



BOOKFILTER'S FALL PICKS FOR THEATER LOVERS

MICHAEL GILTZ | OCTOBER 3, 2018

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The savvy reader's favorite website BookFilter.com chooses the best theater books ready for the spotlight, exclusively for Broadway Direct.

Fall is when the theater season is at its happiest. Like spring training for baseball fans, this is when every show is a potential smash hit and Tony winner. We can't promise success to all the plays and musicals opening on Broadway in the months to come, but we can promise every theater buff will find a handful of books they'll love in this fall round-up. Besides, you're gonna need something to read while standing in line at the TKTS booth or for the restroom during intermission. Enjoy!

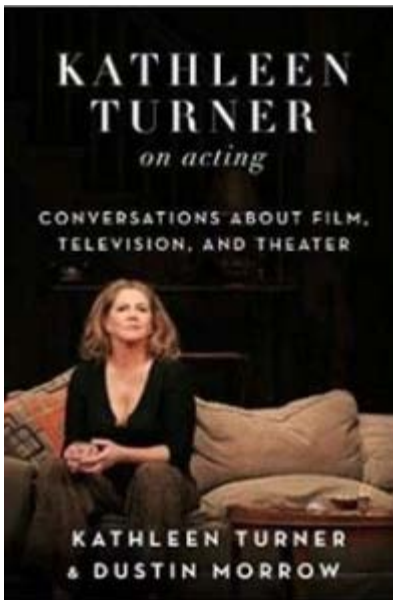
[Dear Evan Hansen: The Novel](#)



By Val Emmich with Steven Levenson, Benj Pasek, and Justin Paul
\$18.99, Poppy

This has to be the most anticipated theater book of the year. Tony winner Ben Platt's performance in the Broadway musical *Dear Evan Hansen* was so iconic and acclaimed, it was possible that without him in the cast, the mania for the show would die down. Turns out, nope. The show is stronger than ever, proving it wasn't just a great performance but a great role that other actors can tackle and bring their own insight to. So now here comes *Dear Evan Hansen: The Novel*, a young-adult adaptation of the show with writer Val Emmich building on the book, music, and lyrics of Steven Levenson and the team of Benj Pasek and Justin Paul. Has a Broadway show ever been turned into a YA novel before? I don't think so. Will it answer the questions some have about the social anxiety disorder that plagues Evan? Undoubtedly. But for this October 9 release to come alive, it will have to stand on its own. Early reviews from fans are positive, and soon even those who can't get to Broadway or wait for the national tour to come to their town will be able to dive into this story and this world. Though if they play the cast album while reading it, well, who could blame them?

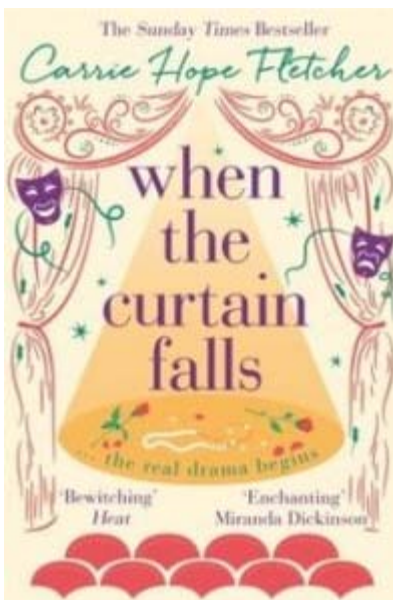
[Kathleen Turner on Acting](#)



By Kathleen Turner and Dustin Morrow
\$24.99, Skyhorse Publishing

All the fuss over Kathleen Turner's new memoir/master class in acting has focused on her bawdy sense of humor, truth telling about what it's like for a woman in the film, TV, and theater industry, and, of course, any dirt she's willing to dish about costars and the like. That's a shame, because the core of this dialogue is about her insight into acting. From classic performances on film in *Body Heat* and *War of the Roses* to Tony-winning turns in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Turner has a lot to share. Actors and fans, pay attention.

