



**Abbey Theatre** Irish theatre. The Abbey is the Dublin playhouse by whose name the Irish National Theatre Society Ltd is popularly known. The Society's predecessors were the Irish Literary Theatre (1899–1901), founded by W. B. YEATS, AUGUSTA LADY GREGORY, Edward Martyn and George Moore; and the Irish National Dramatic Company of Frank and Willie Fay. The aim of the Society, formed by the Fay brothers, Yeats, Lady Gregory and J. M. SYNGE, was to encourage new writers, in Synge's words, to 'work in English that is perfectly Irish in essence'. The Abbey Street theatre, converted from a former morgue, was the gift in 1904 of an English admirer of Yeats, ANNIE HORNIMAN. The Fay brothers were amateurs, both capable actors with practical stage experience. Yeats and the Fays had compatible approaches to theatre, but by 1908 Miss Horniman had removed the Fays, whom she detested, and by 1911 her subsidy also. With the death of Synge in 1909 Yeats was effectively in control.

The indisputable dramatic genius of these years is Synge, whose disreputable peasant characters provoked riotous nationalist demonstrations, especially against *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). More to the Abbey audience's taste were Lady Gregory's folk dramas. Synge's mantle passed to SEAN O'CASEY and his synthesis of poetic vernacular and urban REALISM. O'Casey's irreverent treatment of the patriotic myths of Easter 1916 in *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) caused more riots. 'You have disgraced yourselves again,' Yeats told the audience. Sadly, O'Casey abandoned the Abbey when in 1928 it rejected his part-expressionistic *The Silver Tassie*.

Alongside the uncommon brilliance of Synge and O'Casey, the Abbey had consolidated a line of essentially realist dramas on local themes, initiated by PADRAIC COLUM (*Broken Soil*, 1903), LENNOX ROBINSON (*The Clancy Name*, 1908) and T. C. MURRAY (*Birthright*, 1910). Robinson also inaugurated the DUBLIN DRAMA LEAGUE (1919–29), opening the Abbey stage to experimental European and American drama.

The relative security of an annual government subsidy from 1925 enabled the directors to accommodate a little theatre, the Peacock. Their better-known players, including CYRIL CUSACK, remained at risk to the rewards of London and Hollywood. Under the autocratic rule of Ernest Blythe, with Yeats now infrequently present, the Abbey languished but survived. In the 1930s and 40s the discipline of acting and direction slackened, vulgarizing perhaps its best writer of the period, GEORGE SHIELS. A few substantial new playwrights – including PAUL VINCENT CARROLL and M. J. MOLLOY – emerged. HUGH HUNT's tenure (play-director 1935–8) was too brief to establish reform.

The fire which destroyed the old Abbey in 1951 exiled the company for 15 years to the decrepit Queen's Theatre, a larger house requiring runs longer than the Abbey's practice. Its new home, on the old site, is a 628-seat modern theatre with sophisticated stage and lighting facilities.

After an indecisive start, the new Abbey found its confidence, enlivened by the considerable talents of the directors Tomas MacAnna, Alan Simpson, Joe Dowling, and a gifted company. However, recent times have seen

both trouble and triumph. On the one hand there have been five artistic directors in about eight years, and the Abbey's primacy has been challenged by the resurgent GATE THEATRE. On the other, in recent years the Abbey has undertaken successful European and American tours, and it has had the stimulus of distinguished guest directors. It remains a writers' theatre and was an important instrument in the dramatic revival which began in the 1960s. Among the contemporary Irish writers mainly associated with it are BRIAN FRIEL, Bernard Farrell, TOM MURPHY, TOM KILROY, HUGH LEONARD, TOM MACINTYRE, FRANK MCGUINNESS and Sebastian Barry. So, despite its recent turbulent history, the Abbey continues to be at the centre of Irish theatre and a major force in Irish cultural life.

**Abbott, George** 1887–1995 American director, playwright and actor. In his 1963 autobiography Abbott praised his Harvard drama teacher GEORGE PIERCE BAKER in a way that defined his own theatrical creed: 'Professor Baker gave you no nonsense about inner meanings and symbolism; he turned your whole thoughts and energies into the practical matter of how to make a show.' Taking Baker's lessons to heart, Abbott became the most practical showman in BROADWAY history, and performer, co-author and director of over 130 productions. He first acted on a Broadway stage in 1913; in the autumn of 1989 he directed a workshop production of a new musical called *Frankie*. As both director and co-author his specialties were racy MELODRAMA (*Broadway*, 1926), split-second FARCE (*Three Men on a Horse*, 1935) and peppy musicals with vigorous choreography (*On Your Toes*, 1936; *Damn Yankees*, 1955).

**Abell, Kjeld** 1901–61 Danish playwright. He began his career designing Balanchine's ballets at the KONGELIGE TEATER. His first writing for the theatre, the ballet-scenario *The Widow in the Mirror* (1934), introduced a recurrent Abell theme, the anguish caused by alienation from life. Ballet undoubtedly influenced the plays that followed, beginning with *The Melody that Got Lost* (1935) produced at the Riddersalen cabaret theatre. His early expressionistic plays (see EXPRESSIONISM), *The Melody* and *Eve Serves Her Childhood*, sharply depict the suffocating effect of bourgeois values. His plays during and immediately after World War II, such as *Anna Sophie Hedvig*, *Judith*, *The Queen on Tour*, *Silkeborg* and *Days on a Cloud*, identify activism as essential to freedom and escapism as self-annihilation. His later plays became more complex and mystical, such as *Vetsera Does Not Bloom for Everyone*, *The Blue Pekinese* and *The Scream*.

**Abington, Frances** 1737–1815 English actress. By 1755 she was working with THEOPHILUS CIBBER at the HAYMARKET Theatre and in 1756 joined DRURY LANE. After a period acting in Ireland she returned to Drury Lane to join GARRICK's company. She played Lady Teazle in SHERIDAN's *The School for Scandal* (1777). Having retired, she made an unsuccessful return in 1799, by which time she was overweight and no longer a leader of fashion.

**above** Elizabethan stage direction denoting a practical upper level, in both public and private theatres of London. De Witt's drawing of the SWAN includes a gallery over the stage which is assumed to represent the

## ABSURD, THEATRE OF THE

kind of fixture normally used by actors entering 'above'. (See also **BELOW**.)

**absurd, theatre of the** see **THEATRE OF THE ABSURD**

**Accesi** Two Italian acting companies, of the *COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*. Both begun under the patronage of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, the first may have been founded around 1595, the other around 1600 by Tristano Martinelli and Pier Maria Cecchini. The troupe toured Italy and France and merged briefly with GIOVANNI BATTISTA ANDREINI's troupe, the *FEDELI*, before dissolving about 1626, at which time SILVIO FIORILLO was the company's outstanding player in his role as Captain Matamoros.

**Achurch, Janet** 1864–1916 English actress. Her career is identified with ISEN and SHAW. As a member of F.R. BENSON's company in the 1880s, she established a reputation as a tragedian. On taking over the management of London's Novelty Theatre in 1889 she played Nora in the first British production of *A Doll's House*, returning to play Mrs Linde as her final stage appearance in 1911. In 1900 she starred in the premieres of *Candida* and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*.

**Ackermann family** The most important family of German actors in the 18th century. Having joined the SCHÖNEMANN troupe in 1740, Konrad (Ernst) (1712–71) soon left to set up his own troupe, along with SOPHIE SCHRÖDER (1714–92), whom he later married. The Ackermann troupe toured widely in Central and Eastern Europe and introduced to the German stage the genre of the *BÜRGERLICHES TRAUERSPIEL*, becoming widely known for the comparative realism of its acting, particularly after EKHOF joined the troupe in 1764. After his stepfather's death, FRIEDRICH SCHRÖDER took over the troupe, eventually settling it permanently in the Hamburg Town Theatre. Ackermann's two daughters, Dorothea (1752–1821) and Charlotte (1757–74), were also actresses.

