

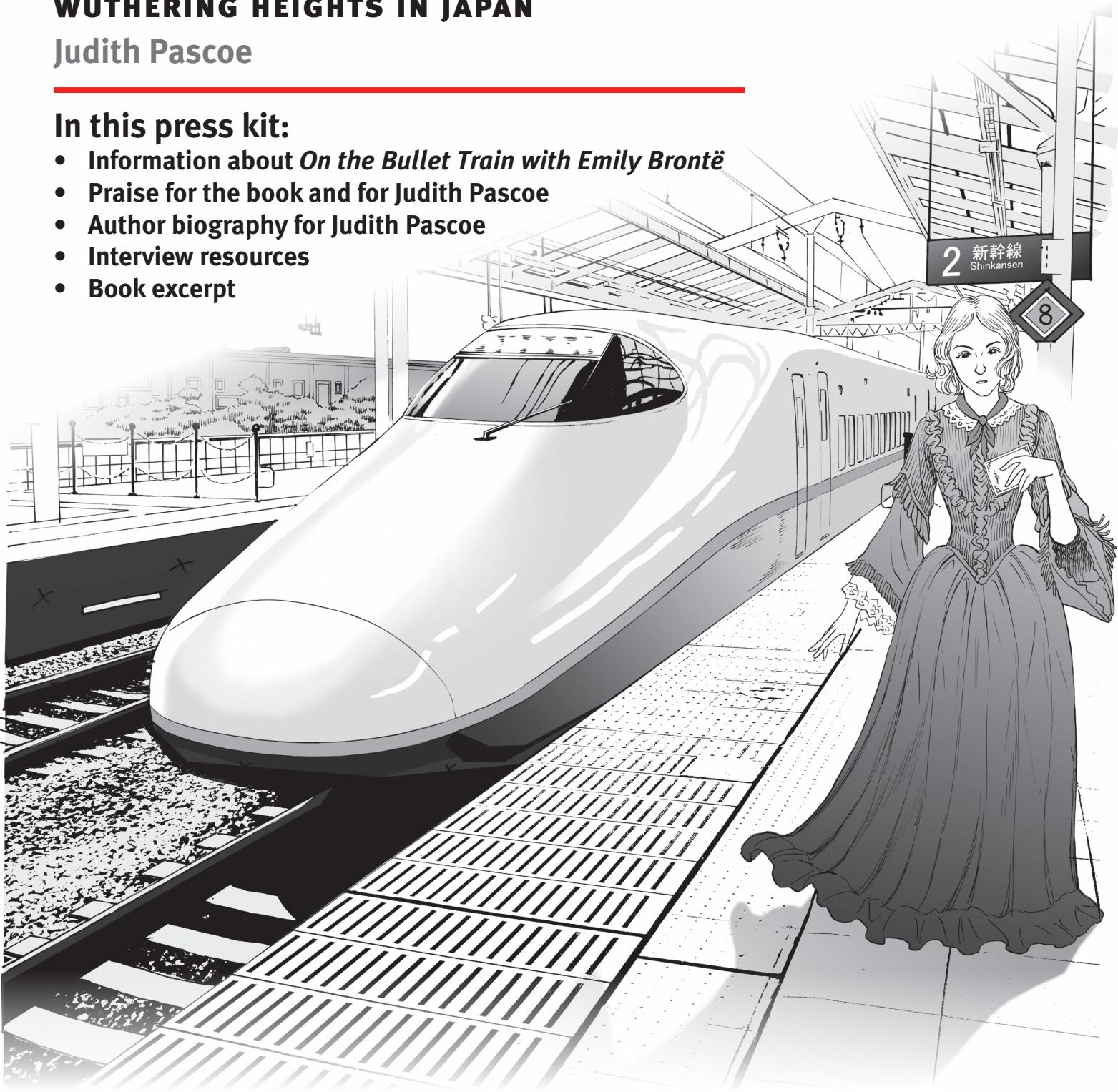
ON THE BULLET TRAIN WITH EMILY BRONTË

WUTHERING HEIGHTS IN JAPAN

Judith Pascoe

In this press kit:

- Information about *On the Bullet Train with Emily Brontë*
- Praise for the book and for Judith Pascoe
- Author biography for Judith Pascoe
- Interview resources
- Book excerpt



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ON THE BULLET TRAIN WITH EMILY BRONTË

WUTHERING HEIGHTS IN JAPAN

Judith Pascoe

Reveals how and why Brontë's novel won a huge following in Japan and has been re-imagined by writers and manga artists

While teaching in Japan, Judith Pascoe was fascinated to discover the popularity that Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* has enjoyed there. Nearly 100 years after its first formal introduction to the country, the novel continues to engage the imaginations of Japanese novelists, filmmakers, manga artists and others, resulting in numerous translations, adaptations, and dramatizations. *On the Bullet Train with Emily Brontë* is Pascoe's lively account of her quest to discover the reasons for the continuous Japanese embrace of *Wuthering Heights*, including quite varied and surprising adaptations of the novel. At the same time, the book chronicles Pascoe's experience as an adult student of Japanese. She contemplates the multiple Japanese translations of Brontë, as contrasted to the single (or non-existent) English translations of major Japanese writers. Carrying out a close reading of a distant country's *Wuthering Heights*, Pascoe begins to see American literary culture as a small island on which readers are isolated from foreign literature.

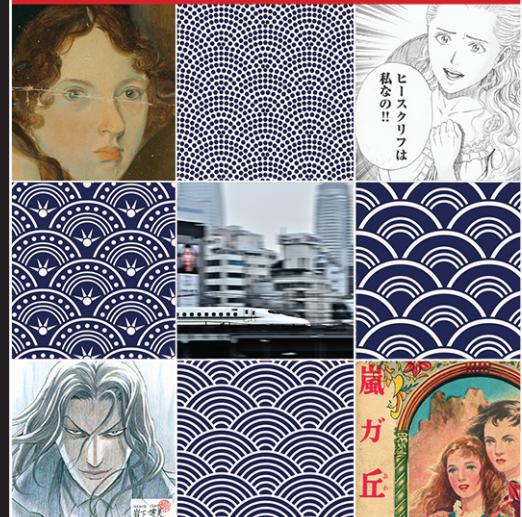
In this and in her previous book, *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files*, Pascoe's engaging narrative innovates a new scholarly form involving immersive research practice to attempt a cross-cultural version of reader-response criticism. *On the Bullet Train with Emily Brontë* will appeal to scholars in the fields of 19th-century British literature, adaptation studies, and Japanese literary history.

Judith Pascoe is Professor of English, University of Iowa. She is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in nonfiction, which supported work on this book.

JUDITH PASCOE

On the Bullet Train with Emily Brontë

Wuthering Heights in Japan



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Praise for the book and for Judith Pascoe

“A beautifully written, innovative book that brings together personal memoir and an ethnographic scholarly study of translation and transnational flows of culture focused around the reception of Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*. The author’s experience of Japan and the complex intersections of *Wuthering Heights* with Japanese culture are artfully layered and integrated.”

—Adela Pinch, University of Michigan



Praise for Pascoe’s previous work, *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice*

“The theatre scholar’s daunting but irresistible quest to recover some echoes of performance of the past has never been more engaging presented than in Pascoe’s account of tracing the long-silenced voice of Sarah Siddons. Her report is a warm, witty and highly informative exploration of the methodology and the pleasures of historical research.”

—Marvin Carlson, author of *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*

“Richly informed by archival research and theories of new media supplemented by first-hand experimentation, and written in a lively, first-person voice, *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files* is a vibrant and sure-to-be-influential work of scholarship.”

—Amy Muse, *Comparative Drama*

“Judith Pascoe, in her new book, *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice*, writes engagingly and humorously about the process of historical recovery.”

—Daniel Cavicchi, *The Ardent Audience*

“...a truly interdisciplinary study that is about much more than recovering Siddons’s lost voice. In her multifaceted investigations, Pascoe asks us to consider what it means to think about historical evidence in the absence of tangible documentation, an issue that theater historians have been tackling for many years, but which have just recently become a central interest of literary scholars.”

—Laura Engel, *Women’s Writing*

“Along the way, the author aptly developed her own voice—her gift for felicitous, first-person writing, still a skeptically viewed undertaking in academic monographs.... Pascoe succeeds in creating an account, personal and learned, of her quest.... She splices *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files* with lively writing... a literary counterpart to Siddons’s riveting voice.”

—*The Chronicle of Higher Education*



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ON THE BULLET TRAIN WITH EMILY BRONTË

WUTHERING HEIGHTS IN JAPAN

Judith Pascoe

About Judith Pascoe

Bio

Judith Pascoe teaches classes on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and culture at Florida State University, where she is the George Harper Professor in the Department of English. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, and a Fulbright Japan Lecturing Award. She directed of the University of Iowa's Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant project, entitled: The Newly Composed PhD: Writing Across Careers.

