

Guide To Devised Theater Second To None

Are you tired of traditional scripted plays? Do you crave theatrical performances that break the mold and invite you on a journey of creativity, collaboration, and innovation? Look no further! In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the world of devised theater, an extraordinary form of performance art that is second to none.

What is Devised Theater?

Devised theater, also known as collaborative, ensemble, or collective theater, is a unique approach to creating theatrical performances that involve an entire group of artists – actors, directors, designers, musicians, and more. Unlike traditional theater, where a script is written by a playwright, devised theater starts with little or no script at all. Instead, the ensemble collaboratively develops the content, structure, and themes of the production through improvisation and experimentation.

Devised theater combines elements from various disciplines, including theater, dance, music, visual arts, and even everyday life. The process fosters a highly collaborative and democratic environment, where all members of the ensemble have equal input and authority in shaping the final performance. It allows for unique storytelling that is fluid, dynamic, and thought-provoking.

Ensemble-Made Chicago: A Guide to Devised Theater (Second to None: Chicago Stories)

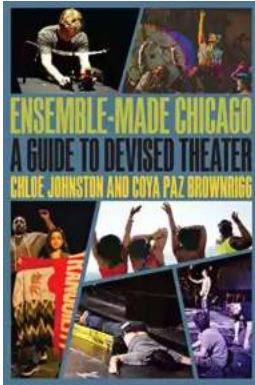
by Chloe Johnston(Kindle Edition)

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Why Devised Theater?

Devised theater offers an alternative to traditional theater that embraces the unknown and celebrates artistic freedom. It encourages artists to think outside the box, explore new ideas, and challenge conventional theater-making practices. Here are a few reasons why devised theater is second to none:

1. Unleash Your Creativity:

Devised theater provides a platform for artists to unleash their creativity fully. By starting with a blank canvas, performers can delve into uncharted territories and discover new and exciting artistic possibilities. With no limitations, the ensemble can explore unconventional narratives, experiment with diverse physicality, and push the boundaries of traditional storytelling.

2. Collaborative Spirit:

Collaboration lies at the heart of devised theater. This form of theater-making encourages the ensemble to work together as a cohesive unit, sharing ideas, inspiration, and innovations. Every member's input is valued, regardless of their role. The collaborative process fosters a strong sense of community among

ensemble members, leading to lifelong friendships and a deep appreciation for each other's contributions.

3. Unique and Timely Stories:

Devised theater allows for the exploration of unique and timely stories that reflect the concerns of our society. By drawing from personal experiences, current events, or social issues, the ensemble can create performances that resonate with audiences on a profound level. Devised theater provides a platform for underrepresented voices and marginalized communities, fostering a more inclusive and diverse theatrical landscape.

Steps to Creating a Devised Theater Piece

Creating a devised theater production involves a series of collaborative and creative steps. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you navigate the process:

1. Finding Inspiration:

The initial phase of devising a theater piece involves finding inspiration. This could come from a variety of sources, such as personal experiences, literature, visual art, or group discussions. The ensemble explores different ideas, themes, and motifs that resonate with the group's collective vision.

2. Research and Exploration:

Once a general direction is established, the ensemble dives into extensive research and exploration. This may involve reading, visiting relevant locations, conducting interviews, or experimenting with various forms of artistic expression. The goal is to gather as much information and inspiration as possible to inform the development of the piece.

3. Improvisation and Workshopping:

Through improvisation and workshopping, the ensemble begins to shape the performance. Scenes, characters, and narratives are developed collaboratively, allowing for experimentation and iteration. The performers explore different emotions, physicality, and relationships, weaving together a unique and cohesive tapestry of storytelling.

4. Refining and Rehearsing:

Once the core elements of the devised piece are in place, the ensemble focuses on refining and rehearsing the performance. This includes polishing the characterizations, fine-tuning the structure, and clarifying the narrative arc. Rehearsals often involve constructive feedback sessions and a constant quest for improvement.

5. Production and Performance:

After weeks or months of preparation, the devised theater piece is ready to be presented to an audience. The ensemble collaborates with designers, technicians, and other professionals to bring the performance to life. Each performance is unique, driven by the energy and connection between the artists and the audience.

Exploring Devised Theater Techniques

Devised theater incorporates a wide range of techniques and tools to enhance the storytelling experience. Here are a few commonly used techniques:

1. Viewpoints:

Viewpoints is an improvisational technique developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau that focuses on movement and spatial awareness. It helps the ensemble create dynamic stage pictures, explore physicality, and develop a heightened sense of ensemble connection.