**Accuart, André** 1922– French stage designer. He is known primarily for his work in the 1960s on such productions as *The Blacks* (1959), directed by ROGER BLIN, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1961), co-directed by JEAN VILAR and Georges Wilson, and *Biedermann and the Firebugs* (1960), directed by JEAN-MARIE SERREAU. His designs are abstract, utilizing skeletal structures such as tubes or movable flats and multiple playing levels.

**acrobatics** Form of physical entertainment. One of the most ancient and prevalent, it is represented in Egyptian and Etruscan murals by leapers and vaulters. The earliest work devoted to the subject is Arcangelo Tuccaro's *Trois dialogues de l'exercice de sauter et voltiger en l'air* (1599). The most basic move is the *salto* or leap into the air, in which neither hands nor feet must move. All sorts of combinations are possible – backwards, forwards, sideways (the Arab jump), the flip-flop (a backward somersault from a standing position), and from trampolines and flying trapezes. The *salto mortale* or death-defying leap is so called from its dangerousness. A double *salto mortale* was first performed by an Englishman named Tomkinson in 1840.

Other forms of acrobatics include the antipodean, in which one acrobat lies on his back and juggles the other performer with his feet; and its offshoot, the Icarian games, invented by the Englishman Cottrelly c.1850, in which performers are tossed, balanced and caught by the feet of their partners, lying on specially constructed cushions.

In popular amusements like the *COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*

and the harlequinade, acrobatics is at a premium, but it is neglected by the dramatic stage, except in actors' training. TOM STOPPARD in *Jumpers* (1972) used acrobatics as a metaphor for mental gymnastics.

**acting** The impulse to make-believe and **PLAY** is common to humanity. To act is both to do and to pretend to do. For both actor and spectator, the uncanny power of any performance springs from an ambiguous tension between what is actual and what is fictional. This ambiguity is present in all acting, however much a particular society or individual may wish to resolve it. In the 20th century many Western theories of acting have stressed the integrity of the doing, while in the 18th century, for example, Europeans were more concerned with the authentic nature of the pretence, its style and social aptness.

Throughout history, the unease aroused by this ambiguity has been reflected in the status of the actor. Even in classical Greece (see **GREEK THEATRE, ANCIENT**), where acting had religious and political importance, there is evidence from the 4th century BC onwards that the *technitai* of Dionysus were viewed with ambivalence. Certainly in Rome acting was felt to be the work of slaves and aliens (see **ROMAN THEATRE**), while in modern Europe players long existed on the margins of law and religion (MOLIÈRE could not be buried in consecrated ground). This ambivalence can be traced elsewhere.

In Asia, outside the confines of local prestige, religious purpose or court patronage, performers were, and often still are, equated with wanderers and beggars. Although in ancient India actors were believed to trace their ancestry to a member of the highest caste, the priestly Bharata, sacred myths tell how they were soon condemned to the lowest caste for their satire and mockery of the sages. Only through the intervention of kings could this ambivalence be allayed. In China, decrees from as early as 1369 banned actors from entering for state examinations.

The social assimilation of the acting profession in the West, around the beginning of the 20th century, was paralleled by sustained and serious evaluation of its art. In England, for example, IRVING's knighthood in 1895, the first to be bestowed on an actor, was followed not only by further theatrical knighthoods (six before 1914) but also by the founding of the Academy of Dramatic Art (later RADA). Similar developments are evident throughout Europe, most notably in Russia where for STANISLAVSKY training combined with a radical analysis of the art. Stanislavsky's accounts of his psycho-physical method constitute the first systematic examination of acting, in the West, written from the viewpoint of the actor. Earlier writings are either anecdotal or, as with DIDEROT, written from the perspective of the auditorium.

In the East, such approaches to practice can be found in works like the *Natyasastra* (c.200 BC) and ZHAMI's treatises on the *Nô* (c.1402–30). The systematic encoding of traditional acting genres found in such manuals emphasizes a performer's obligation to embody the received wisdom and aesthetics of particular styles and techniques. Training in the genre rather than rehearsal for the individual play is paramount. In Asian theatre, the master–pupil relationship is ubiquitous. Imparting the traditional form through example, through long apprenticeship and disciplined physical preparation and practice, establishes the importance of performance over text, of the transmitted skill in its present-tense embodiment over individual expression.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-44654-9 - Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre

Sarah Santon and Martin Banham

Excerpt

[More information](#)**ADEJUMO, MOSES OLAIYA**

The art of acting lies in showing and sharing an action, image, character or story. It is rooted in the present-tense encounter of actor with actor, and/or actor with audience. The material of the art is the body, voice and being of the performer. Different styles demand different skills of this material. Bodily skills may range from the acrobatic and pantomimic, as in traditional Chinese theatre, through schematic languages of dance and gesture, as found in *KUTUYATTAM* or *KATHAKALI*, to the faithful reproduction of everyday motions, as in Western *NATURALISM*. Vocal skills likewise may range from song, through chant or declamation, to conversational speech. This is not simply a contrast between a presentational mode of acting with its emphasis on display and a representational mode with its stress on verisimilitude. It relates to a range of percepts of which masks and trance are an ambiguous part. Acting works with living presence. This is of the utmost importance in performance and of the utmost contention in discussion. Contraries abound – inspiration versus technique, talent versus training. KEAN or KEMBLE, Irving or COQUELIN, DUSE or BERNHARDT?

**Acting Company** American company, originally known as the City Center Acting Company. JOHN HOUSEMAN and Margot Harley organized the first graduating class of the drama division of the Juilliard School into a permanent repertory troupe, which began performing at the City Center in New York in 1972. By 1984 it functioned as the touring arm of the JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS in Washington, DC. The company's members are selected nationally by auditions. Alumni of the company include KEVIN KLINE, PATTI LUPONE, WILLIAM HURT and Christopher Reeve.

**Actors Studio, The** American acting workshop. Founded in 1947 by GROUP THEATRE alumni ELIA KAZAN, CHERYL CRAWFORD and ROBERT LEWIS, the Actors Studio is a unique workshop for professional actors. It is not a school; it charges no tuition fees and once an actor is accepted (by a rigorous audition process) he or she becomes a member for life. Under LEE STRASBERG, its artistic director from 1951 to 1982, the Studio became renowned as the high temple of the Method. Studio actors have been both praised for their psychological revelation and attacked for self-indulgence and mannerism, but the influence of the Method is undeniable and has come to be identified as the quintessential American style. The enduring legacies are the films directed by Kazan and the performances of the Studio's many illustrious members – from MARLON BRANDO, James Dean and Montgomery Clift to DUSTIN HOFFMAN, Robert de Niro, AL PACINO, Shelley Winters, GERALDINE PAGE and Frank Corsaro, who is the Studio's present artistic director.

**Actors Theatre of Louisville** American theatre. One of the leading regional theatres, located in Louisville, Kentucky, it was founded by Richard Block and Ewel Cornett in 1964 and is noted for encouraging and producing original scripts. Block was replaced in 1969 by Jon Jory, whose leadership proved beneficial. In 1972 the company moved to their present location, the Old Bank of Louisville Building. In 1977 the Actors Theatre initiated the Festival of New American Plays. Scripts such as *Gin Game* and *Crimes of the Heart* premiered at the Actors Theatre, moved to BROADWAY, and won Pulitzer Prizes for Drama.