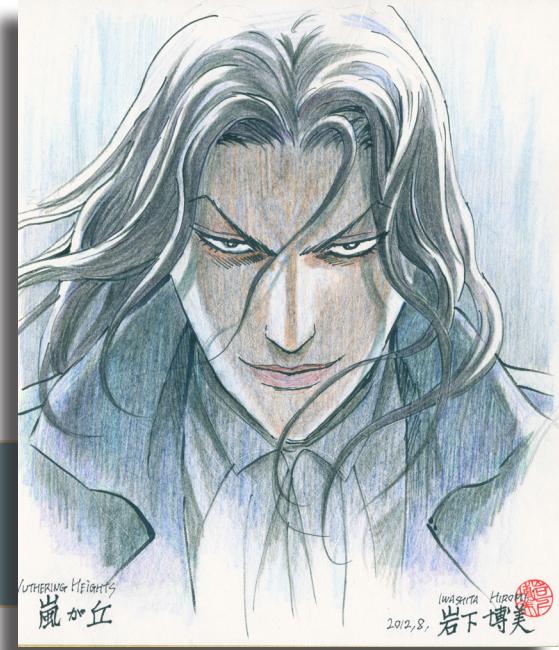
Selected Publications

Books:

- *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice*, University of Michigan Press, 2011
- *The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors*, Cornell University Press, 2006
- *Romantic Theatricality: Gender, Poetry, and Spectatorship*, Cornell University Press, 1997

Articles:

- “My Last Index,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 22 March 2012
- “Lockwood and Blackwood’s: *Wuthering Heights*, New Media, and Mediation,” *A Firm Persuasion: Essays in English Romanticism*, ed. Hatsuko Niimi and Masashi Suzuki (Tokyo: Sairyusha, 2012), 83-101
- “Romantic Voices and Sound Recording,” *Essays in English Romanticism* 34 (2010): 41-49
- “Ann Hatton’s Celebrity Pursuits,” *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, ed. Tom Mole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 245-163
- “Collect-Me-Nots,” *New York Times*, Op-Ed page, 17 May 2007
- “Tiny Tomes,” *The American Scholar* 75 (Summer 2006): 133-38
- “‘Unsex’d Females’: Barbauld, Robinson and Smith,” *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1740-1830*, ed. Tom Keymer and Jon Mee (Cambridge University Press, 2004): 211-26



Education

- Ph.D., English, University of Pennsylvania, 1992
- M.A., English, Syracuse University, 1984
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Interview Resources

Suggested Interview Questions

1. In your book you describe your own difficulty reading *Wuthering Heights*, and you write that many readers find it off-putting. Why is it a difficult novel for many readers to connect with?
2. What accounts for the novel's popularity in Japan?
3. What most surprised you about the ways in which the novel has been adapted in Japan?
4. Your book discusses the many manga versions of *Wuthering Heights*. How has manga shaped the novel's place in Japanese culture?
5. Your book focuses on adaptations but touches on translations as well. What about the language of the novel presents challenges in Japanese translations?
6. In the book you discuss some adaptations of the novel in which Catherine's famous line "I am Heathcliff" is absent, and others in which it is regarded as central. How does omitting or changing that line alter the story?
7. You also describe the absence of the "I am Heathcliff" line in your analysis of Mizumura Minae's literary adaptation, *A True Novel*, and describe speculating if a moment in the novel is Mizumura's version of the line, before pulling back and asking if you were "imposing the English sentence on a scene that could stand on its own, that could invoke meanings beyond those of Bronte." That seems to be a central tension in examining these adaptations. How did you balance the adaptations' meanings with those of the source material?
8. How did thinking about *Wuthering Heights* in this cultural context change your interpretation of the novel?
9. Your work is described as cross-cultural reader response criticism. What does that method of analysis involve?
10. What do you hope readers take away from this book?

About the Fulbright Program

The Fulbright Program provides competitive, merit-based grants for international educational exchange for students and scholars. It was founded by United States Senator J. William Fulbright in 1946. Operating in 160 countries, the program provides 8,000 grants annually. As a recipient of a Fulbright Lecturing Award for the 2009-2010 academic year, Dr. Pascoe taught American Literature and culture at Japan Women's University and Tsuda College, which formed the basis for this book.



About the Guggenheim Fellowship

The Guggenheim Fellowship supports individuals who have demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts. It was established in 1925 by former United States Senator and Mrs. Simon Guggenheim. Approximately 175 fellowships are awarded each year. Dr. Pascoe is a recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship in nonfiction for the 2012-2013 academic year, which supported her work on this book.



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Excerpt



INTRODUCTION

***Wuthering Heights* and the Pursuit of Mastery**

In 1987 a famous portrait of the Brontë sisters, painted by Branwell Brontë, was exhibited at a Japanese department store. In the painting, one of only two surviving portraits of Emily Brontë, the sisters look a little wooden, and if Emily did not, in actuality, have the biggest head of the three, then Branwell faltered when it came to proportions. John Elliot Cairns, who viewed the portrait at Haworth in 1858, called it “a shocking daub, not up to the rudest sign board style.” Others agreed; in 1914, the second wife of Charlotte Brontë’s husband found the portrait folded like a washcloth and left on top of a cupboard. Still, for Japanese Brontë fans, it must have seemed like a piece of the true cross had come to call on its distant pilgrims. The Brontë Society of Japan, with the support of the Seibu Department Store corporation, transported the portrait from the London National Portrait Gallery to Tokyo, and displayed it as the centerpiece of an exhibit whose title, roughly translated, read “*Wuthering Heights* Exhibition: The Running across the Heath Brontë Sisters’ World.” By roughly, I mean as it might be translated by someone who has not sufficiently mastered Japanese.

In the summer of 2009, I carried Emily Brontë’s novel *Wuthering Heights* to Japan as I began a yearlong stint as a Fulbright lecturer. When I arrived, I was unaware that the Brontë sisters were so popular in Japan that a department store had underwritten the transport of Branwell’s awkward portrait for an exhibit of the nineteenth-century literary canon, a screaming banshee of a book in the midst of well-mannered works. But I also selected *Wuthering Heights* as the sole volume in my traveling library because my personal relationship with the novel was uneasy. I’d read it (halfheartedly) in high school and (hermeneutically) in graduate school, but I didn’t get it in the way I get Charlotte Brontë’s novels or even the more challenging works of Henry James.

When I brought *Wuthering Heights* to Japan, I imagined experiencing the kind of single-minded absorption that Louis Renza enacts in *A White Heron*, in which he presents multiple readings of a single Sarah Orne



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Jewett story; that T. J. Clarke carries out in *The Sight of Death*, in which he visits and revisits the same two paintings; and that Geoff Dyer carries out in *Zona*, his obsessive meditation on Tarkovsky's *Stalker*. My fantasy was further fueled by a Derrida documentary in which the philosopher was asked whether he had read all of the books in his library. "No," he responded, "only four of them. But I read those very, very carefully."

My dream of mastering *Wuthering Heights* can also be traced to a lost rite of graduate school passage. Students in the class before mine had to pass a one-book exam and a fifty-book exam before commencing dissertation work. My class was tasked with passing only the fifty-book exam, that is, with demonstrating breadth, rather than breadth *and* depth of knowledge. It's easy to be nostalgic for an exam you never had to take. In my imagined version of the one-book exam's last invigilation, the final group of masters-in-training fill blue books with their vast accumulated knowledge of *Beowulf* or *Huckleberry Finn* or *The Tempest* while seated in the dome-shaped reading room of the old British Library, Karl Marx and Virginia Woolf scribbling nearby. When I resolved to concentrate on Emily Brontë's lone novel, I hoped to join the intellectual pantheon to which my upper classmates and their nineteenth-century progenitors belonged. "No one is more triumphant than the man who chooses a worthy subject and masters all its facts," wrote E. M. Forster with quaint confidence in 1927. When I resolved to focus on Emily Brontë's novel, I imagined that I, belatedly, would become more like the dauntingly knowledgeable specialists who taught me back when professors carried broken-spined, much-glossed copies of Milton. At a moment in the early twenty-first century when search and browse were on the ascendant, I would attempt to meet the past century's definition of a well-educated person.

That I would be rereading Brontë's novel in a country in whose language I was illiterate would make it less likely that I would start wandering across a different moor. I could avoid becoming distracted by the Brontë family history, which hangs over the literary works like Spanish moss over a graveyard. Because it is so implausible that geographically isolated siblings wrote some of the greatest works of nineteenth-century English literature, and because the family was beset by tragedy (Branwell and Emily were dead of tuberculosis within a year of *Wuthering Heights'* publication; their younger sister Anne succumbed to the same disease five months later), the Brontë family biography, as Henry James wrote, stands before us "as insistently as the vividest page of *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights*." Emily occupies an especially prominent place in the family lore despite (or, perhaps, because of) her slender biographical remains. In Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, the progenitor of all subsequent Brontë biographies, Emily only occasionally snaps into focus, most notably when Charlotte recalls her sister's love of the moors: "Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her;—out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side, her mind could make an Eden." Gaskell goes on to note that Emily studied German as she kneaded bread dough, and to describe her unhappy tenure as a teacher in the village of Halifax: "Emily—that free, wild, untameable spirit, never happy nor well but on the sweeping moors that gathered round her home—that hater of strangers, [was] doomed to live amongst them" (118). After her death, Emily became a specter haunting her sister's days. "The feeling of Emily's loss does not diminish as time wears on; it often makes itself most acutely recognized," Charlotte wrote. "It brings, too, an inexpressible sorrow with it; and then the future is dark" (307).

