we survey the history of this popular theatrical form.

Theatricality in Amusement Parks, Museums, Las Vegas, and Sporting Events

Rock illustrates that we have come to expect theatrical elements as part of our popular entertainments and that theatre is around us in many unexpected venues. Amusement parks like Disney World, Sea World, and Universal Studios incorporate theatrical material; most, for example, present staged productions based on films, which attract huge audiences. The rides at these amusement parks also incorporate theatricality by placing the participant in a theatrical environment and a dramatic situation. Rides based on the *Indiana Jones, Jurassic Park,* and *Harry Potter* films, among many others, allow us, as riders, to be actors in a dramatic plotline, in a space that functions as a kind of stage setting. Disney World has announced plans to build an "immersive" hotel that will allow guests to become part of a *Star Wars* story.

We can also see theatre around us in many other everyday activities. Many restaurants, such as the Rainforest Cafes, have theatrical environments. Shopping centers and specialty stores, such as Niketown and American Girl, contain spaces for performances that highlight specific holiday seasons or product lines.

Museums have recently adopted some of these theatrical techniques to attract visitors. For example, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, includes stage presentations, with live actors and high tech special effects, about this famous president as well as about how historians and archivists work. The museum also contains many exhibits that function like stage

LAS VEGAS AS THEATRICAL ENVIRONMENT
Almost the entire central part of Las Vegas, Nevada, is a gigantic stage set. Everything from the pyramids to the Eiffel Tower and New York City is re-produced there. Seen here is a re-creation of a canal in Venice to house shops at the Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas. (©Andreas Sterzing/VISUM/The Image Works)

settings, including a reproduction of the log cabin in which Lincoln originally lived. Many museums now host performances, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Walker Center in Minneapolis.

In cities such as Orlando, Florida, dinner theatres present theatrical entertainments based on Roman gladiators, medieval knights, and gangsters of the 1930s. *Medieval Nights* is an extremely popular dinner theatre entertainment in Orlando, New Jersey, and Chicago. Las Vegas is a highly theatricalized environment. Its hotels—such as New York, New York; the Bellagio; Luxor; and Mandelay Bay—are constructed like huge theatrical sets. Lavish stage shows use all the elements of theatre to entertain audiences. Possibly the most spectacular is *KA,* a $165 million production of Cirque du Soleil, staged at the MGM Grand by the avant-garde Canadian director Robert LePage, and which gained notoriety for the death of a performer in 2013. In addition, many performance artists and Broadway musicals have set up companies in Las Vegas. These theatre productions are even modified to meet the time limitations of the traditional Las Vegas stage show.

Contemporary sporting events also integrate significant theatrical elements. Sports arenas, as we will note later, function much like theatre spaces. The introduction of sports teams before the start of competitions is often highly staged, with spectacular sound, lighting, and visual effects. Halftime shows, particularly at championship games such as the Super Bowl, are often huge stage spectacles with musicians, dancers, and special effects. Lady Gaga's 2017 Super Bowl performance, for example, included lighting effects, flying her in, and the use of drones.

THEATRICALITY IN SPORTS EVENTS
Sporting events are often highly theatrical—football, basketball, and baseball, as well as many other sports, have a definite theatrical component. One prime example is the half-time show at the annual Super Bowl. Shown here is the half time show at the Super Bowl in 2017 at which the performer Lady Gaga appeared and which featured stunning lighting and special effects. (©Cal Sport Media/Alamy Stock Photo)

Theatre and Digital Media

At the start of the twenty-first century, digital media are omnipresent, ranging from the computer to the Xbox to the iPad to the multitude of smartphones. One result is the immense popularity of video games and other interactive activities accessed through the Internet, on all of these devices, and which are clearly influenced by theatre. These digital entertainments usually present a theatrical plotline in which we engage. Many of these storylines are based on popular melodramatic premises taken from films, comic books, and other entertainments. Some are based on historical events, such as actual wars and battles; others are fictional tales. Their goal is to make us feel as if we are actors within the universe of the game. The desire to create realistic special effects graphics continues a tradition that began with nineteenth-century stage melodrama, continued into film and television, and now is an engaging element of these digital games.