**Adamov, Arthur** 1908–70 French playwright.

Armenian in origin, Adamov settled in Paris in 1924. Between 1947 and 1953 he completed seven plays. Influenced by STRINDBERG, they depict a world of terror and persecution stemming from Adamov's own dreams and neuroses, but with stage images that embody a whole state of mind. The masterpiece of this period is *Professor Taranne* (1953). In 1955 Adamov's *Ping-Pong* heralded a move towards a more politicized theatre. His *Paolo Paoli* (directed by ROGER PLANCHON, 1957) was praised as the first successful BRECHTIAN play in France. Adamov's later successes were *Off Limits* (directed by Garran and Grüber, 1969) and *Si l'été revenait* (*If Summer Returned*), published in 1970. A. A. *Théâtres d'Adamov*, a posthumous tribute directed by Planchon, was performed at the THÉÂTRE NATIONAL POPULAIRE in 1975.

**Adams, Edwin** 1834–77 American actor. He established himself during the Civil War as a travelling star distinguished for his playing of romantic or light COMEDY characters in such vehicles as *The Lady of Lyons* and *Narcisse*. In 1869, EDWIN BOOTH selected him to play Mercutio opposite his Romeo for the opening of BOOTH'S THEATRE, where he later featured in the title role in a dramatization of TENNYSON'S *Enoch Arden*.

**Adams [née Kiskadden], Maude** 1872–1953 American actress. Her adult career began in New York at 16 and in 1890 she began an association with producer CHARLES FROHMAN which lasted until 1915. In 1897 she capitalized on her eternal youthfulness and whimsy as Lady Babbie in *The Little Minister*, a character rewritten for her by BARRIE. She also starred in American productions of his *Quality Street* (1901), *Peter Pan* (1905), *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), *The Legend of Leonora* (1914) and *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916). Other parts included the title role in ROSTAND'S *L'Aiglon*, the strutting hero in his *Chantecler*, and SHAKESPEARE'S Viola, Juliet, Rosalind and Portia.

**Addison, Joseph** 1672–1719 English essayist, politician and playwright, who frequently wrote about drama in the periodicals *The Spectator* and *The Tatler*, often with a sharp mockery. His play *Cato* (1713), a controlled, dignified neoclassical tragedy, was politically controversial; his comedy *The Drummer or the Haunted House* (1716) was not a success.

**Ade, George** 1866–1944 American playwright and librettist. His most popular librettos, *The Sultan of Sulu* (1902) and *The Sho-Gun* (1904), were influenced by GILBERT and Sullivan. He is best remembered for two dramatic comedies of small-town life, *The County Chairman* (1903) and *The College Widow* (1904), which reveal his keen eye and ear for the residents of his native mid-America.

**Adejumo, Moses Olaiya** [Baba Sala] 1936– Nigerian actor-manager. The founder-owner of the Alawada Theatre ('theatre of the one who entertains'), Olaiya, whose stage name is Baba Sala, is the most popular comedian in Nigeria today; and his registered company (both acting and trading) is the most commercially successful, despite performances being almost entirely in Yoruba. A deeply religious Christian, since 1965 he has performed continually all over Nigeria and coastal West Africa. His satirical comedies are improvisations which debunk social pretensions. He and his Alawada Theatre perform extensively on television, and since the late 1970s he has become increasingly involved in film-making. In 1984 Olaiya made a feature film, *Orun Mooru* (*Heaven Is Heated*). Subsequently he has also turned to video as a medium.



## ADELPHI THEATRE

**Adelphi Theatre** (London) Of four theatres on the same site in the Strand, the first was built in 1806 and called the Sans Pareil. It was renamed the Adelphi in 1819. During the long management (1844–74) of BENJAMIN WEBSTER, it was rebuilt to accommodate 1,500 (1858). It was well attended for most of this time, and the description 'Adelphi dramas' was familiarly attached to strong MELODRAMAS. BUCKSTONE and BOUCICAULT were among the featured dramatists. WILLIAM TERRISS's murder at the stage door of the Adelphi in 1897 brought the great years of the theatre to an abrupt end. It was subsequently twice rebuilt, in 1901 and in 1930.

**Adler, Stella** 1903–92 American actress. One of a family of Yiddish actors from Riga who achieved popular success in America, Stella studied at the AMERICAN LABORATORY THEATRE in the 1920s, joined the GROUP THEATRE in 1931 and married its founder, HAROLD CLURMAN. A tall, statuesque blonde, Adler ironically succeeded best in playing downtrodden Depression-era housewives in the Group's productions of CLIFFORD ODETS's *Awake and Sing!* (1935) and *Paradise Lost* (1935). From 1949, when she founded the Stella Adler Conservatory, she was an exhilarating teacher. Countering her arch-rival LEE STRASBERG's Method with its focus on self, she urged students to transcend their own experiences by investigating the play's circumstances rather than their own. (See also YIDDISH THEATRE.)

**Admiral's Men** English company. These Elizabethan players took their name from their patron, Lord Howard, who was created Lord High Admiral in 1585, the year in which the Admiral's Men first appeared at Court. It was EDWARD ALLEYN's acting in CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE's plays at PHILIP HENSLOWE's ROSE that established the company's reputation. In 1594 the formation of the LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN nudged the Admiral's Men into second place in the theatrical hierarchy. Henslowe's financial involvement helped the company to evade the general prohibition of plays after the *Isle of Dogs* affair in 1597. But Henslowe was not himself a member of the Admiral's Men: he was the owner of their theatre. When, in 1599, the Lord Chamberlain's Men opened the GLOBE, very close to the Rose, the Admiral's Men suffered in the competition for audiences. Unlike their rivals, they did not own their own theatre, and may not have commanded the same loyalty from their actors. Alleyn's increasing involvement in his business partnership with Henslowe deprived them of a star.

The move north of the river, to the FORTUNE, in 1600 brought a new audience and sufficient prosperity. As London's acknowledged second company, they were granted royal patronage and the title of Prince Henry's Men after the accession of James I. Regular writers included DEKKER, MUNDAY and CHETTLE, but the sinking reputation of the Fortune during the 1620s announced the company's creative impoverishment. As the Palsgrave's Men, they continued their occupation of the Fortune, but without much success. By 1631, when some of the Fortune actors joined a newly formed Prince Charles's Men at SALISBURY COURT, the long tradition of the Admiral's Men had been broken.

**Adriani, Placido** died c.1740 Italian actor. A Benedictine monk, residing in Naples, he played the role of Pulcinella in monastery recitals. His manuscript collection, *Selva, overo Zibaldone di concetti comici* (1734), is a rich

repository of *COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE* scenarios, plots and lazzi (see LAZZO).

**Aeschylus** 525/4–456/5 BC Greek tragic playwright. A native of Eleusis, Aeschylus is said to have produced tragedies as early as 499, and won his first victory at the Great Dionysia (see GREEK THEATRE, ANCIENT) in 484. He fought against the Persians at the Battle of Marathon (490), and probably also at Salamis (480). He became the most popular tragedian of his day, winning a total of 13 victories at Athens and also visiting Sicily to produce plays for the tyrant Hieron I of Syracuse. It was on a later visit to Sicily that he died. Already by the time of ARISTOPHANES, who affectionately parodies his style in *Frogs*, he was regarded as the first of the great tragedians.

For at least part of his career he played the leading role in his own plays, as was normal until the time of SOPHOCLES. He is said to have been responsible for reducing the role of the Chorus and for introducing the second actor – clearly a momentous innovation. Many of his plays belonged to connected tetralogies.