Contributing to Emily Brontë's mystique is the paltriness of her manuscript archive. "Her remains are so skeletal that the body seems to have gone missing altogether," Lucasta Miller writes. The juvenilia



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of Branwell and Charlotte Brontë has been treasured and preserved by collectors and librarians, but the fantasy Gondal saga that Emily and Anne composed as children survives only in fragmentary and conjectural form. Charlotte Brontë's collected letters take up three impressive volumes published by Oxford University Press. By contrast, the letters Emily Brontë wrote to her siblings did not survive long enough to secure the scholarly edition treatment. Only ephemeral bits of her personal writings are still extant, such as the fifteen-year-old Emily's much-quoted diary paper in which she writes, "The Gondals are discovering the interior of Gaaldine Sally mosley is washing in the back Kitchin."

The biggest absence of the many omissions that make up Emily Brontë's posthumous existence, however, is the loss of manuscript material from the last two years of her life, a period of time during which she is rumored to have been working on a second novel. Her biographer sternly asserts, "The absence of a manuscript of the novel (and of the Gondal prose) can be explained only by a deliberate act of destruction." All eyes turn to Charlotte, who carried out damage control on Emily's reputation, expressing discomfort with her sister's first novel by writing, "Whether it is right or advisable to create things like Heathcliff, I do not know; I scarcely think it is." Charlotte was justifiably embarrassed by press errors that proliferated in the first edition of *Wuthering Heights*. She complained, "The orthography and punctuation of the books are mortifying to a degree: almost all the errors that were corrected in the proof-sheets appear intact in what should have been the fair copies." But along with correcting these errors for the second edition, Charlotte also changed paragraph breaks, altered punctuation, regularized style, and altered dialect. Neither the original manuscript nor any draft pages of *Wuthering Heights* survive. The Emily Brontë who wrote *Wuthering Heights* speaks to us only through the unreliable first edition of the novel, and through a few scattered diary pages and school exercises.

That, for me, was a large part of her appeal. Emily Brontë's papers had already been *edited* in the ruthless manner I wished I could apply to my e-mail mailbox; there, 9,368 messages hovered, waiting for me to determine their future, to toss them in a virtual trash can or to "file" them according to some archival logic. I did not even want to think about the boxes of paper letters that I had transported through three moves because I didn't have the nerve to throw them out without opening them, and because, if I opened them, I'd become thirteen again. Brontë seemed to have sheared through the world as cleanly as a knife, leaving only *Wuthering Heights* behind her.

Before I embarked on the Fulbright year, I made a start on learning Japanese, enrolling in my university's first-year Japanese class, which I attended daily, earning a reputation as the weakest student in the class. In a log I kept of my language-learning experience that first year, I penned an observation that proved prescient: "Nearly every day I have the humbling thought that I am not up to the task. I can't pull up the right word on command, and drop it into the correct spot in a sentence—I've got the beads but I can't string them into a necklace." After one discouraging class meeting, I noted: "Next week we have to read a paragraph of Japanese text for an oral quiz, reading at 'certain speed,' a phrase *sensei* said while looking pointedly at me."

The Japanese writing system is made up of two syllabaries (*hiragana* and *katakana*) used in tandem with Chinese characters (kanji), 2,136 of which are deployed in common usage (the total number of kanji is approximately 50,000). Over the course of first-year Japanese, I learned 90 of the common-use kanji. Knowing a little Japanese was better than knowing no Japanese at all. If nothing else, it allowed me to



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appreciate the difficulty of what I expected the Japanese students in my American literature classes at Japan Women's University and Tsuda College to be able to do. Achieving the ability to read a literary classic in another language often serves as a benchmark of foreign language acquisition. My Japanese students could almost read English-language literature, whereas the ability to read Japanese literature was for me a distant aspiration. Even after I returned to Iowa and completed second-, third-, and fourth-year Japanese classes, I could only dream of being able to read with confidence and ease.

Still, knowing a little Japanese allowed me to glean that the Japanese title of *Wuthering Heights* is 嵐ヶ丘, which is read *Arashi ga oka*. One day, while running my eyes over the display racks in the Kinokunika bookstore, its Japanese literary offerings dispiritingly beyond my ken, I recognized the *Arashi ga oka* characters on the book jacket of a manga volume. The image on the cover of Ôgi Yuzuha's manga depicts a grand turreted mansion in front of which a man sports a windswept coif of a style favored by Japanese pop idols. On the book jacket the big-haired man puts his hand down the unzipped jeans of a blonde young man, who seems unfazed by this development. Emily Brontë's novel tells the story of Heathcliff, a Liverpool orphan who is raised as Catherine Earnshaw's childhood companion, and whom she abandons in order to marry Edgar Linton, the insipid son of an affluent neighbor. The rejected Heathcliff, resorting to furious revenge, marries Linton's sister Isabella, whom he loathes, and uses their child as a pawn to manipulate the daughter of Catherine and Edgar Linton. Brontë's novel presents a lantern slide show of riveting tableaux—a ghost child scratching at a window, a baby falling over a bannister, a dog hanging from a bridle hook—but it does not, so far as I recalled, depict an erotic encounter between two young men. Intrigued, I purchased Ôgi's manga and carried it home for closer analysis.

Electronic dictionary at my elbow, I applied myself to the manga with the assiduousness of a serious scholar. The blonde man, Reona, I discovered, arrives to take a job at the mansion and, while grooming a horse in the nude (Reona, that is, although the horse, too, wears no clothing), is spotted by Kaizaki, the big-haired man. Before long, Reona is buffing Kaizaki's shoes, and Kaizaki is whipping Reona's buttocks. Ôgi's manga belongs to a genre known as *yaoi*, featuring sexual relations among men, drawn by female manga artists, and targeted at female readers. Why had the Japanese title of *Wuthering Heights* been grafted onto a homoerotic manga, I asked my teenage daughters, who knew more about manga than I did, but who were reluctant to discuss the *yaoi* genre with their mother. By invoking the title of Brontë's novel, had Ôgi Yuzuha tried to give Kaizaki a Heathcliffian aura? Was *Wuthering Heights* so well known in Japan that *Arashi ga oka* had come to have a life of its own, evoking, in an untethered kind of way, tormented lovers or windswept moors or something else that was uniquely understood by Japanese people? These were questions that wanted answering as I wandered around with my English-language edition of *Wuthering Heights*, which now seemed tepid in comparison to Ôgi's version.



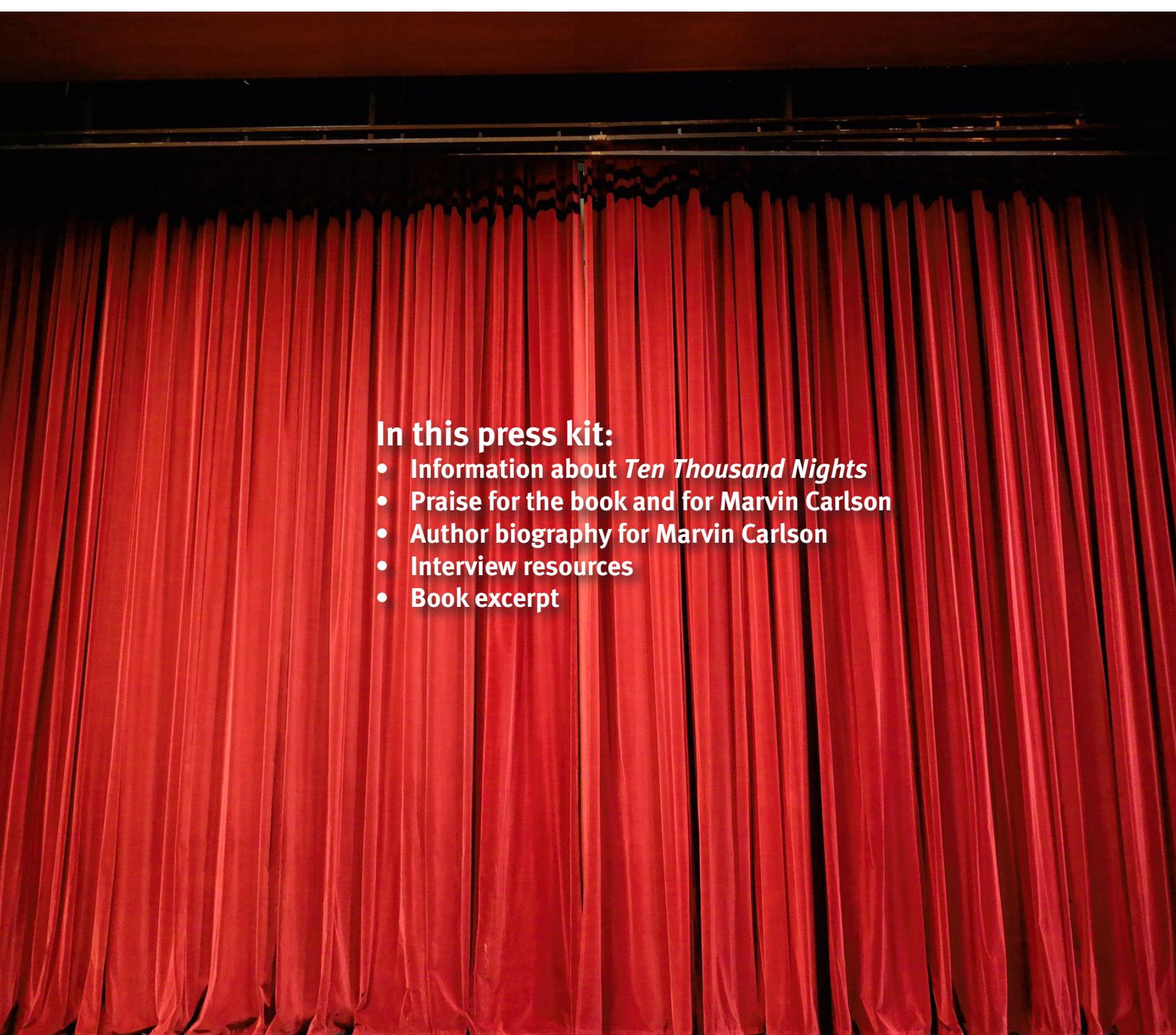
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TEN THOUSAND NIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FIFTY YEARS OF THEATER-GOING