There are also interactive theatrical role-playing websites on the Internet. These sites all allow us to feel as if we are actors in a theatricalized fantasy world. Even websites that are supposedly realistic chat rooms allow us to play roles as if we are actors in a performance for an unseen audience.
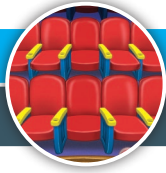
1. Attend a theatre performance. Note the following: (a) What it is like arriving at the theatre, entering the lobby, then entering the theatre itself. (b) As the performance begins, how you become aware of the type of theatre you will see: musical, historical play, modern domestic drama, comedy, or something other than these.

2. As the play gets under way take note of the following:

   a. The scenery: Is it life-like or fantasy? Is it complete or merely suggestive of time and place? Is it beautiful to look at or is it depicting something frightening or strange? Is the stage filled with scenery, or relatively bare? As the play progresses, does the scenery remain constant or are there frequent scene changes?

   b. The lighting: What kind of lighting is there? Is it the lighting of a rock concert or nightclub, or does it seem like the natural lighting of a home or an outdoor park or patio? What are the colors of the lighting? Are the colors appropriate to the situation? Does the lighting change frequently or only rarely?

   c. The acting: Are the performers supposed to be ordinary people, of the type you would recognize from friends, family, or everyday characters on TV? Or are the characters historical people or larger-than-life figures? Is there anything special about the way one or more actors perform? Are they believable and ordinary, or is there something unusual or distinctive?

The term *cosplay* is a contraction of *costume* and *play*. It describes a combination of role-playing, costuming, and social interactions and became a worldwide popular culture phenomenon because of the Internet. Cosplay, which began in the 1990s, refers to people, known as *cosplayers*, dressing up as characters from cartoons, video games, films, television series, and other entertainments.

Often those engaged in cosplay attend large fan conventions for popular television shows, comic book conventions, and cosplay competitions. The combination of online social networks and dedicated websites allows cosplayers to interact virtually and at any time of day or night from across the globe.

Another impact of digital technology is that audiences can attend live broadcast and digitally streamed productions from theatres across their nation and across the globe. The National Theatre, for example, established National Theatre Live, which broadcasts productions via satellite to film houses. Some theatres stream performances to audience members' computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones. Broadway HD was established to allow individuals anywhere to stream Broadway quality shows to their digital devices. But like live television, these streamed events do not place audiences in the presence of the live performers as theatre does.

Although there is an abundance of dramatic materials available in movie houses, on television, on Blu-ray or DVD, streamed digitally into our homes, in amusement parks, at sporting events, in video games, and on the Internet, theatre itself is also a highly diverse and eclectic art form that attracts a wide spectrum of audience members and artists and is, in stark contrast to these others, a truly live, nonmediated art form.

Cosplay A contraction of costume and play that combines role-playing, costuming, and social interactions through the Internet or at conventions.

THEATRE AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

There is one additional, highly significant, but often overlooked reason for us to attend and study theatre. Throughout its history theatre has had a two-fold appeal. One attraction is the sheer excitement or amusement of a theatre event. The other

is the unique ability of theatre to incorporate in dramatic material profound, provocative, timeless observations about our human condition. Ideas, moral dilemmas, probing insights—these have long found vivid expression in exceptional plays and exceptional performances. Moreover, in theatre these performances are live, not reproduced on a film, television screen, or digital device.

In Greek and Shakespearean tragedy, and in the works of modern playwrights like Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Lorraine Hansberry, and August Wilson, we encounter questions and issues that strike at the very heart of our human existence. In the comedies of the French playwright Molière, we see personal foibles exposed as they have rarely been before or since.

Finally, theatre also differs in significant ways from other types of live entertainment such as performances by rock stars. Rock musicians, for example, make no pretense of offering the same kind of experience as a production by a theatre company. A drama or a piece of performance art has a structure—a beginning, middle, and end—a purpose, a cast of characters, a unique completeness that a concert by a rock artist would never aspire to.

In other words, theatre, which influences so much of the world around us, is an art form with its own characteristics: its own quality, coherence, and integrity.

SUMMARY

1. During the past century live theatre has faced a number of daunting challenges from other dramatic media: films, television, electronic media, etc.

2. Live theatre has been able to meet these challenges not only because of its unique characteristics, but chiefly because it is only in live theatre that the audience is physically present at a performance by live actors.

3. Live theatre today is available in a wide variety of venues: commercial theatre, nonprofit professional theatre, college and university theatre, amateur theatre, children's theatre.

4. There is also a wide range of the types of theatre available today: classic, traditional, experimental, avant-garde.

5. Theatrical elements are part of many other activities in which we engage: religious services, rock concerts, theme parks, sports events.