He is said to have written 90 plays: we know the titles of over 70; seven survive under his name. *Persians* (472), which depicts the despair of the Persian court on hearing of the Greek victory at Salamis, is the earliest drama we possess and the only surviving Greek tragedy on a historical subject. It did not belong to a connected tetralogy. *Seven against Thebes* (467) was the third play of a tetralogy about Oedipus and his family, the others being *Laius*, *Oedipus* and the satyr play *Sphinx*. *Suppliant Women* (once thought to be the earliest play but now dated between 466 and 459) almost certainly belonged to a connected tetralogy about the daughters of Danaus. *Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi* (*Libation-Bearers*) and *Eumenides* together form the *Oresteia* (458), the only connected trilogy that survives (the lost satyr play *Proteus* completed the tetralogy). The seventh play, *Prometheus Bound*, was until recently accepted as authentic by most scholars, but detailed examination of its language, metre and stagecraft has made it very probable that it is post-Aeschylean, perhaps datable to the 440s. It was accompanied by the lost *Prometheus Unbound*, in which Prometheus was released from his torment by Heracles. Like the *Oresteia*, *Prometheus Bound* employs three actors.

Fragments also survive, not extensive but providing valuable evidence for Aeschylus' satyr plays, as well as for lost tragedies.

The surviving plays, though few in number, are extremely diverse. Each is fairly simple in plot, though those of the *Oresteia*, perhaps influenced by Sophocles, are more complex than the others. Each, except *Suppliant Women* and *Eumenides*, invests a single public event (such as the Persian defeat or the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra) with great moral and religious significance. Before it occurs, or is announced, the event is foreshadowed with foreboding or (in *Choephoroi*) with illusory hope, and we become more and more aware of the network of forces making it inevitable; afterwards its ethical implications are explored and its future consequences predicted. Characterization tends to be subordinate to the deeds which the characters perform rather than being pursued for its own sake; but this does not prevent those characters from being fully intelligible in human terms. The Chorus is constantly exploited and its songs carry much of the moral and emotional weight of the drama.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-44654-9 - Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre

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## AFRICAN THEATRE

**Afinogenov, Aleksandr (Nikolaevich)** 1904–41 Soviet playwright. He searched for a new psychological drama in the post-revolutionary years of transition from primitive AGIT-PROP to doctrinaire socialist realism. He was a Communist Party member from 1922. His early plays – *Robert Tim* (1923), *The Other Side of the Slot* (adapted from Jack London, 1926), *At the Breaking Point* (1927), *Keep Your Eyes Peeled* (1927) and *Raspberry Jam* (1928) – were produced by the Proletkult Theatre, where Afinogenov served as literary manager and director, and reflected the group's proletarian bias. Tiring of the schematic, Proletkult style, he formally broke with the organization in 1928, joining the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), whose approach to art he helped to define in *The Creative Method of the Theatre: The Dialectics of the Creative Process* (1931). However, in his 1929 drama *The Eccentric*, a character study of a romantic non-communist dreamer, the author had the temerity to cast communists as villains. His best play, *Fear* (1931), which brings subtlety and humanity to a confrontation between a good communist and an unenlightened but salvageable elder scientist, was considered pivotal in the Soviet dramatic canon, and was successfully staged by STANISLAVSKY at the MOSCOW ART THEATRE. His remaining plays include *Distant Point* (1935), a Soviet philosophical drama; *Hail, Spain!* (1936), a popular romantic piece; and *Mashenka* (1940), an amalgam of personal and patriotic dramas. His insistence on psychological realism at the expense of ideological concerns cost Afinogenov his Party membership in 1937. It was restored in 1938.

**African theatre** The roots of theatre in Africa are ancient and complex and lie in areas of community festival, seasonal rhythm and religious ritual as well as in the work of court jesters, travelling professional entertainers and storytellers. Since the late 1950s, in a movement that has paralleled the political emancipation of so much of the continent, there has grown a theatre that comments back from the colonized world to the world of the colonialists, that discusses the shared experience in the shared languages, and its own cultural and linguistic integrity. Contemporary African theatre serves a purpose within communities and cultures that is much greater than simply that of entertainment or diversion. This functional quality gives the theatre a sense of purpose, and influences not only its material but also the nature of its performance and reception. The present-day theatre is enriched and complemented by its coexistence with traditional forms, skills and understanding.

Its vitality, diversification and variety of form and content warn against too homogeneous a view of African theatre, but centuries of European economic and political domination have inevitably influenced Africa's cultural life, and especially its theatre. During the first half of the 20th century indigenous theatre movements often reflected Western models, whether in the Nigerian and Ghanaian 'concert party' or the vaudeville presentations of southern African theatre. The Western influences were, however, effectively subverted and eventually dominated or replaced by indigenous forms. The influence of Western-style education continues to determine elements of theatrical form and language in much contemporary drama, but here again we can see playwrights and performers working increasingly on their own terms and asserting a powerful cultural and political identity. Theatre in many

parts of Africa has been at the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle, and has not relaxed its sense of purpose in the post-independence world. (Witness the banning of HUBERT OGUNDE's work not only by the colonial government of Nigeria in the 1940s but also by the independent government of the 1960s; or the imprisonment of WOLE SOYINKA during the Nigerian civil war; or NGUGI WA THIONG'O's exile from Kenya.)

**FESTAC**

The first World Festival of Negro Arts was held in Dakar in 1966. This was followed by the second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture held in Lagos, for which the acronym FESTAC was coined. The festivals were planned as pan-African celebrations; and the ingredients ranged from performance to debate, dominated primarily by dance and theatre.

**English-speaking Africa**

The universities in the anglophone nations of Africa played an important part in developing theatre activities from the late 1950s onward, both through the playwrights they produced and through the establishment of imaginative performance venues and initiatives. The latter ranged from the travelling theatres in Nigeria (see also YORUBA TRAVELLING THEATRES) and Uganda to the Chikwakwa community theatre in Zambia. With much of the new drama emerging from the universities, it is not surprising that a certain elitist tone characterized much of the work – both in its concern with the problems of the young educated man or woman in conflict with traditional manners and attitudes, and in the choice and use of language.

The language debate remains a crucial one: calls have been made, by Wole Soyinka amongst others, to replace English with a pan-African language. The Nigerian playwright OLA ROTIMI proposes 'the domestication of the English language – handling it within the terms of traditional linguistic identity'. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has argued for the use of indigeneous languages. A positive move is also being made by younger dramatists towards exploring the use of pidgin as a *lingua franca*. It is important to remember that in notionally 'English-speaking' nations indigenous languages are often paramount, both in terms of day-to-day usage and in government and culture. Swahili, for instance, is the language of much theatre – published and unpublished – in Tanzania and elsewhere in East Africa, including the important plays of EBRAHIM HUSSEIN. Yoruba in Nigeria is the appropriate language of the immensely popular theatre of Baba Sala (see MOSES OLAIYA ADEJUMO) as well as the 'operas' of DURO LADIPO, celebrating as they do the myths and history of the Yoruba people. Shona and Ndebele are the languages of much new writing for the theatre in Zimbabwe.

Growing alongside the literary theatre has been a dynamic popular theatre, often using indigenous languages and unscripted, improvised material. The nature of this theatre ranges from broad FARCE to serious commentary and protest. Protest theatre itself is, not surprisingly, at its most effective and dynamic in South Africa, where 'township theatre' has not only produced an exceptional group of playwrights and performers, but has also determined a political agenda. One of the intriguing questions for the future of South African theatre is how a theatre geared to protest – whether through the relatively sophisticated productions of the Johannesburg Market Theatre or Cape Town's Space Theatre, or the street theatre productions

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-44654-9 - Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre

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of transient radical groups – will accommodate itself to the changing political scene. Having found such a challenging role in effecting change, will the theatre be able to change itself, and contribute to the new dialogue in a post-apartheid, majority-rule South Africa? South African playwrights and performers are exploring the exciting potential of interculturalism within their own nation.

THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT, a community theatre activity designed either for propaganda (health care and hygiene, literacy, good agricultural practices and so on) or, in a more radical context, as a vehicle of conscientization, has also been experimented with and applied in many areas of the continent. The ideology and the practice of theatre for development has been tested and extended by the practitioners themselves in conferences and workshops, and in action through the work of companies and individuals. Typically, Oga Steve Abah in Zaria, Nigeria, through the Samaru Project, has used the resources of a university drama department to contribute to the conscientization of rural communities. ZAKES MDA in Lesotho and PENINA MLAMA in Tanzania have made important contributions to the critical literature of one of Africa's most buoyant theatre movements.

**French-speaking Africa south of the Sahara**

'Francophone' sub-Saharan Africa is the term used since the 1960s, in both English and French, to describe a group of 16 African countries where, as a result of French and Belgian colonial rule (roughly between 1885 and 1960), French is the language of government, business and administration. When independence came (in or around 1960), the continental federations of West and Equatorial Africa broke down into a series of separate states, but the influence of the French language and its culture remained. These countries, from Senegal in the west through Zaire in the centre to Chad in the east, each have a unique cultural identity, but they have also evolved, by virtue of their similar colonial experience (especially those under a centralizing power like France), a distinctive modern African culture.

This francophone African culture, a synthesis of local African and imported French and Belgian traditions, has found expression in many forms: the earliest practised genre was poetry in the 1930s, with Léopold Senghor; then came fiction in the early 1950s with Camara Laye, Mongo Beti and Abdoulaye Sadi, and almost a decade later, in terms of significant published works, the theatre. In spite of its relative youth, the theatre is now a vital aspect of the literature of sub-Saharan Africa in French, accounting for some three hundred published plays. Many of these, by playwrights like CHEIK NDAO, BERNARD DADIÉ, Sony Labou Tansi (1947–95), Félix Tchicaya U'Tamsi (1931–88) and GUILLAUME OYONO-MBIA, are of the highest standard and are regularly produced in francophone Africa. Some have been performed in France.

The performance of ancient oral narratives such as the Sunjata and Mwindo epics of old Mali and Zaire respectively by traditional bards or troubadours, commonly known as *griots*, as well as the enactment of rituals, takes on the quality of drama and theatre. European-style theatre began in French-speaking Africa in the early 1930s at two educational establishments almost simultaneously: the École Primaire Supérieure at Bingerville in the Ivory Coast, and the École Normale

William Ponty, then on the island of Gorée off Dakar in Senegal. The link between the two was Charles Béart, who taught at both institutions in the 1930s. Three of the people who contributed most to the development of theatre in the Ivory Coast – François Amon d'Aby, Coffi Gadeau and Bernard Dadié – were students at both schools. The second important development was the establishment after independence, in several states, of institutes of the arts whose drama sections provided training in a wide variety of theatre skills, and national theatres which performed, alongside European plays, the increasing number of African plays being written.

Francophone African drama falls, in terms of themes, into three broad categories: historical, social and political. The first accounts for most of the plays produced so far. In exalting language, Ndao's *L'Exil d'Albouthi* (Albouthi's Exile, 1967), Jean Pliya's *Kondo le requin* (Kondo the Shark, first published 1966) and Seydou Badian's *La Mort de Chaka* (The Death of Chaka, 1962), for example, depict the careers of various 19th-century warrior-kings and their heroic struggles to defend their territories, often against France. History (whether factual or legendary) is also used not for glorification but for the framework and the necessary safe distance that it offers for a critical reflection on the present.

The dislocating effects of modern culture on traditional beliefs and customs and the retrograde nature of some of the latter constitute the second, social, category of mostly comic plays: such as Oyono-Mbia's *Trois prétendants... un mari* (Three Suitors, One Husband, 1964), Guy Menga's *La Marmite de Koka Mbala* (Koka Mbala's Pot, 1969) and Protas Asseng's *Trop c'est trop* (Enough Is Enough, 1981). The third group of plays by, among others, U'Tamsi (*Le Destin glorieux du Maréchal Nnikon Nniku*, *The Glorious Destiny of Marshal Nnikon Nniku*, 1979), Maxime Ndébeka (*Equatorium*, 1989) and Sony Labou Tansi explore the political corruption and ugly tyrannies that have sprung up in postcolonial African societies.

Over the past decade or so, francophone African theatre has moved in new directions. In the plays of dramatists like Nicole Werewere-Liking (1950–) from Cameroon or Bernard Zadi Zaourou (1938–) from the Ivory Coast, ritual ceremonies – especially healing, initiation and purification rites – have provided the bases, in content and structure, for a new type of drama.

**Portuguese-speaking (lusophone) Africa**

In the Portuguese colonies, European theatre was introduced early on by missionaries. The plays were inevitably religious in character, their objective being the propagation of Catholicism. The religion of the Africans was not taken into consideration. When independence was declared in 1975 in Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe, illiteracy was higher than 90 per cent – a situation which had affected literary production and interest in drama. Portuguese colonialism had imposed severe CENSORSHIP on newspapers and books. The vast majority of the plays performed before independence were *vaudeville* pieces that came from the metropolis to amuse white spectators. After independence, Marxist regimes aimed to make good the damage done by colonialism and to build a classless society. Consequently drama was often used as a means of politicizing people, as a political instrument supporting the principles of socialist realism.

**French-speaking North Africa**

Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are all Muslim countries



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-44654-9 - Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre

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## AFRICAN-AMERICAN THEATRE

and have been so since the Arab conquest of North Africa in the 7th and 8th centuries. The dominant European influence is that of France which, starting with the annexation of Algeria in 1830, eventually brought Tunisia (1883) and most of Morocco (1912) under its control as protectorates. Independence for Morocco and Tunisia came in 1956 and for Algeria in 1962.

It has not been easy for theatre to flourish in these three countries. The Muslim tradition gave it little encouragement. French censorship was always ready to suppress criticism of the colonial authority. Theatre tended to come therefore largely from outside the region. In the 19th century shadow theatre from Turkey (see KARAGÖZ; SHADOW PUPPETS) was popular. Theatre companies from Egypt (see MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA) visited from time to time. Touring French theatre companies provided entertainment chiefly for French expatriates (or citizens, in the case of Algeria) and the French-speaking Arab elite; their offerings were almost by definition drawn from the Parisian BOULEVARD theatres. Since independence, there has been more indigenous activity, especially in Algeria. National Theatres have been established in Algeria and Tunisia, not without difficulty. All three countries were well represented in the drama section of the 1969 pan-African festival (FESTAC), which was held in Algiers. The development of the theatre has also been hampered, even into the present, by the firm hold of classical Arabic on literary production and the barrier to communication with the ordinary people that this causes. Algeria did, however, have the major advantage of the work of Rachid Ksentini who, between the wars, wrote and directed plays in spoken Arabic with considerable success. Directors and writers committed to the nationalist movement before independence realized the importance of Ksentini's work for the development of a people's theatre after independence. His ideas were adopted by Bachtarzi Mahiedine and Mustapha Kateb in particular, as directors of the Conservatoire Municipal d'Alger and the Théâtre National Algérien respectively.

The French-speaking Algerian playwright and novelist KATEB YACINE is well known in France for his realistic and frank attacks on French colonialism in North Africa. His plays have been directed by JEAN-MARIE SERREAU. Yacine's often violent language and style are as much those of the poet as of the dramatist, and his theatre, like his novels, offers a vision of human behaviour which is far more nuanced than the simple portraits of political theatre.

**African-American theatre** African-American theatre has a dual origin. First came the indigenous theatre consisting of folk tales, songs, music, dance and mimicry that blacks performed in cabins, at camp meetings and in open parks like Congo Square in New Orleans. African in spirit, these expressions were transformed by the American environment. Then came the African theatre in imitation of white playhouses and scripted dramas that WILLIAM HENRY BROWN established in 1821.