Marvin Carlson



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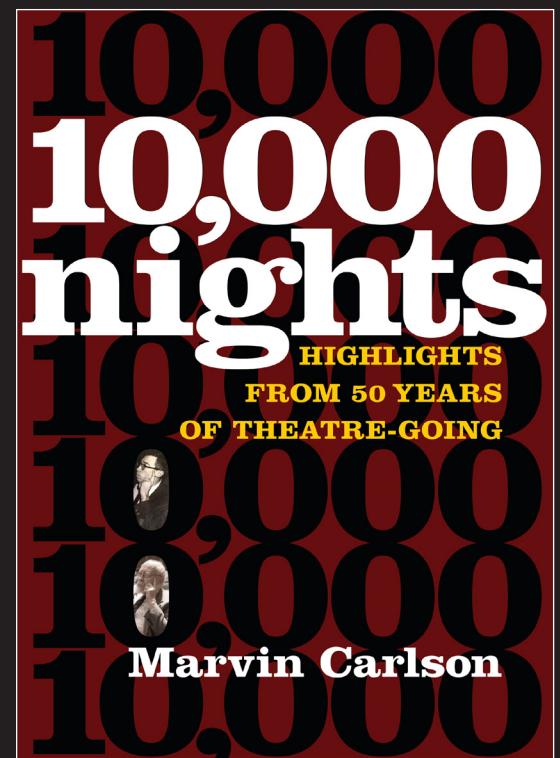
Relives essential moments and remarkable achievements in modern theatre, from the 1960s to the present

Marvin Carlson is the Sidney E. Cohn Distinguished Professor of Theatre, Comparative Literature and Middle Eastern Studies at the City University of New York and director of the Marvin Carlson Theatre Center at the Shanghai Theatre Academy. His many influential books have been translated into fifteen languages.

Esteemed scholar and theater aficionado Marvin Carlson has seen an unsurpassed number of theatrical productions in his long and distinguished career. *Ten Thousand Nights* is a lively chronicle of a half-century of theatre-going, in which Carlson recalls one memorable production for each year from 1960 to 2010. These are not conventional reviews, but essays using each theater experience to provide an insight into the theater and theatre-going at a particular time. The range of performances covered is broad, from edgy experimental fare to mainstream musicals, most of them based in New York but with stops at major theater events in Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Milan, and elsewhere. The engagingly written pieces convey a vivid sense not only of each production but also of the particular venue, neighborhood, and cultural context, covering nearly all significant movements, theater artists, and groups of the late twentieth century.

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Praise for the book and for Marvin Carlson:

“The appeal of this book extends far beyond academia . . . To people who work in theatre, it offers an exhilarating excursion through the great achievements of the past half-century; to theatre lovers, a delightful memory palace as well as supplement to our own cherished recollections of great performances; finally, to students and young artists, an inspiring invitation to embark on their own lifelong voyages of artistic discovery.”

—Una Chaudhuri, New York University

“*10,000 Nights* brings back to life some of the greatest theatre productions of the last five decades. Marvin Carlson has been a passionate theatre goer not only in New York but in London, Paris, Berlin, and Moscow as well, witnessing some of the most exciting European productions of the era. Only Marvin Carlson could have written such a wonderful and engaging theatre history.”

—Erika Fischer-Lichte, Freie Universität Berlin

“Marvin Carlson has probably attended more performances than any other person on the planet . . . One couldn’t ask for a more amiable, passionate, astute, and knowledgeable guide to a rich halfcentury of work for the stage.”

—Alisa Solomon, Columbia School of Journalism

“*10,000 Nights* is the memoir of a journey by the man who may well have seen more performances over half a century than any theater-goer at any time in history. Carlson begins his story in Kansas c. 1953 in sepia tones, but the Yellow Brick Road he travels for a lifetime bursts into brilliant technicolor as it passes over the rainbow and through multiple genres, styles, venues, nations, and languages. Follow it with him, and I guarantee that you will meet many unforgettable characters along the way.”

—Joseph Roach, Sterling Professor of Theater, Yale University



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About Marvin Carlson

Marvin Carlson has been a significant voice in theater for nearly 60 years. Born in Wichita, Kansas in 1935, Carlson's first exposure to professional theater was a road show of *John Brown's Body*, which Carlson saw in 1953, at the age of eighteen. That production left a lasting impression on Carlson. He went on to study English at the University of Kansas, earning a B.A. in 1957 and an M.A. in 1959, before earning his Ph.D. in Drama and Theater from Cornell University in 1961.

Determined to move into the New York orbit, it was at Cornell that Carlson began regularly attending performances on and off Broadway: "With graduate student energy and determination, we would often drive down on a Saturday morning, see three shows that day (a matinee in the afternoon and two shows in the evening, since at that time most off-Broadway theatres offered two showings Saturday evenings.)"

Carlson was a professor at Cornell's Department of Theater Arts from 1961 to 1979, during which time he continued to regularly attend performances in New York and elsewhere. In 1979, he accepted a position at Indiana University's theater department. While Carlson appreciated Bloomington's renowned opera program, as well as the nearby Chicago theater scene, he writes, "New York remained my theater center." In 1986, he joined the faculty at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where he is a Distinguished Professor of Theater and Comparative Literature.

A prolific scholar, Carlson has written 19 books and over 100 articles on theater, but as Yale University Professor Joseph Roach observes, "He always writes in a language intelligible to anyone who loves the stage."

Much of his historical scholarship examines the revolutionary origins of modern theater, with book-

"In the work of a lifetime, some exceptional scholars will significantly deepen the ongoing conversation in their fields. Others, rarer still, will change the subject. Of the course of a fifty-year career in theater studies, Marvin Carlson has done both." —Joseph Roach

length studies including *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (1966), *French Stage in the Nineteenth Century* (1972), *German*

Stage in the Nineteenth Century (1972), *Goethe and the Weimar Court Theatre* (1978), *The Italian Stage from Goldoni to D'Annunzio* (1981), and *Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century* (1998).

Language holds a place of honor in Carlson's work, evidenced by his 2006 volume, *Speaking in Tongues*, as well as his numerous translations of plays from French, Spanish, and Arabic, which he mastered late in his career and which led to authoritative research on theater of the Arabic-speaking world.

Drawing connections across times and cultures, Carlson has become a leading voice in bringing critical theory to theater studies, exemplified by his books *Theories of Theatre* (1984) and *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life* (1990). He also wrote Routledge's *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (1996) and Oxford University Press's *Theatre: A Very Short Introduction* (2014). His scholarly writing has been widely anthologized and has been translated into fifteen languages. In 2009, his former students honored his fifty year career with a collection of essays, *Changing the Subject: Marvin Carlson and Theatre Studies 1959-2009*.

Carlson's later work examines the centrality of memory to the experience of theater. His 2001 book, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, won the Joe A. Callaway Prize for Best Book on Drama and Theatre. In it, he writes, "Just as one might say that every play might be called *Ghosts*, so, with equal justification, one might argue that every play is a memory play."

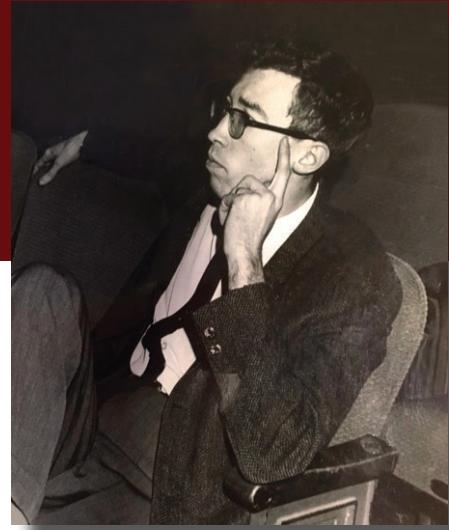
Carlson further explores that theme of memory in his forthcoming memoir, *10,000 Nights*. Having retained that energy for theater-going that he first showed as a graduate student, he writes, "I am almost overwhelmed by the range and richness of theatre it has been my privilege to experience."



Interview Resources

Suggested interview questions

1. Your book is comprised of essays on your theater-going experiences that are presented year by year. Why did you decide to organize your memoir in this way?
2. For your book you selected just one representative production per year. Were there any performances that you particularly regret not making the cut?
3. What are the main ways in which the Western theater world has changed over the course of the half century that you have been attending the theater?
4. The book focuses on the New York theater scene but also discusses some productions in Europe and elsewhere. How does New York theater differ from the rest of the world? And how has New York's role in the global theater scene evolved?
5. You discuss in the coda "the centrality of memory to the experience of all theater." Why is memory central, and how have your thoughts on that centrality shaped your experiences of the theater?
6. Do you have a theater-going experience that you remember particularly fondly?
7. How has your scholarly work on the history of theater influenced your experience of the theater? And how has your theater-going influenced your scholarship?
8. What makes a production create a lasting impact on audiences and on the culture at large?
9. You mention in the book that, "Any actor undertaking a revival must deal with the ghosts of his predecessors in a role." How do performers (or directors) deal with those ghosts to make a production new?
10. What do you hope readers take away from this book?