THE AUDIENCE

2
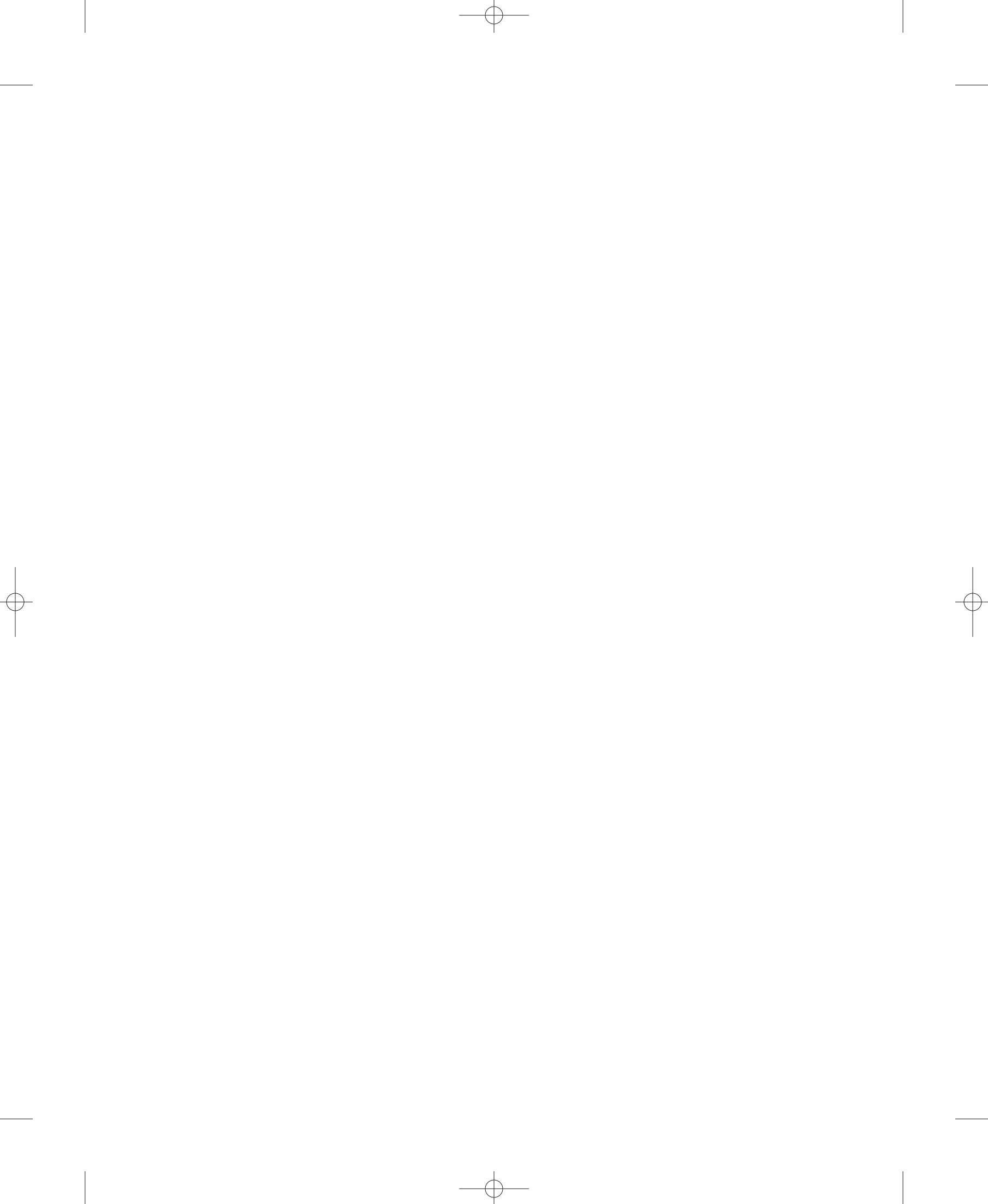
This chapter is devoted to the role we play as audience members. Before focusing on that role, however, we will examine two important background subjects that will enhance audience participation and awareness. The first is a look at theatre's relationship to the arts in general and to other art forms. The second is knowledge of how a theatre production is conceived, developed, and presented, including a brief examination of the various elements of which a theatre production consists. Though we touch on these elements of theatre here, we will examine them in greater detail in the part "Creating Theatre: The Playwright."