The African theatre had no successors in antebellum America, except for two plays written by the ex-slave William Wells Brown. Black indigenous expressions, however, were by the 1840s adopted by white comedians and fashioned into blackface minstrelsy that caricatured black folk on Southern plantations. Ironically, the now disdained MINSTREL SHOW opened the professional stage to African-Americans. At the same time

black performers were polishing their acting skills in short farces which were added to their shows. Since black playgoers were segregated in an upper gallery section in most theatres, these shows played primarily to white audiences. Yet their success ensured perpetuation of the genre into the first decades of the 20th century. Vying for popularity with the minstrels were the ubiquitous 'Tom shows', which, based on the dramatization of *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* (1852), also began to employ blacks as slave characters. But eventually the play was denounced by black leaders.

Black companies of higher calibre emerged after the Civil War. The Astor Place Company of Coloured Tragedians under J. A. ARNEAUX came into being in 1884 with a Shakespearian repertoire, and in 1889 Theodore Drury gave the first performance of his Opera Company. In straight drama William Edgar Easton wrote two historical plays on the Haitian revolution: *Dessalines* (1893) and *Christophe* (1911), which were produced by HENRIETTA VINTON DAVIS. Scott Joplin composed his opera *Treemonisha* (1911), but it remained unproduced for decades. In 1897 Bob Cole organized a stock company and training school at Worth's Museum in New York. Others followed, urged on by black critics. In New York the Negro Players were formed in 1912 and the LAFAYETTE PLAYERS in 1915.

Blacks first appeared on BROADWAY in dramatic roles in *Three Plays for a Negro Theatre* (1917) by the white writer Ridgely Torrence. In 1920 CHARLES GILPIN gave a stunning performance for the PROVINCETOWN PLAYERS in *The Emperor Jones* (1920). W. E. B. DuBois, editor of the *Crisis*, urged formation of a nationwide movement of little theatres presenting plays 'about us, by us, for us, and near us'. His magazine and *Opportunity* sponsored playwriting competitions and published prizewinning entries. In the years ahead black college drama professors would begin writing and directing original plays with their students.

Three dramas by white playwrights demonstrated the reach of black histrionic talent. PAUL GREEN's *In Abraham's Bosom* (1926) shared Pulitzer Prize honours with an experienced cast including the gifted Rose McLendon; DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD's 1927 hit *Porgy* inspired the operatic version by GEORGE GERSHWIN; and MARC CONNELLY's *The Green Pastures* (1930) earned a Pulitzer Prize and a five-year run. The 1930s witnessed an upsurge of socially relevant plays like Hall Johnson's *Run Little Chillun* (1933), LANGSTON HUGHES's *Mulatto* (1935), and *Stevedore* (1934) by white authors Paul Peters and George Sklar. The short-lived FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT through its Negro units in 22 cities sponsored black playwrights and productions, including Theodore Browne's *Natural Man* (1937) in Seattle, Theodore Ward's *Big White Frog* (1938) in Chicago, and ORSON WELLES's production of the 'voodoo' *Macbeth* (1936) in Harlem.

In the 40s the American Negro Theatre made steady progress in training and production at its Harlem-based Library Theatre. PAUL ROBESON's record-breaking *Othello* (1943) belongs to this decade. After World War II the civil rights movement gained momentum. Plays such as ALICE CHILDRESS's *Trouble in Mind* (1955) and Lofton Mitchell's *A Land Beyond the River* (1957) dealt unambiguously with the racial problem and used racially mixed casts. Companies like JOSEPH PAPP's NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL began to cast black actors in traditionally white roles. The trend towards integration

## AGATE, JAMES (EVERSHED)

was reflected in LORRAINE HANSBERRY's award-winning drama *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), and OSSIE DAVIS's satiric comedy *Purlie Victorious* (1961). The search for a black identity led to experimentation with new dramatic forms. In 1969 CHARLES GORDONE's *No Place to Be Somebody* captured the Pulitzer Prize. Other significant playwrights of the period were ED BULLINS, Phillip Hayes Dean, ADRIENNE KENNEDY, Ron Milner, Charlie Russell, Joseph Walker and Richard Wesley.

Among the few theatre groups to survive when funding was withdrawn were the NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY of New York, the Free Southern Theatre in New Orleans and the Inner City Cultural Center in Los Angeles. African-American theatre had gained immeasurably from this period of upheaval. Important black productions of recent years include NTOZAKE SHANGE's *For Colored Girls...* and Vinnette Carroll's *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*, both in 1976, Phillip Hayes Dean's monodrama *Paul Robeson* (1978), and CHARLES FULLER's Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Soldier's Play* (1981). The most important voice to emerge in the 1980s was that of AUGUST WILSON, who wrote and staged a series of plays chronicling black life in this century. Two met with particular success, *Fences* (1983) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990).

**Agate, James (Evershed)** 1877–1947 British critic. Theatre critic of *The Sunday Times* from 1923 until his death, Agate established himself as the most feared and most courted of theatrical judges. Determined always to write well, his views could be unreliable; he delighted in flamboyant actors, from SARAH BERNHARDT to DONALD WOLFIT, and tended to resist radical change in the London theatre. His natural conservatism was a discouragement to dramatic innovation. Agate's self-consciousness is disarmingly confessed in the title of his nine-volume diary, *Ego* (1932–47). Among his 20 volumes of selected criticism are *Buzz, Buzz!* (1918), *Brief Chronicles* (1943), *Red-Letter Nights* (1944) and *Immanent Toys* (1945). He also wrote a biography of the French actress RACHEL.

**Agathon** c.447–c.401 BC Greek tragic playwright. A tragedian at Athens, he departed c.407 for the court of Archelaus of Macedon. ARISTOTLE mentions a TRAGEDY of his (*Antheus*) in which plot and characters were entirely invented (not drawn from myth), and another which contained enough material for an epic. He also says that Agathon was the first to write choral odes which were mere interludes, irrelevant to the play's action. A few fragments survive.

**Ager Fikir** (Patriotic Theatre Association) The first professional Ethiopian theatre company. It was established in 1935, before the Italian invasion, in order to present short propaganda plays to prepare the people of Addis Ababa for resistance. After the restoration of the monarchy it was revived. Programmes were largely musical, though many short plays were performed. The present home was acquired in 1953. Today, full-length plays and music and dance shows are performed there to popular audiences four times a week.

**agit-prop** Term that describes theatre pieces devised to ferment political action (agitation) and propaganda.

**Aguilera Malta, Demetrio** 1909–79 Ecuadorian playwright, poet, novelist and diplomat. He was one-fifth of the famous Grupo de Guayaquil, a leftist literary group dedicated to social change but committed as well to literary excellence. In the early period he wrote realistic social dramas, but his best efforts clearly belong to his expressionistic period (see EXPRESSIONISM), with *El tigre*

(*The Tiger*, 1955), a play of magical realism in the supernatural tropics, *Dientes blancos* (*White Teeth*, 1955) and *Honorarios* (*Fees*, 1957). During his later years as a diplomat he wrote *Infierno negro* (*Black Hell*, 1967) and *Muerte*, S.A. (*Death Inc.*, 1970).

**Agustín, José** 1944– Mexican playwright and novelist. He combines novelistic and dramatic techniques into interesting compositions. *Abolición de la propiedad* (*Abolition of Property*), first staged in 1979, relies on television recordings and projections in dealing with an almost psychopathic perception of reality. *Círculo vicioso* (*Vicious Circle*, 1972), an exposé of corruption in the Mexican penal system, was originally censored by the Mexican authorities for its gross language.

**Aidoo, Ama Ata** 1942– Ghanaian playwright and novelist; Secretary for Education in the Rawlings government. Her reputation rests upon her two plays, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1964) and *Anowa* (1970). *The Dilemma of a Ghost* explores the problems of a marriage between a Ghanaian man who has achieved academic honours in the United States and a black American woman whom he brings home to Ghana. *Anowa* is concerned with the legacy of slavery, and the tragic outcome. Aidoo now lives in Zimbabwe.