Recent Publications

Books:

- *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, University of Michigan Press, 2001
- *Speaking in Tongues: Languages at Play in the Theatre*, University of Michigan Press, 2006
- *Hamlet's Shattered Mirror: Theatre and the Real*, University of Michigan Press, 2016

Articles:

- "Living History, Re-enactment," *Performance Studies: Key Words, Concepts and Theories*, ed. Bryan Reynolds, Palgrave, 2014
- "Keynote Address: Whose Space Is It, Anyway?" *Theatre Symposium: A Journal of the Southeastern Theatre Conference*, Vol. 24, no. 1, 2016
- "Theatre of the Sixties—The German Connection," *The Sixties Center Stage*, eds. James Harding and Cynthia Rosenthal, University of Michigan Press, 2016

Translations:

- *Theatre From Medieval Cairo: The Ibn Daniyal Trilogy* by Ibn Daniyal (translated from Arabic with Safi Mahfouz), 2013
- *Four Plays from Syria* by Sad'allah Wannous (translated from Arabic with Safi Mahfouz), 2014
- *The Trilogy of Future Memory* by Jalila Baccar (translated from French with Fadhel Jaïbi), 2015

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TEN THOUSAND NIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FIFTY YEARS OF THEATER-GOING

Marvin Carlson

Excerpt

1997 Julie Taymor's *The Lion King*

A new chapter opened in Broadway theatre history with the presentation of Disney's *The Lion King* at the reopened New Amsterdam Theatre on Forty-Second Street in 1997. Not only did this solidify the increasing presence of the Disney corporation on Broadway, a development that elicited sharply mixed reactions in the theatre world, but even more important, this became a kind of keystone in changing the most crime-ridden block in the city back to the entertainment center it had been in the opening decades of the century.

Of course, like any New York theatre-goer I was acutely aware of these developments, but what spurred me to attend the New Amsterdam while its first show was still in previews, at the end of October 1997, was not the much-publicized renovation, nor even the show itself, based on one of the most popular recent Disney films, but the director, Julie Taymor, whom I at that time I considered one of the most exciting and innovative theatre artists in the city.

Up until the 1990s, I had paid little attention to puppet theatre, except for the Bread and Puppet theatre, reflecting the common bias that it was primarily a children's entertainment, but the work of Taymor, herself a former member of Bread and Puppet, opened my eyes to a whole new world of possibilities for that art. I became better and better acquainted with her work during this decade, as it appeared at a variety of off-Broadway venues, but the two works that led me to view *The Lion King* with such anticipation were two productions I saw in 1996: the Latin American myth / fairy tale *Juan Darien*, which I saw at St. Clement's Church, and Carlo Gozzi's *The Green Bird*, which I saw at the New Victory.

Although the New Amsterdam was considered the theatre that was key to the revitalization of Forty-Second Street, the New Victory was in fact the first of the street's historic theatres to reopen after decades of neglect or conversion into X-rated film houses. Various schemes for the reclaiming of the street had been advanced for years, but serious change did not come until the early 1990s, when the Urban Development Corporation, which during the previous decade had condemned and appropriated the majority of properties in the neighborhood, marked out seven theatres on the street for restoration and when Mayor Giuliani, by insisting on tougher enforcement of quality-of-life legislation, forced out most of the remaining sex businesses in the area.

Forty-Second Street had a very strange feeling when I attended *The Green Bird*, one of the first offerings of the newly reopened New Victory, in the spring of 1996. The theatre itself, with a beautiful partly restored and partly rebuilt interior, was one of the city's most attractive, and the restored monumental staircase in



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front made a powerful statement. The theatre seemed very much a part of the busy world of Times Square just a few steps to the east, but the long block to the west, leading to Port Authority, seemed sterile and desolate, with most of its businesses and theatres locked and vacant, and only a few small stores still operating. The major activity was across the street, where scaffolding surrounded the New Amsterdam, still being prepared for reopening.

Although I was eager to see Taymor's new venture, many in the theatre community had misgivings. How would this unconventional experimental artist who had achieved such remarkable success with limited means work productively with a monster concern and the commercial orientation of the Disney enterprises? Such questions quite dominated more mundane but often-expressed concerns, such as how Taymor could represent a stampede of thousands of wildebeests on stage.

In fact Taymor triumphed equally on both fronts. Her *Lion King* was an unqualified success both commercially and artistically and established her with the general public in a position of prominence that she already enjoyed among off-and off-off-Broadway audiences. It proved one of Disney's most successful theatre ventures and became the cornerstone not only of that organization's presence in New York, but of the renewal of the Times Square theatre district.

The renewal was clearly in process when, not willing to wait for the official opening in November, I attended an October 1997 preview. This whole end of the block was now lively, with the New Victory already open across the street and the new Ford Center (a few doors west of it, created by combining the old Lyric and Apollo Theatres) already selling tickets for its official opening in December with *Ragtime*. Disney had also acquired the property next to the New Amsterdam on the east and was converting it into a major retail outlet for Disney products, to be connected to the theatre.

Simply entering the New Amsterdam was a stunning experience. I had been impressed by the elegance of the restored New Victory, but the New Amsterdam far surpassed it in its art nouveau splendor, every detail of which had been lovingly restored not only in the lavish auditorium, but in the elegant multilevel public spaces—lobbies, bars, smoking rooms—not only more lavishly appointed, but more spacious than those of almost any other Times Square theatre. Everywhere were glowing bas-reliefs, floral bouquets, overflowing bowls of fruit, peacocks, smiling girls' faces festooned with wreaths, flowers and lighted bulbs, rows of elaborate and heavy baroque chandeliers, allegorical figures in glowing pastels celebrating such concepts as "Progress," in the midst of erupting terra-cotta gardens. Before the show, during the intermission, and afterward I wandered through this art nouveau fairyland that offered some new and dazzling visual treat around every corner or turn of the stairs. The interior was similarly lavish, and again a riot of pastel colors, art nouveau vegetation, sweeping curves, and monumental allegorical frescos. Two sweeping balconies terminated in a charming set of little rounded boxes that carried on into the elegantly appointed proscenium arch.

Even expecting to be stunned and dazzled by the visual power and imagination of Julie Taymor, I have to admit that the first ten minutes of *The Lion King* were among the most overwhelming I have ever experienced in the theatre. The opening number, the "Circle of Life," was introduced by the solitary figure of the Shaman Rafiki, in a sense the narrative center of the production. Rafiki's costume, an elaborate construction of fabric, feathers, beads, bracelets, and hairpieces, suggested the heavily textured costume of a character in an African ritual drama, while his elaborate, multicolored facial masks suggested the



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face painting of kathakali or Chinese opera. As he sang the opening lines, an enormous sun of orange rippling fabric rose behind him, and the first figures summoned forth passed in silhouette in front of it, two remarkable “giraffes” created by actors on six-foot stilts with an extended neck and head built up from their shoulders and two longer poles extending from their arms to make the front legs. Other figures flooded the stage—animals, birds, and perhaps most beautifully, the grasslands of the savanna itself, represented by a whole chorus line of figures, each with a large headdress representing a bed of grass and with flowing floor-length diaphanous robes that as they whirled about the stage seemed literally to bring the earth itself to life.

Then came the real spectacle. The figures summoned by Rafiki to the assemblage no longer appeared from the sides of the stage, but from every part of the theatre, down the aisles, through the balconies and the hanging boxes, across the airspace above us. The entire theatre seemed filled with a dizzying array of birds and animals—the majority of them full-size puppets ingeniously built onto the bodies of actors with poles, wheels, physical extensions, and masks. The figures bore a striking resemblance to the animal originals and yet were also clearly theatricalized machines—four bodies made up one huge elephant and two a lumbering rhinoceros, leaping figures with cutout animal silhouettes represented gazelles, a cheetah was played by a Bunraku puppet manipulated by a cat-clad operator. The central lion figures wore imposing lion masks like headdresses, with fully exposed human faces beneath creating a powerful double focus.

The story itself, the coming of age of the young lion king, was almost lost in the unfolding display of one stunning visual effect or dance scene after another. Even the much-anticipated and demanding stampede scene did not disappoint, but in fact provided one of the most memorable sequences of this remarkable evening. In one of the story’s most powerful and frightening sequences, the young lion Samba and his father are lured by the villainous Scar into a stampede of wildebeests, in which the father is killed.

The Disney film created this sequence in a wide variety of shifting perspectives, looking at the hundreds of wildebeests racing through a narrow canyon from above, beneath, almost every possible angle, with constantly increasing tension. Taymor’s challenge was to find a theatrical equivalent of this spectacle and her version was, like much of her work, simple, ingenious, and stunning. Large, reddish-earth-colored pieces on the sides of the stage suggested the canyon walls, and the stampede first appeared, as it does in the film, as tiny wildebeest figures dashing from top to bottom of a rotating screen at the back of the stage. Then, as they dashed through the canyon toward us, new ranks of frantically dancing wildebeests poured in from the sides, wearing larger and more threatening horned masks with each new row as they approached the audience, until the entire stage space was filled with savagely dancing figures, while in the distance tiny new figures still appeared.