2. Physical Theater:

Physical theater combines elements of movement, gesture, and physicality to communicate narratives without relying solely on verbal language. It allows the ensemble to convey emotions, relationships, and themes through the body, creating visually captivating scenes.

3. Object Transformation:

Object transformation involves using everyday objects in unconventional ways to enhance the storytelling. By assigning new meanings and functions to objects, the ensemble can create imaginative and unexpected narratives that constantly surprise and engage the audience.

Devised Theater Companies to Watch

If you are intrigued by devised theater and want to explore notable companies in the field, here are a few recommendations:

1. Complicite:

Complicite, based in the United Kingdom, is renowned for their visually stunning and intellectually stimulating devised theater productions. Their works, such as "The Encounter" and "A Disappearing Number," push the boundaries of traditional storytelling and immerse the audience in unique theatrical experiences.

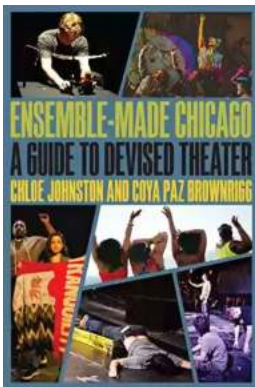
2. The Wooster Group:

The Wooster Group, a New York-based company, is known for their innovative and experimental devised theater pieces. Through their unconventional use of technology, multimedia, and physicality, they challenge traditional theatrical norms and create performances that provoke thought and ignite conversation.

3. Elevator Repair Service:

Elevator Repair Service, also based in New York, is renowned for their immersive and meticulously crafted devised theater productions. Their works, such as "Gatz" and "The Sound and the Fury," intricately blend text, movement, and design to reimagine classic literature and transport audiences into mesmerizing theatrical worlds.

Devised theater is a powerful and captivating form of performance art that is second to none. It celebrates collaboration, creativity, and the exploration of unique stories that resonate with our society. By embracing the unknown and breaking free from traditional theater-making practices, devised theater offers a transformative experience for both artists and audiences. So, step into the world of devised theater and prepare to be amazed!



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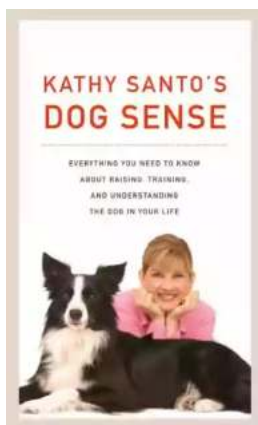


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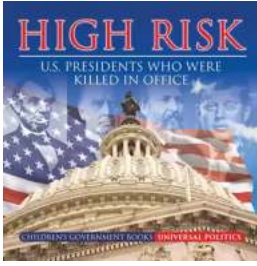
Ensemble-Made Chicago brings together a wide range of Chicago theater companies to share strategies for cocreating performance. Cocreated theater breaks down the traditional roles of writer, director, and performer in favor of a more egalitarian approach in which all participants contribute to the creation of original material. Each chapter offers a short history of a Chicago company, followed by detailed exercises that have been developed and used by that company to build ensemble and generate performances. Companies included range in age from two to fifty years, represent different Chicago neighborhoods, and reflect both the storefront tradition and established cultural institutions. The book pays special attention to the ways the fight for social justice has shaped the development of this aesthetic in Chicago.

Assembled from interviews and firsthand observations, Ensemble-Made Chicago is written in a lively and accessible style and will serve as an invaluable guide for students and practitioners alike, as well as an important archive of Chicago's vibrant ensemble traditions. Readers will find new creative methods to enrich their own practice and push their work in new directions.



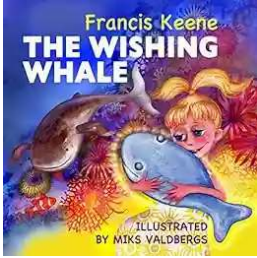
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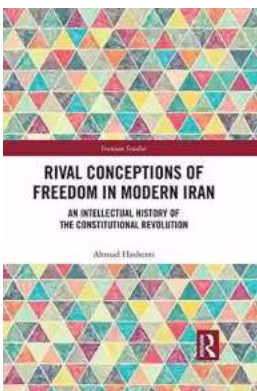
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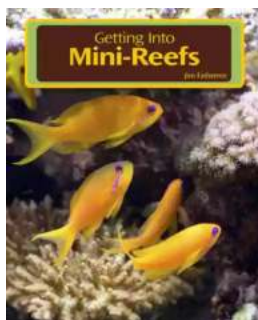
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