**Aiken, George L.** 1830–76 American playwright. He is known for one play: *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*, or *Life Among the Lowly*, a dramatization of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, presented in September 1852 with Aiken in the part of George Harris. In response to audience demand for more episodes from the novel, Aiken prepared a sequel, *The Death of Uncle Tom, or the Religion of the Lowly*, and in mid-November combined the two plays into one drama of six acts, now the standard version.

**Aikenvald, Yuly (Isaevich)** 1872–1928 Russian literary critic and theatre reviewer. He became embroiled in the pre-revolutionary debate over theatre's true nature and proper function. His article 'Rejecting the Theatre' (*Studio*, 1912) defied attempts by the symbolists (see SYMBOLISM) MEYERHOLD, EVREINOV and others to poeticize theatre by asserting that it had no value except as dramatic literature. Aikenvald's broadside encouraged directors NEMIROVICH-DANCHENKO and KOMISSARZHEVSKY, critic D. N. Ovsyaniko-Kulikovsky and dramatist-actor A. I. Yuzhin-Sumbatov to publish *Debating the Theatre* (1912), in which they defended their roles as artistic interpreters.

**Akalaitis, JoAnne** 1937– American actress and director. She is a founding and continuing member of the avant-garde group MABOU MINES. Her experimental works have been performed at major art centres and festivals throughout the USA and Europe. From 1990 to 1993 Akalaitis was artistic director of the New York SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.

**Akimov, Nikolai (Pavlovich)** 1901–68 Soviet stage and film designer. His graceful, whimsical and vibrantly colourful stage realizations defined the character of the Leningrad Theatre of Comedy, where he was artistic director (1935–49, 1955–68). As a designer in the 1920s Akimov worked in Leningrad and Moscow on Soviet dramas. He began directing in 1929 and in 1932 staged a controversial formalist production of *Hamlet* for Moscow's Vakhtangov Theatre. His sharp and witty style was most clearly demonstrated in his Theatre of Comedy productions, particularly EVGENY SHVARTS's *The Shadow* (1940, 1960), *The Dragon* (1944, 1962) and *An Ordinary Miracle* (1956), and in SUKHOVO-KOBYLIN's *The Case* (1964) and *Krechinsky's Wedding* (1966). From 1951 to



## ALDRIDGE, IRA

1955 he served as the Lensoviet Theatre's artistic director, where he staged SALTYKOV-SHCHEDRIN's *Shadows* (1953) and an earlier version of *The Case* (1955). He also designed theatre posters and wrote two books which blended memoirs with theatre aesthetics and practice. In 1960 he was named a People's Artist of the USSR.

**Akins, Zoë** 1886–1958 American playwright and screenwriter. She began her career with an experimental free-verse drama, *The Magical City* (1916). Early sophisticated comedies and wistful tragedies about jaded, worldly women were followed by a rash of popular comedies. Her first and best hit was *Déclassée* (1919). Others were *Papa* (1919), *Greatness: A Comedy* (1921, also called *The Texas Nightingale*), *Daddy's Gone A-Hunting* (1921) and *The Greeks Had a Word for It* (1929, later filmed as *The Goldiggers*). In 1935 she won the Pulitzer Prize for her adaptation of EDNA FERBER's *The Old Maid*.

**Aksyonov, Vasily (Pavlovich)** 1932– Soviet novelist and playwright. He is part of the intellectual tradition of literary PARODY and grotesque REALISM of GOGOL and others. As part of the Young Prose movement centred on VALENTIN KATAEV's journal *Youth* (1955), he became a spokesman for the post-World War II generation. His early novels, characterized by racy dialogue, Western-style fashions and colloquialisms, reflect the problems of youth and maturation in Soviet society. His later writing is more experimental and fantastic, reverting to the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s. *Always on Sale*, a realistic social SATIRE and highly theatricalist pastiche of popular culture, was a great success in OLEG EFREMOV's 1965 production at Moscow's Sovremennik Theatre. *Your Murderer* (published in English, 1977), subtitled 'An Anti-alcoholic Comedy in Eight Scenes with a Prologue and an Epilogue', is a grotesque, fanciful parable of an artist who is destroyed by his own creation. A third play, *The Heron* (unpublished), is a CHEKHOVIAN parody set at a health resort. In 1980 Aksyonov emigrated to the United States.

**Aktie Tomaat** (Action tomato, or the tomato campaign) Dutch theatre movement. Late in 1969, tomatoes were thrown at actors during a performance by the Nederlandse Comedie at the municipal theatre of Amsterdam: students from the Toneelschool (Amsterdam School of Drama) were launching a protest against the limited theatrical repertory, lacking in social relevance, and against the authoritarian status of the director, who subordinated the actors to his views. This protest linked up with the call for democracy by students and workers in Europe and America. As a result, new Dutch companies, such as WERKTEATER, organized on democratic principles, emerged: the director became a creative assistant or member of a collective; actors could start to explore their creative potential; productions were improvised and dramatic texts updated. The new theatre groups were subsidized by the Ministry of Culture.

**Alarcón, Juan Ruiz de** see RUIZ DE ALARCÓN (Y MENDOZA), JUAN

**Alawada Theatre** see ADEJUMO, MOSES OLAIYA

**Albee, Edward** 1928– American playwright. Albee made a spectacular debut with four one-act absurdist plays (see THEATRE OF THE ABSURD), beginning with *The Zoo Story* (1958), and capped his reputation with the BROADWAY productions of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962) and *Tiny Alice* (1964). He was greeted as the leader of a new theatrical movement and his name was linked with those of TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, ARTHUR MILLER and

WILLIAM INGE. Refusing to capitalize on the lacerating wit and character conflict that made *Virginia Woolf* so powerful, Albee has pursued an increasingly rarefied style. Despite critical and commercial defeats, he has continued to write prolifically in three forms: adaptations (such as Carson McCullers's *Ballad of the Sad Café*, 1963, and Nabokov's *Lolita*, 1980); short chamber plays (*Box and Quotations from Mao-Tse Tung*, 1968, *Listening*, 1975, and *Counting the Ways*, 1976); and full-length plays in which ordered lives are invaded and transformed. In *A Delicate Balance* (awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1966), Harry and Edna carry a mysterious psychic plague into their best friends' living room. The title character in *The Lady from Dubuque* (1979) is an angel of death. Talking sea creatures emerge from the water to confront sedate picnickers in *Seascape* (which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1975). In recent years Albee's mainstream reputation has been low. His Broadway production *The Man Who Had Three Arms* (1983) was received poorly by the critics. *Marriage Play* (1987) premiered out of New York – as did *Three Tall Women* (1991) which, nevertheless, eventually won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (1994).

**Albee, Edward F.** see VAUDEVILLE

**Albertazzi, Giorgio** 1925– Italian actor and director. He began his career as an actor in the early 1940s, and became internationally known in films like *L'année dernière à Marienbad* and *Morte di un bandito*. He is a strong lead player with an impressive stage presence. Among his major roles in classic drama have been SHAKESPEARE's *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Richard III* (the last in his own version, most recently in 1988), PIRANDELLO's *Enrico IV* and IBSEN's *Peer Gynt* (1988). He has directed in theatre and film and, since 1985, with *Lucia di Lammermoor*, for the musical stage. He has supported the work of modern foreign dramatists on the Italian stage, most recently directing the Italian premiere of ARNOLD WESKER's *Letter to a Daughter* (1993).

**Albery, James** 1838–89 English playwright. His one outstanding success, *Two Roses* (1870), established HENRY IRVING as a star. CHARLES WYNNDHAM got Albery to adapt the saucy marital farce *Les Domains Roses* into *The Pink Dominoes* (1877). *Where's the Cat?* (1880) was a disappointment for the critics, who ruined Albery's talent by expecting too much of it.