When I left the production, dazzled and exhilarated, I enjoyed a final turn around the lovingly restored fairy-tale-like lobby space, and as I made my way back out toward the urban reality of modern Forty-Second Street I passed under the huge terra-cotta bas relief bearing at the top the legend “progress.” It brought me up short, thinking how appropriate it must have seemed to the first audiences in this bold new theatre, the first erected in the Times Square area, in 1903, almost a century before. They were leaving this lavish new venture after seeing the appropriate inaugural production, a suitably specular *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Then, at the dawn of what would later be called the Progressive Era, in a theatre opening a new part of the city to dramatic entertainment, the motto seemed totally appropriate.



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What then, about 1997, when the unalloyed vision of “progress” had taken such a battering in the previous century and when this dazzling new venture could not escape the now much more contradictory emotions that word aroused? For many this unquestionably successful new venture was seen as the long-awaited turning point that would restore Times Square to the position of entertainment capital of America, while others worried about the cultural and social price this might exact. A few voices continued to speak nostalgically even of the crime-ridden old Forty-Second Street, missing its gritty reality, its edginess, and its representation of free speech, even of the most socially questionable type. Others, a much larger group, worried about the “Disneyfication” of the area, turning Forty-Second Street into a kind of entertainment theme park, devoted to consumption and merchandising, centrally represented by the large new Disney store directly connected to the ornate lobbies of the restored New Amsterdam.

From these perspectives, the evocation of progress had a distinctly ironic ring. In the glow of the experience of *The Lion King*, however, I felt few such misgivings. Leaving the theatre amid a delighted crowd, seeing another crowd gathered at the New Victory across the street, and seeing the soon-to-open Ford Center just a few doors down, it seemed to me that the return of the live theatre to this formerly forbidding areawas unquestionably a cause for celebration, and that even the heavily loaded term “progress” was not an inappropriate one.



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ELLEN STEWART PRESENTS

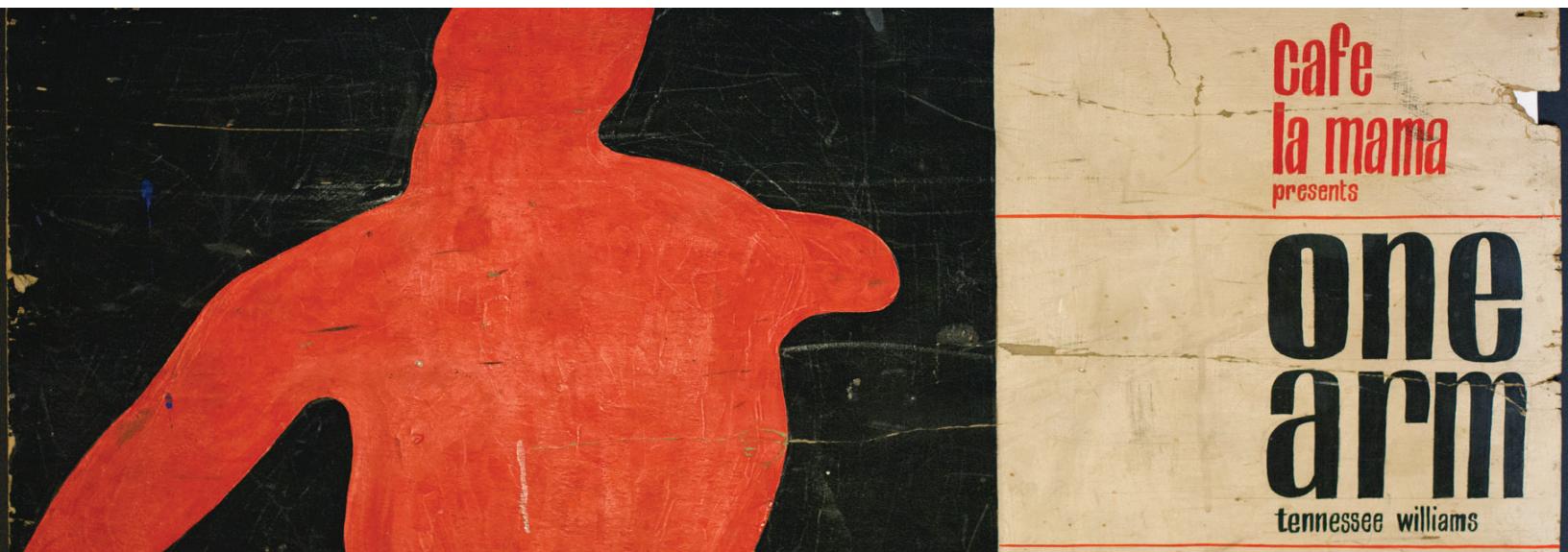
FIFTY YEARS OF LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

Cindy Rosenthal



In this press kit:

- Information about *Ellen Stewart Presents*
- Praise for the book and for La Mama Experimental Theatre Club
- Author biography for Cindy Rosenthal
- About Ellen Stewart
- Interview resources
- Book excerpt



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ELLEN STEWART PRESENTS

FIFTY YEARS OF LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

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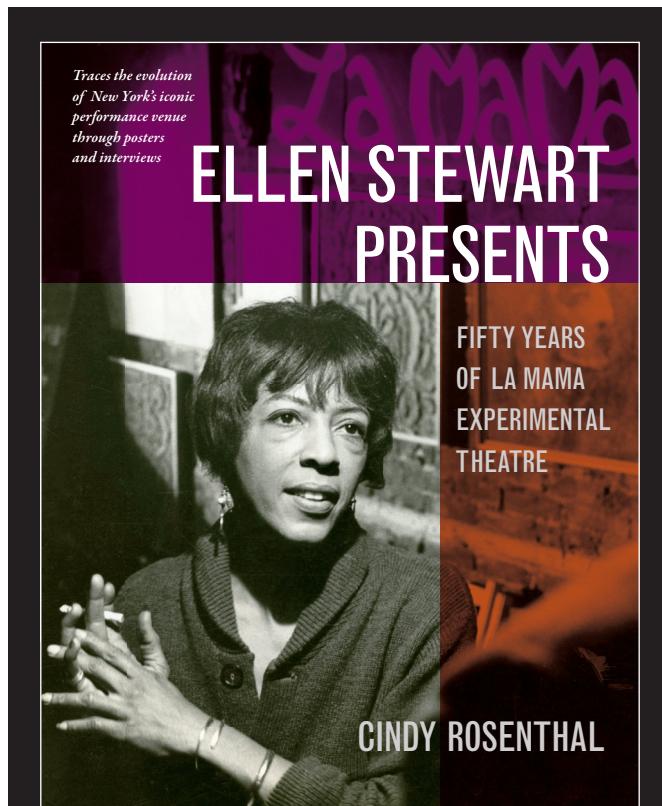
A stunning visual chronicle of New York's iconic performance venue

Ellen Stewart (1919–2011) was the single most important figure in the history of American avant-garde theater and performance art. Founder of La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, Stewart was responsible for a staggering array of productions and for fostering the early work of directors, playwrights, actors, composers, and performance artists. Active until her death at age 91, Stewart also established a highly regarded workshop for directors and playwrights in Umbria, after receiving the prestigious MacArthur grant in 1985.

Although she was a vital force in American theater for decades, Stewart resisted attempts to have the story of La MaMa written until five years before her death. Following Stewart's vision for this book, theater scholar Cindy Rosenthal relates the history of La MaMa through its performance posters, capturing the irreverence and the aesthetic of La MaMa over five decades. Richly illustrated, including posters and photographs of early productions and other rarely-seen photos, and featuring interviews with a wide range of now-famous La MaMa alums, *Ellen Stewart Presents* is a book for theater aficionados and anyone interested in the history of Off-Off-Broadway, the cultural history of New York City, or visual culture from the '60s to the present.

Cindy Rosenthal is Professor of Drama and Dance, Hofstra University.

This books was produced with the help of a grant from Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.



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ELLEN STEWART PRESENTS

FIFTY YEARS OF LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

Cindy Rosenthal

Praise for the book and for La Mama Experimental Theatre Club:



“No one empowered and unleashed more artistic freedom than Ellen Stewart. Her unique ability to make a haven for creative expression is here glimpsed through the posters of productions spanning her indelible career. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Ellen for the multitude of artists she nurtured—birthed, in a true sense. Here’s a record of that amazing era that we, Ellen’s ‘babies,’ will always hold as dear as our trusting innocence.”

—Diane Lane, Oscar-nominated actor

“What a gift to have this unique lens and perspective on history through the book’s extraordinary collection of posters and interviews from La MaMa’s remarkable community of artists. The book allows us not only to witness moments from that history, but through its visual representations of the productions, to observe the culture and politics of New York City over five decades. For us at La MaMa it is essential to understand where we came from in order to dream fully about where we are going—and this book will make that possible, for generations to come.”

—Mia Yoo, Artistic Director, La MaMa Experimental Theatre



“Through the physical nature of the poster, its relationship to performance, and the actual poster-making process, Rosenthal found a way to provide a linkage for all the disparate, uncommon, and almost otherworldly theatre that was and is the mainstay of this important theatre institution . . . using the poster as a kind of key in the lock of Stewart’s impenetrably mysterious personal connection with her theatre, its history, and the magic of her artistic entrepreneurship, to provide insight into the nature of how she worked over fifty years to create an artistic home for some of the world’s most important theatrical artists. It is a fascinating and rather gorgeous way into the heart of what has made La MaMa and Ellen Stewart a place of magic in the theatre.”