In the second half of the chapter we will focus on the indispensable role the audience plays at a live theatre production. We examine how we, as spectators, might prepare for attending a production and also explore the variety, diversity and range of audiences at various kinds of theatrical presentations. Beyond that, we look at the way in which critics, reviewers, and bloggers can help us become more informed evaluators of a production and how we, as audience members, can develop our own criteria to evaluate our theatre experiences.

WHAT IS ART?

As has often been observed, art is a mirror or reflection of life: an extension or a projection of how we live, think, and feel. Art reveals to us what we treasure and admire, and what we fear most deeply. Art is not only something we find desirable and enjoyable; it is an absolute necessity for human survival.

There are feelings, emotions, and ideas that cannot be expressed in any way other than through art. The beauty of a face or a haunting landscape may be impossible to convey in words, but it can be revealed in a painting; a complex personality can be captured in a novel or a play in a way that reveals the person's

◀ **THE ACTORS MEET THE AUDIENCE**

The essence of the theatre experience is the exchange between performers and audience members. The electricity, the vibrations, the chemistry between the two is at the heart of theatre. Here we see the audience applauding the actors at the conclusion of a 2006 production of Hamlet *at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis.* (©AP Photo/Andy King)

innermost soul; joy or anguish can often be communicated most directly and completely through music, poetry, or drama. Without these modes of expression—that is, without art—human beings would be as impoverished and as helpless as they would be if they tried to live without language.

Characteristics of Art

Art can be divided into three categories: *literary, visual,* and *performing.* The literary arts include novels, short stories, and poetry. The ***visual arts*** include painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography. The ***performing arts*** are theatre, dance, opera, and music. (Film, another art form, partakes of both the visual and the performing arts.) One characteristic of all art—visual, literary, or performing—traditionally has been that it is selective. As the three categories suggest, different art forms usually focus on certain elements and eliminate others. The visual arts, for example, deal solely with sight and touch—what we can see and feel—and they exclude sound. When we visit an art gallery, there is a hush in the air because the concentration is purely on what the eye observes. Moreover, in the visual arts, a composition is frozen and constant. We value the visual arts partly because they capture subjects—faces, landscapes, a series of colors or shapes—and hold them fast in a painting or a sculpture. We can look at a statue of a Roman soldier from 2,000 years ago, or a Madonna and Child painted 500 years ago, and see exactly the same artifact that its first viewers observed.

Music, on the other hand, concentrates on sound. Although we may watch a violinist playing with a symphony orchestra or observe a soprano singing at a recital, the essence of music is sound. We prove this whenever we close our eyes at a concert, and whenever we listen to recorded music. In both cases, the emphasis is totally on sound. By concentrating on sound, we block out distractions and give our full attention to the music itself. This kind of selectivity is one quality that has traditionally defined each art form.

However, art does not have rules. While we are describing the selectivity of traditional art forms throughout history, experimental artists have often tried to break down the barriers between them. In the contemporary art world, *installations* mix visual, sound, and performative elements. There are concerts that use lights and projections. But these are more the exceptions and also reflect the constant experimentation within all of the arts.

Another characteristic of art is its relationship to time or space; thus a second way to differentiate the arts is in temporal and spatial terms. The visual arts are ***spatial arts***; they exist in space, which is their primary mode of existence. They occupy a canvas, for instance, or—in the case of architecture—a building. By contrast, music moves through time; it is a ***temporal art***. It does not occupy space; musicians performing a symphony exist in space, of course, but the music they perform does not. The music is an unfolding series of sounds, and the duration of the notes and the pauses between notes create a rhythm that is an essential part of music. This, in turn, becomes a time continuum as we move from one note to the next.

Unlike painting and sculpture on the one hand or music on the other, theatre, dance, and opera occupy both time and space. Let's now consider the special characteristics of the performing arts.

Characteristics of the Performing Arts

The performing arts, of which music, theatre, opera, and dance are a part, have several characteristics in common. One is the movement through time described

Visual arts   These include painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography.

Performing arts   These include theatre, dance, opera, and music, where there are live performers and audience members.

Spatial arts   Art forms that exist in space and are created to last over time.

Temporal arts   Art forms that exist for only a specific period of time.