**Aldredge, Theoni** 1932– American COSTUME designer. Born in Greece, Aldredge studied and then worked at the GOODMAN THEATRE in Chicago before moving to New York in 1958. From 1962 onwards she was a principal designer for the NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL. From the mid-1970s she has been part of the collaborative team – MICHAEL BENNETT, ROBIN WAGNER and THARON MUSSER – that produced *Chorus Line* and *Dreamgirls*, among others. Aldredge has designed landmark productions such as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Hair*. She also designs for ballet, opera, television and film, including *Network* and *The Great Gatsby*. Costumes for the elegant but short-lived musical *Nick and Nora* (1991) were designed by her. Aldredge is a collaborative artist; her designs are integrated with and supportive of the direction and overall visual statement of a production.

**Aldridge, Ira** 1807–67 African-American actor. Starting in New York, Aldridge moved to England at the age of 17 and became a touring provincial actor in Britain and Ireland for over 25 years. In 1833 he replaced the mortally ill EDMUND KEAN as Othello at COVENT GARDEN Theatre, and in 1852 began a series of highly successful

**ALEKSEEV, K.S.**

appearances in Europe and Russia. Equally brilliant in TRAGEDY and COMEDY, he often performed Othello and Mungo (in BICKERSTAFFE's comic operetta *The Padlock*) on the same bill. He introduced psychological realism into acting in the 1850s, well before his European counterparts.

**Alekseev, K.S.** see STANISLAVSKY, KONSTANTIN

**Aleotti, Giovanni Battista** 1546–1636 Italian architect, engineer and stage designer. He spent most of his working life in the service of the court of the Estensi at Ferrara, where he built the Teatro degli Intrepidi in 1605. His finest surviving work is the Teatro Farnese in Parma (1618), one of the largest baroque theatres, with a seating capacity of 4,500. Aleotti is thought to have introduced sliding flat wings by 1618, replacing traditional Serlian (see SERLIO) fixed angle wings and permitting frequent and rapid shifts of scene. (See also TORELLI.)

**Alexander, George** [George Samson] 1858–1918 Anglo-Scottish actor and theatre manager. He was with IRVING at the London LYCEUM from 1881 to 1889, most notably as Valentine in *Faust* (1885). He bought the lease on the ST JAMES's, where his declared policy was to encourage and support the writing of new plays by British authors. The first English producer of OSCAR WILDE – *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) – and the creator of Jack Worthing in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), he enjoyed his greatest (and boldest) success with PINERO's *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893), which made a star of MRS PATRICK CAMPBELL. Later Pinero premieres included *The Princess and the Butterfly* (1897), *His House in Order* (1906), *The Thunderbolt* (1908) and *Mid-Channel* (1909). The 1902 production of STEPHEN PHILLIPS's *Paolo and Francesca* earned for Alexander an undeserved reputation as an upholder of literary standards. He was, in fact, a shrewd businessman and efficient theatre manager, who took risks only occasionally. He was knighted in 1911.

**Alexander [née Quigley], Jane** 1939– American actress. She came to stardom as the white mistress of the black boxing champion in *The Great White Hope* (1968). Dedicated to regional theatre, to which she returns frequently, she was critically acclaimed as Lavinia in O'NEILL's *Mourning Becomes Electra* at the AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE (Festival) THEATRE in 1971. Other New York theatre appearances include *Six Rms Riv Vu* (1972), *First Monday in October* (1978), WILLIAM GIBSON's *Monday After the Miracle* (1982), *Shadowlands* (1990) and *The Visit* (1992). In 1993 she was selected to head the controversial National Endowment for the Arts.

**Alfieri, Vittorio** 1749–1803 Italian playwright and poet. He wrote in both French and Italian, his first TRAGEDY *Cleopatra* appearing in 1775. Over the next decade he produced the bulk of his dramatic work, including 19 tragedies, non-dramatic verse and many political writings. At their best his plays reveal a distinctively personal blend of the classical and romantic, a taste for Aristotelian rules combined with a highly individual insistence on the exercise of heroic will. But although 19th-century actors like SALVINI performed some of Alfieri's great poetic dramas abroad, and several have survived on the modern Italian stage, none has entered the European repertoire. Of his 21 tragedies perhaps the best are *Oreste* (1778), *Virginia* (1778), *Saul* (1782) and *Mirra* (1786); none of his six comedies now attracts interest.

**Allen, Gracie** see BURNS, GEORGE

**Allen, Viola** 1869–1948 American actress. In 1884 the actor JOHN McCULLOUGH engaged her to play his daughter in *Virginius*, then made her his leading lady. Later she played opposite W.E. Sheridan, TOMMASO SALVINI and JOSEPH JEFFERSON III. She was leading lady in CHARLES FROHMAN's Empire Stock Company. An intelligent and appealing actress, she was highly regarded for such portrayals as Viola and the double roles of Hermione and Perdita. She retired in 1918.

**Alleyn, Edward** 1566–1626 English actor. He is known to have been with the ADMIRAL'S MEN at the ROSE by 1592, where he played MARLOWE's towering heroes. His career, unlike that of his fellow leading actor RICHARD BURBAGE, was interrupted when he retired from the stage in 1597, and with his father-in-law PHILIP HENSLOWE ran the Bear Garden and built the FORTUNE as a new home for the Admiral's Men. When the Fortune opened in 1600, Alleyn returned to the stage. His highly rhetorical style may by then have seemed old-fashioned, but he did not finally retire until 1604. In 1613 he began the building of the College of God's Gift at Dulwich (then a few miles southeast of London).

**Alonso de Santos, José Luis** 1942– Spanish playwright, acting teacher and critic. He became associated with the independent collective theatre movement during his student years. The premiere of his first original play coincided with Franco's death in November 1975, and he is recognized as a major author of the new theatre of democratic Spain. Among important works are *La estanquera de Vallecas* (*Hostages in the Barrio*, 1981), *El álbum familiar* (*Family Album*, 1982) and *Bajarse al moro* (*Going down to Marrakesh*, 1985), the latter widely acclaimed, translated and filmed. Typically Alonso de Santos's plays are bitter-sweet comedies. Their surface humour, creative use of contemporary slang and intertextual references to filmic codes make them particularly appealing to a younger generation of theatregoers.

**Alpers, Boris (Vladimirovich)** 1894–1974 Soviet theatre critic and scholar. Following the 1917 Revolution he adopted a Bolshevik bias in his writing. A former member of MEYERHOLD's Dr Dapertutto Studio on Borodinsky Street (1914–15), Alpers helped to establish the Ligovsky Dramatic Theatre in Petrograd (1921–4), and later the Moscow Theatre of the Revolution, where he headed the literary section (1924–7) and where many of the 'social themes' originally proposed at the Ligovsky were realized. From 1921 he wrote reviews, theoretical articles and books, the most important being *The Theatre of the Social Mask* (1931), written in the late 1920s, which presented the first proper assessment of Meyerhold's work to that point.

**alta comedia** see COMEDIA

**Álvarez Lleras, Antonio** 1892–1956 Colombian playwright. Considered to be the father of the modern Colombian theatre, he wrote 15 plays. From his first effort in 1907 to his masterpiece, *El virrey Solís* (*The Viceroy Solís*, 1948), he sought to internationalize Colombian theatre with psychologically realistic plays that were didactic and often historical.

**Álvarez Quintero, Serafín** 1871–1938 and **Joaquín Álvarez Quintero** 1873–1944 Spanish playwrights. They collaborated on more than 200 plays and sketches over a period of 40 years. The brothers had an early success with *Esguima y amor* (*Fencing and Love*, 1888) in Seville. After nine years in Madrid they gained success with *El ojo derecho* (*The Apple of His Eye*), followed by a