—David Crespy, University of Missouri



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About Cindy Rosenthal



Cindy Rosenthal with Ellen Stewart

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Bio

Theater historian, performer, and director Cindy Rosenthal is Professor of Drama and Dance at Hofstra University. She teaches acting, play analysis, dramatic literature, theatre studies and women's studies.

Rosenthal first met Ellen Stewart in 2002 and forged the relationship that led to this book.

Education

- PhD, Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University (1997)
- MA, Performance, Gallatin Division in Literature, New York University (1989)
- BA, English and Drama, Tufts University (1976)

Selected Publications

Articles:

- "Ellen Stewart: La Mama of Us All," *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Summer 2006
- "The Personal, the Political, the Gardens and NYU," *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 46, No. 3, Fall 2002

Volumes edited:

- *Living on Third Street: Hanon Reznikov's Plays of the Living Theatre 1989-1992*, Autonomedia, 2008

Volumes co-edited with James Harding:

- *Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theatres and Their Legacies*, University of Michigan Press, 2006
- *The Rise of Performance Studies: Rethinking Richard Schechner's Broad Spectrum*, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011
- *The Sixties, Center Stage: Mainstream and Popular Performances in a Turbulent Decade*, University of Michigan Press, 2017

Forthcoming Books

- *Ellen Stewart Presents: Fifty Years of La Mama Experimental Theater*, University of Michigan Press, 2017

Productions

For Hofstra's Drama Department, Dr. Rosenthal has directed *Fiddler on The Roof* (Fall 2015), *The Burial at Thebes* (Fall 2014), *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Fall 2007), *Nickel and Dimed* (Fall 2009), *Rent* (Fall 2011) and *This Bud of Love*, a one-hour adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Dr. Maureen McFeely, which toured local high schools (Spring 2013). She directed the world premieres of two productions by Hofstra alumnus Isaac Rathbone, *Undeclared History* (2011), about the Vietnam War, and *The Bonus Army* (2012), about the activism of World War I veterans during the Depression. She also directed Rathbone's *The March of the Bonus Army* off-off Broadway at Cap 21 in 2014.

Rosenthal has performed off-Broadway, in regional theatre and in musical tours (including seasons at Boston Shakespeare and New Jersey Shakespeare), in a Clio Award-winning commercial, and in Hofstra's premiere production of *The Vagina Monologues*. As a founding member of the Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble, since 1986 she has performed and directed works in Middlebury, Vermont and in Juneau, Alaska. In summer 2015 she played Jo Britten in *Blues for Mister Charlie* and Miss Maudie in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Other favorite roles at Bread Loaf include Gertrude in *Hamlet*, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Sonia in *Uncle Vanya*.

About Ellen Stewart



Ellen Stewart in 1981

Ellen Stewart was born in Chicago, Illinois on November 7, 1919. She spent her youth in Detroit and Chicago, where her mother designed and built costumes for vaudeville and variety shows. She moved to New York City in 1950 to become a clothing designer and was hired by Saks Fifth Avenue, first as a porter. However, it did not take long for Saks to recognize her talents and offer her a position as a designer.

Stewart had a successful career in fashion (two of her dresses were worn at Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953) and she had no theatrical experience, but she was motivated to establish a theater to assist her foster brother, Fred Lights, and another playwright, Paul Foster. Lights and Foster needed a space to produce their plays, so Stewart opened her first theater in a tiny basement space on East Ninth Street in the East Village on October 18, 1961, to "give them their dreams."

Stewart wasn't interested in plays and didn't read them; she was interested in people. She housed playwrights, fed them, and offered them financial support with money she made as a freelance fashion designer. Her theater was named "La Mama" because she came to be known as "Mama" to this community of artists.

Many theater luminaries cut their teeth at La Mama. Artists who performed at La Mama include Philip Glass, Bette Midler, Billy Crystal, Andre de Shields, Harold Pinter, Harvey Keitel, Sam Shepard, F. Murray Abraham, Olympia Dukakis, Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, David and Amy Sedaris, Kevin Bacon, Harvey Fierstein, Diane Lane, and Wallace Shawn.

In 1969 La Mama moved to its current location, a 99-seat theater on East Fourth Street, and in 1974 Stewart opened a second location, a 295-seat theater called the Annex (renamed The Ellen Stewart Theater in 2009). La Mama also boasts a rehearsal space and an art gallery. Stewart's influence extends internationally as well, with La Mama "satellites" in cities like Bogota, Tel Aviv, and Melbourne, and La Mama troupes have performed around the world.

Stewart was primarily a producer, but beginning in the 1970s she sometimes conceived, adapted, and directed her own projects, including The Cotton Club Gala, which recreated the 1920s era Harlem night club, and Mythos Oedipus, a dance-opera based on the Greek myth.

Stewart received a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" award in 1983. In 1993, she was the first Off-Off-Broadway producer to be inducted into the Broadway Theater Hall of Fame. In 2005 Tom O'Horgan presented Stewart with the Stewardship Award from the New York Innovative Theatre Awards. This honor was bestowed to Stewart on behalf of her peers and fellow artists of the Off-Off-Broadway community "in recognition of her significant contributions to the Off-Off-Broadway community through service, support and leadership." In 2006 she received a Tony Award for excellence in theater.



Ellen Stewart at the opening of *Golden Bat* in 1970

Interview Resources

La Mama etc. Presents Loco7's
Bokan - The Bad Hearted
A Dance-Puppet piece inspired by the Mythology of the Legend of Yurupary from the Amazon Jungle



Photo by Hendrik Smitsger

Conceived, Designed,
Choreographed &
Directed by
Federico Restrepo

Music Composed by
Elizabeth Swados

Additional Music by
Camila Celin & Daniel Correa

December 3 - December 19, 2004

Suggested interview questions:

1. Your book tells the history of La Mama through the posters announcing key productions. What stands out about the posters that La Mama made for its shows?
2. You first met Stewart in 2002. What was your relationship with her like?
3. What made Ellen Stewart so successful as the mother of Off-Off Broadway?
4. How does La Mama E.T.C. differ from other experimental theaters?
5. What do you find most surprising about La Mama's history?
6. How did La Mama change over the course of the fifty years that the book covers?
7. You note that La Mama was very committed to international exchange. Why was that important to Stewart?
8. What examples of that international exchange stand out for you?
9. You write that Stewart wasn't interested in plays, she was interested in people. How did that approach affect her work as a producer?
10. A diverse array of notable actors and playwrights have worked with La Mama,. How has the theater fostered the talents of its artists?
11. Though she was primarily a producer, Stewart also conceived and directed her own projects, beginning later in her career. What motivated her to direct?
12. Of the posters in La Mama's archive, do you have a personal favorite?
13. Where do you see Ellen Stewart's legacy today?
14. What do you hope readers take away from this book?

Articles

- "Ellen Stewart La Mama of Us All" Profile by Cindy Rosenthal in TDR: The Drama Review
- The New York Times's Ellen Stewart Obituary
- The Guardian's Ellen Stewart Obituary
- Playbill's Ellen Stewart Obituary
- The New York Times's Profile of Mia Yoo, Ellen Stewart's successor as La Mama's Artistic Director

Events

Coinciding with the book's publication, La Mama will be hosting an exhibit, 'A Poster History of La MaMa's Downtown Community' featuring a selection of posters from La Mama's archives. In conjunction with the exhibit, La Mama will host a series of programs, all of which are free and open to the public:

- A celebration of the publication of Ellen Stewart Presents, featuring a reading by the author and a Q&A. November 13, 6:00-8:00 pm.
- A guided tour of the exhibit and a history of La Mama with Ozzie Rodriguez, director of the La Mama archives. November 14 & December 5, 1:00-3:00 pm.
- A panel discussion about the evolution of avant-garde theater posters, moderated by Cindy Rosenthal. December 4, 6:30-9:00 pm.

All events will be held in the Lobby of the Ellen Stewart Theatre, 66 East 4th Street, New York, NY 10003.

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ELLEN STEWART PRESENTS

FIFTY YEARS OF LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

Cindy Rosenthal

The following excerpt discusses three La Mama productions from the 1980s: *Mythos Oedipus*, conceived and directed by Ellen Stewart; *Safe Sex*, written by and starring Harvey Fierstein and directed by Eric Concklin; and *Road*, written by Jim Cartwright, directed by Simon Curtis, and starring Kevin Bacon, Joan Cusack, and Betsey Aiden.

With *Mythos Oedipus*, Stewart assumed the primary artistic directorial role of the Great Jones Repertory Company. When Stewart began to conceive, adapt, and direct her own productions in the mid-1980s, she used the hands-on experience and knowledge she had absorbed working with O'Horgan, the Plexus Group, Serban, and Swados. She was not formally trained in choreography, composition, playwriting, or stagecraft. In rehearsals and design meetings Stewart's take was intuitive rather than scholarly or technical. She had a unique, innate awareness of and sensibility for style, rhythm, color, and harmony. She would often call upon one or more company members to jump in to assist, improvise, and demonstrate. Company members with special skills were selected to bring in specific ideas or choreography to rehearsal.

Yukio Tsuji is a La MaMa resident composer whose first show at La MaMa was *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, an adaptation by Jean-Claude van Itallie in 1983.