Part 1   Theatre in Today's World

THE PERMANENCE OF THE VISUAL ARTS
If they are preserved, painting and sculpture—unlike performing arts such as theatre, dance, and music—are permanent and unchanging. An example is this sculpture of the Nike of Samothrace, goddess of victory, on display at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. The torso enfolded in flowing robes and the outstretched wings appear much as they did when the sculpture was first created on the island of Samothrace in Greece around 200 B.C.E., about 2,200 years ago. (©Crystaltmc/iStock/Getty Images RF)

THE PERFORMING ARTS
Like theatre, opera, and music, dance shares a number of characteristics with these other performing arts. For example, all these arts move through time, they require interpreters as well as creators, and they must be seen live by an audience. In this photo, we see the Kremlin Ballet performing *Swan Lake* in Skopje, Macedonia. (©Boris Grdanoski/AP Images)

above. Another is that they require interpreters as well as creators. A playwright writes a play, but actors and actresses perform it; a composer writes a piece of music that singers and instrumentalists will perform; a choreographer develops a ballet that dancers will interpret.

Another quality shared by the performing arts is that they require an audience. A performance can be recorded on film or tape, but the event itself must be "live," that is, it must occur in one place at one time with both performers and audience present. If a theatre performance is recorded on film or tape without the presence of an audience, it becomes a movie or a television show rather than a theatre experience. To put this distinction another way, when an audience watches a film in a movie theatre, there are no performers onstage; there are only images on a screen.

In addition to the general qualities we have been discussing, each art form has unique qualities and principles that set it apart from other art forms and help us to understand it better. When we know how shapes and designs relate to overall composition, for instance, and how colors contrast with and complement one another, we are in a better position to judge and understand painting. In the same way, we can appreciate theatre much more if we understand how it is created and what elements it consists of.

THE ART OF THEATRE

We now turn our attention to the specific elements and qualities of theatre that make it a unique and lively art.

The Elements of Theatre

When we begin to examine theatre as an art form, we discover that there are certain components common to all theatre. These elements are present whenever a theatre event takes place; without them, an event ceases to be theatre and becomes a different art form and a different experience.

Audience   As we have suggested, a necessary element for theatre is the audience. In fact, the essence of theatre is the interaction between performer and audience. A theatre, dance, or musical event is not complete—one could almost say it does not occur—unless there are people to see and hear it. When we read a play in book form, or listen to recorded music, or even watch a film or television show, what we experience is similar to looking at a painting or reading a poem: it is a private event, not a public one, and the live performance is re-created and imagined rather than experienced firsthand. All the performing arts, including theatre, are like an electrical connection: the connection is not made until positive and negative wires touch and complete the circuit. Performers are half of that connection, and we, as audiences, are the other half.

Performers   Another absolutely essential element for theatre is the performers: people onstage presenting characters in dramatic action. Acting is at the heart of all theatre. One person stands in front of other people and begins to portray a character—to speak and move in ways that convey an image of the character. At this point the magic of theatre has begun: the transformation through which an audience accepts, for a time, that a performer is actually someone else. The character portrayed can be a historical figure, an imaginary figure, or even a self-presentation; still, everyone accepts the notion that it is the character, not the actor or actress, who is speaking.

Acting is a demanding profession. In addition to native talent—the poise and authority needed to appear onstage before others, and the innate ability to create a character convincingly—acting requires considerable craft and skill. Performers must learn to use both voice and body with flexibility and control; they must be able, for example, to make themselves heard in a large theatre even when speaking in a whisper. (This takes extensive physical and vocal training, which we will discuss in more detail later.) Performers must also be able to create believability, or the emotional truth of the characters they portray; that is, the audience must be convinced that the actor or actress is thinking and feeling what the character would think and feel. (This, too, is a difficult task requiring a special kind of training.)

Script or Text   Another element essential to theatre is the *script* or *text*, which could also be called the *blueprint* for a production. The playwright transforms the raw material—the incident, the biographical event, the myth—into a dramatic script, a sequence of events that features characters speaking and interacting with one another. Making this transformation is not easy. It requires intimate knowledge of stage practices, of how to breathe life into characters, of how to build action so that it will hold the interest of the audience and arouse anticipation for what is coming next. In other words, the playwright must create characters and develop a dramatic structure.

The term *text* is used to include any type of theatrical activity presented onstage: for example, all performances created or improvised by performers or directors as well as those created by a playwright. Frequently, the term *text* is all-inclusive, and it is sometimes used in place of *script*. A specific example of

Script (text)   The blueprint for a production, the material staged by the various theatre artists.

