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Performance Theory (Routledge Classics) (Volume 84)



Synopsis

Few have had quite as much impact in both the academy and in the world of theatre production as Richard Schechner. For more than four decades his work has challenged conventional definitions of theatre, ritual and performance. When this seminal collection first appeared, Schechner's approach was not only novel, it was revolutionary: drama is not just something that occurs on stage, but something that happens in everyday life, full of meaning, and on many different levels. Within these pages he examines the connections between Western and non-Western cultures, theatre and dance, anthropology, ritual, performance in everyday life, rites of passage, play, psychotherapy and shamanism.

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Customer Reviews

'Reading Performance Theory by Richard Schechner again, three decades after its first edition, is like meeting an old friend and finding out how much of him/her has been with you all along this way.'

— Augusto Boal

One of contemporary theatre's most celebrated directors, he is also a world-renowned artist and scholar.

Schechner's "Performance Theory" is a well-considered piece of research and commentary on the

deep importance and function of theater in human life. For me this is valuable background reading for my current research and much appreciated.

This is a great book and one that is indispensable for the theatre academic or practitioner. I had it in paper and I decided to buy it kindle format for convenience. There is one problem that I found in some of the kindle books: graphics are not well scanned - small fonts in the graphics are not readable.

Schechner's Performance Theory marks a watershed in the study of performance. It should be on the bookshelf of anyone concerned with theater, anthropology, or ritual.

There are a few foundational books I want to recommend first regarding the history of performance/literary theater: Not enough about classic work – Towards a Poor Theatre (Theatre Arts (Routledge Paperback)) primarily Grotowski, linked here, and newer more obscure work also linked in this review. Polish American poet Hedwig Gorski whose book linked here documents – Intoxication: Heathcliff on Powell Street – how they put Grotowski's Poor Theater into practice in the 1970s in a skewed way, maybe a sloppy American way compared to the long traditions of Polish theatre. The results were fascinating, to say the least. For those less interested in theory, you might be interested in knowing what the actors in the film My Dinner with Andre linked here – My Dinner with André – were discussing: Grotowski theatre exercises, theory, and practice. Years ago, I had the privilege of seeing a Grotowski trained actor from South America do a solo performance, and my life was changed forever. I highly recommend Grotowski essential book as a foundation theory for all the individual theater movements, including slam/hip hop of today, and the Gorski memoir and DVD I linked here as essential for anyone interested in the real history of American poetry in performance, solo theater, and the spoken word movement including slam.

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