YUKIO TSUJI (2005): Regular musicians cannot work with Ellen. I'm a composer and an arranger, and Michael Sirotta is too. She trusts us. She sings a melody, we write it down. Then everything after that is up to us. It can be anything we want to do. If it doesn't work, she says [he yells], "IT DOESN'T WORK!!" Then we change it. She's not a musician, but when she sings, she always sings on pitch. It's amazing. We know what she wants. We adjust ourselves. She always has a story. We've been working with Ellen for a long time. Musicians have egos. She knows that she needs to find a certain kind of voice for the story. She doesn't do auditions. She just finds people. . . . Ellen belongs to everywhere. She doesn't do outdoor perfor-

mance in New York. But internationally we are outdoors always. And we are moving, moving. After outdoor performances, nobody wants to come back in. . . .

Before I joined with Ellen I didn't know what experimental theater was. She is a person who knows about color; she is full of color. No one can do what she can do. All countries, all languages, all colors come together. She makes something new, a mix of cultures. More Europeans understand this kind of work than Americans do. Here it is much more conservative. I learned a lot from her. Skin color doesn't matter; culture, where you come from, doesn't matter. It's a blend. I can study one thing or another, but that stays in one place, doesn't change. . . . With Ellen it is always a new beginning.

The Greek myths were Stewart's starting point. Her primary source materials were the myths themselves, rather than existing classical plays. "Why is Oedipus (or Antigone or Perseus) important?" is the question that sparked the creation of each of her productions. Stewart researched and created her own versions of the Greek stories.

STEWART (2005): Why aren't my interpretations as valid as Sophocles and Euripides?

Critics responded enthusiastically. Alisa Solomon, in the *Village Voice*, compared Stewart's production with Serban's *Fragments of a Trilogy*. In the *New York Times*, D. J. Bruckner wrote, "Miss Stewart is doing much more than filling us in on background mythology. 'Mythos Oedipus' is a splendid, barbaric spectacle resonant with chants, and music that has an almost ancient, oriental quality. On multitiered stages at opposite ends of the auditorium and in the space between (the audience occupies balconies on the two longer walls of the room), 21 members of this international cast dance, chant and enact the stories of lust, betrayal, murder and vengeance that make this troubling myth irresistible."

Safe Sex, which opened at La MaMa on January 8, 1987, moved directly from the sold-out La MaMa run to a Broadway production. According to an article in the *New York Post* covering the transfer, production posters were being "snatched off restaurant walls as souvenirs" when they were first displayed. Harvey Fierstein did not see *Safe Sex* as an "AIDS play" in the way that William Hoffman's *As Is* and Larry Kramer's *A Normal Heart* were, because *Safe Sex* was not about people living with AIDS. *Safe Sex* consists of three short plays: the first, about someone who is a carrier of the virus, the second, about two lovers who are afraid to have sex, and the third, about two people

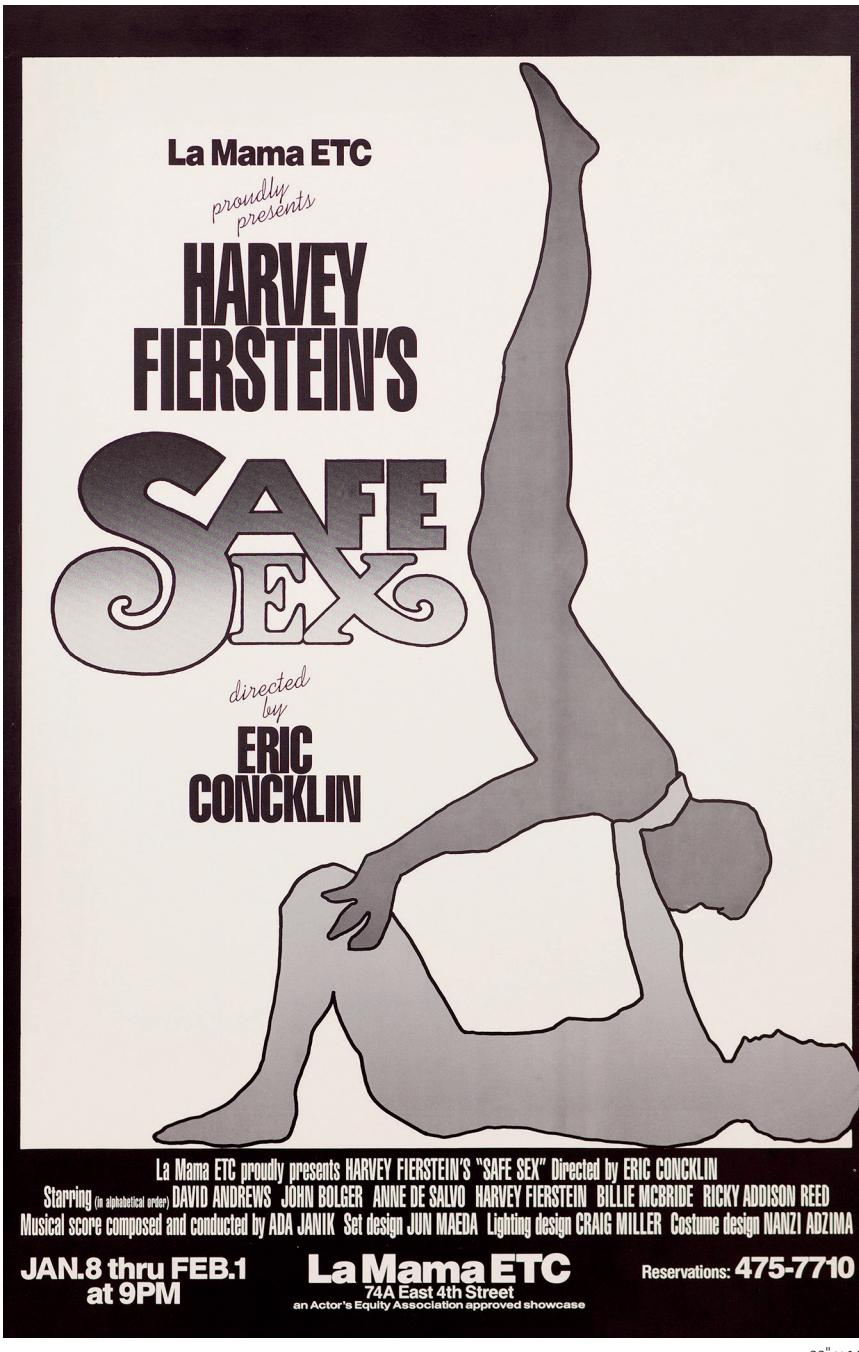


FIG. 94: *Safe Sex*, written by and starring Harvey Fierstein. Directed by Eric Concklin, 1987. Graphic image on poster by Fierstein, poster design by G2. Fierstein designed the two male figures on the poster in a muscular, acrobatic pose. They are carefully balanced; the relationship between the two bodies signifies "safe sex"—but also reveals tension between the two figures.

who have lost a loved one to AIDS. Fierstein stated that this play was much more autobiographical than *Torch Song Trilogy*.

The final play in the trio was adapted for HBO a year later, starring Fierstein and Stockard Channing. Titled *Tidy Endings*, the television production received strong reviews.



FIG. 95: *Road*, by Jim Cartwright. Coproduction of La MaMa and Lincoln Center Theater. Opened July 28, 1988. Director: Simon Curtis. Poster by James McMullan, a renowned international artist who designed over fifty posters for Lincoln Center, including the acclaimed revivals of *Anything Goes*, *South Pacific*, and *Carousel*.

22" x 14"

Fierstein's dedication, a kind of manifesto, was printed in the La MaMa program and in the Broadway playbill for *Safe Sex*. An excerpt from his statement is printed here.

AUTHOR'S DEDICATION: For my darling Court Miller

Sex is good. It is not wrongful or unhealthy. AIDS has blinded us from this simple truth. It has poisoned the joy of affection. It has banished the spontaneity of loving. It imbues lovers with guilt, strangers with distrust, and victims with shame. I curse this disease and any virus-like person who would call it God-given. I mourn for the promised lives it has stolen and exalt those now fighting for their right to live.

These plays are dedicated not only to our lost loved ones, but to those who stood bravely by their sides. To all who work toward the annihilation of this threat and to those now threatened.

Actors Kevin Bacon, Joan Cusack, and Betsy Aiden were featured in the cast of *Road*, a coproduction with Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. *Road* was staged environmentally in the La MaMa Annex, where designer Paul Brown constructed a mean street in Lancashire, England, evoking the "road" in the title of the play. The audience was invited to follow the action of the ne'er-do-wells peopling this dreary landscape, whether it was watching a young couple make love in a bed inches away or buying fish and chips from a roadside stand. The Annex space was selected and La MaMa approached for a coproduction because it would be highly suitable for British director Simon Curtis's staging of what has been described as a "promenade" performance — where actors perform among spectators, and spectators stand and move in close proximity to the actors.

JAMES MCMULLAN (interview with Thomas Cott, 1998): My feeling about posters—and I think I've made this mistake occasionally—is not to try to get too clever with the concept of the poster. If you try to say too much, if you try to be too metaphorical, if you try to make it too much of an intellectual game, it probably complicates the poster too much. And it sets up the wrong kind of tension in the viewer's mind. I think when my posters are more successful is when they're fairly simple and emotionally very direct.