Text   Any type of theatrical activity presented onstage: for example, all performances created or improvised by performers or directors rather than a playwright. Frequently, the term *text* is all-inclusive, and it is sometimes used in place of *script*.

a nonliterary theatrical text would be an improvisatory presentation created by actors on a street, in a warehouse, or in a theatre.

Along with structure, a text must have a focus and a point of view. Who and what is the text about? Are we supposed to regard the characters and the events as sad or funny? The person or persons who create the text have the power as well as the responsibility to direct our attention toward certain characters and away from others. We will discover more about how these tasks are accomplished when we look at the nature of a dramatic text.

Director An additional key element of a theatre production is the work of the *director*: the person who rehearses the performers and coordinates the work of the designers and others to make certain that the production is cohesive as well as exciting. As we will see, the separate role of the director became prominent for the first time in modern theatre, but many of the functions of the director have always been present.

Director The coordinator all of the elements of a production who is responsible for the unifying vision of a production.

Theatre Space Another necessary element of theatre is the *space* in which performers and audiences come together. It is essential to have a stage, or some equivalent area, where actors and actresses can perform. It is also essential to have a place for audience members to sit or stand. We will discover that there have been several basic configurations of stage spaces and audience seating. Whatever the configuration, however, a stage and a space for the audience must be a part of it. Also, there usually must be a place for the actors and actresses to change costumes, as well as a way for them to enter and exit from the stage. As we shall see, sites for performances may be permanent, temporary, or transformed from spaces not originally intended for theatre.

DESIGN ELEMENTS IN THEATRE
The design elements in theatre include scenery, costume, lighting, and sound. This scene from a production of *Beauty and the Beast* in Paris, France shows vividly the costumes, levels and lighting of a large-scale musical. In such a production all of the visual and aural elements combine to produce the overall effect. (©Kristy Sparow/Getty Images)

Design Elements   Closely related to the physical space is another important element: the design aspects of a production. Design includes visual aspects—costumes, lighting, and some form of scenic background—and a nonvisual aspect, sound.

A play can be produced on a bare stage with minimal lighting, and with the performers wearing everyday street clothes. Even in these conditions, however, some attention must be paid to visual elements; there must, for instance, be sufficient illumination for us to see the performers, and clothes worn onstage will take on a special meaning even if they are quite ordinary.

Usually, visual elements are prominent in theatre productions. Costumes, especially, have been a hallmark of theatre from the beginning; and scenery has sometimes become more prominent than the performers. In certain arrangements, visual aspects come to the forefront; in others—such as the arena stage, where the audience surrounds the action—elaborate scenery is impractical if not impossible.

The visual aspects of theatre are particularly interesting to trace through history because their place in theatre production has shifted markedly from time to time. For example, stage lighting changed dramatically when the electric lightbulb came into use at the end of the nineteenth century. In our contemporary theatre, computerization has led to spectacular scenic and lighting effects using projections and videos.

As we noted earlier, a design element that is not visual is sound. This, too, is a modern element that has come into its own with modern technology. Of course, there were always sound effects, such as thunder and wind created by offstage machines; and there was frequently music, especially during certain periods when every intermission was accompanied by orchestral performances. In modern times, though, with digital inventions, there are far more elaborate sound effects; and frequently there are also unobtrusive microphones, sometimes in the general stage area and sometimes worn by the performers.

To sum up, the following are the major elements of theatre:

- Audience
- Performers
- Script or text, with its structure, characters, and point of view
- Director
- Theatre space
- Design aspects: scenery, costume, lighting, and sound

Theatre as a Collaborative Art

It should be clear from what we have said that theatre is a collaborative art. For a theatre event to take place, its various elements must be brought together and coordinated.

The director must stage the play written by the playwright and must share with the playwright an understanding of structure, theme, and style. At the same time, the director must work closely with performers in rehearsing the play, and with the designers of scenery, lights, costumes, and sound, to bring the production to fruition. During performances many elements must be coordinated: the work of actors and actresses along with technical aspects—scene changes, lighting shifts, and sound cues. The people working on these elements are joined, in turn,

by a number of collaborators: stage manager, stage carpenters, makeup experts, those who make costumes, and computer lighting experts. In an ensemble piece, where the play is actually composed by a group of actors working with a director, collaboration is more important than ever.

Another essential component in this collaborative enterprise is the business and administrative side of a production or theatre organization. This includes producers and managers, and their staffs—the people who organize and administer press and public relations, advertising, scheduling, fund-raising, and all the details of keeping the theatre running smoothly, including ticket sales, ticket taking, and ushering.

Ultimately, the many elements integrated in a production—text or script, direction, design, and acting, assisted by the technical side and the business side—must be presented to an audience. At that point occurs the final collaboration in any theatre enterprise: the performance itself before spectators. We will be discussing all of these collaborators in the part "Creating Theatre" of our textbook.

THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

If you asked us to list the essential components of what creates a theatre experience, the chances are we would mention several of the elements listed above but might not include the presence of the audience. This is understandable—particularly today, when film and television are so pervasive. In these media, which are so much like theatre in many ways, the "product," as it is sometimes called, stands alone as a finished presentation. When you watch a film at home on a Blu-ray or streamed via the Internet, it has been completed and is in its absolutely final form. The same is true of a film in a movie theatre; when released it might be shown in 1,000 theatres simultaneously across the United States, and it will be exactly the same in each location, time after time. The audience watches but plays no part in what appears on the screen.

Theatre is different. Even when the story and the characters presented are identical—in a film and stage presentation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* for instance—there is the crucial and important difference, namely, that each theatre performance is unique and occurs in the presence of an *audience.* The ramifications of the audience are far-reaching. To begin with, in live theatre the performers have no opportunity to play a scene over or to correct mistakes. Most of us are aware that in creating a film most scenes are filmed a number of times. These repetitions are called "takes," and there may be four, five, or even twenty takes before the director feels that a scene is "right." Moreover, once scenes are filmed, the director decides in the editing room where each scene begins and ends and how scenes are joined together.

In theatre, there is no repeating and no editing. The performers move through a production from beginning to end, and if there is a mishap—if an actor forgets a line, or an unexpected noise occurs offstage—the performers must recover and carry on. The result of all this is that each theatre event is immediate, and unique.

The dynamics and the excitement of being in the presence of a living person are as old as time and have not changed despite the many technological advances of recent years. As we have noted previously, people still wait for hours or stand in the rain to see a rock star or a hip-hop performer in person, although the same performer is readily available on many digital devices. The same is true of film personalities and charismatic political figures—people eagerly throng to see someone "in person." Thousands of people in Chicago lined up in January 2017 in the hopes of getting tickets to hear the farewell speech of outgoing President Barack Obama.

This same chemistry is possible at every stage performance when the actors and actresses and the members of the audience are in the same place at the same time.

There is another aspect in which we, as the audience, play a significant part: the effect that we have on performers. The drama critic Walter Kerr (1913–1996) explained the special relationship between audience and performers at a theatre event:

> It doesn't just mean that we are in the personal presence of performers. It means that they are in our presence, conscious of us, speaking to us, working for and with us until a circuit that is not mechanical becomes established between us, a circuit that is fluid, unpredictable, ever-changing in its impulses, crackling, intimate. Our presence, the way we respond, flows back to the performer and alters what he does, to some degree and sometimes astonishingly so, every single night. We are contenders, making the play and the evening and the emotion together. We are playmates, building a structure.[1]

Or as television, film, and stage actress Kim Cattrall has remarked: "Theatre is immediate, it's alive, you're there with the audience, it can't be done again and again and again and again, it's organic."[2]

In other words, we should always remember that as audience members we have an enormous effect on actors and actresses. They are buoyed up by a responsive audience and discouraged by an unresponsive one. Sometimes, if an audience is not reacting, they might try harder than ever to make contact. This is the case not only with comedy, where laughter is a clear gauge of the audience's response, but also with serious drama. Performers know whether or not spectators are caught up in the action. When audience members are involved in a serious play, they become very quiet; you can sense their fierce concentration. When an audience is not engaged, there may be noticeable coughing or rustling of programs. Reacting to this, actors and actresses will change their performances in subtle but very real ways.

THE AUDIENCE REACTS
The response of the audience affects the performance of the actors, who sense how a play or musical is being received by the spectators. In the scene here the audience at the Globe Theatre in London pays close attention to a performance of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* by William Shakespeare.
(©Gideon Mendel/Getty Images)

[1]Kerr, Walter, "We Call It 'Live Theater,' but Is It?" New York Times, January 2, 1972.
[2]Kim Catrall," Official London Theatre, January 14, 2005