When the Curtain Falls

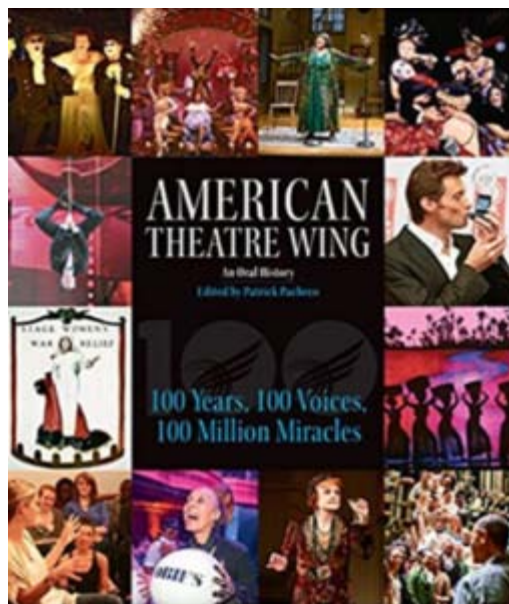


By Carrie Hope Fletcher

\$24.99, Sphere

Actress Carrie Hope Fletcher has performed in the West End since she was 7 years old (Eponine, natch). Right now she's the lead in *Heathers: The Musical*. But her second career, as [a vlogger on YouTube](#), brought Fletcher fans all over the world, and that led to a No. 1 memoir and several novels. Her latest is a romantic cross between *Phantom of the Opera* and, well, any show where two actors performing together fall in love. It begins in 1952 when star-crossed lovers acting in a debut play are thwarted by an obsessive interloper. And then it flashes to the present, when two more young lovers fall hard while performing in a revival of that same play, only to find themselves plagued by a ghost. They realize that long-ago romance must be celebrated before their own story can move ahead. It's a diverting tale filled with the details only an actor can spot and share.

[American Theatre Wing: An Oral History](#)

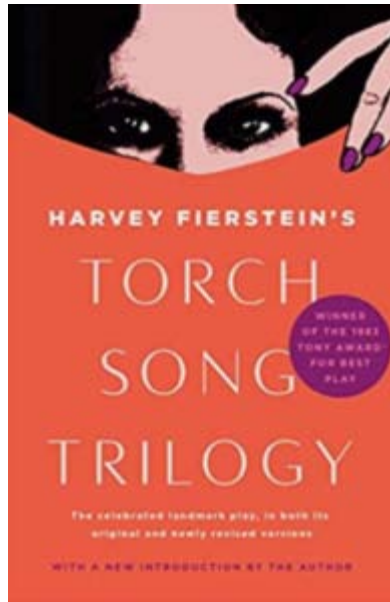


By Patrick Pacheco

\$45, Graphic Arts Books

Author Patrick Pacheco was tasked with the duty of sharing stories celebrating 100 years of the American Theatre Wing, and thus 100 years of American theater, from Broadway to Off-Broadway and regional scenes all over the country. Obviously, no single book — however thick — could do justice to it all. But with never-before-seen photos and anecdotes from a who's who that includes Angela Lansbury, Harvey Fierstein, Audra McDonald, Harold Prince, Patti LuPone, Neil Patrick Harris, and so many others, well, you can hardly go far wrong, either.

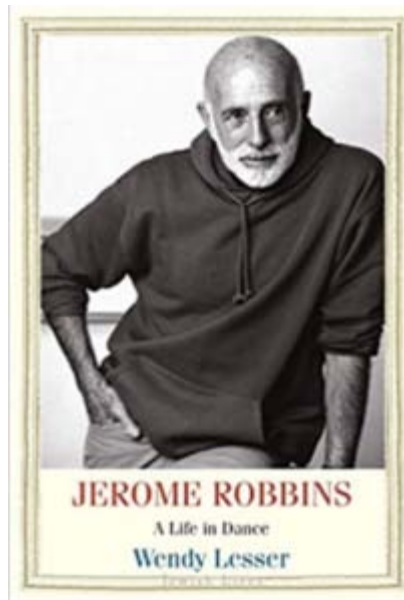
Torch Song Trilogy



By Harvey Fierstein
\$17, Ballantine Books

Just in time for its return to Broadway, Harvey Fierstein's Tony winner for Best Play gets a new edition. You'll find the complete scripts for the original three one-act plays, the newly revised version that streamlines it down, a fresh introduction from Fierstein, and photos from both the Broadway run and the 2017 Off-Broadway production starring Michael Urie and Mercedes Ruhl that is opening this month on the Great White Way. The only way it could be better was if Fierstein came over for coffee and cake to chat and answer your questions about this, *Kinky Boots*, and so much more from his remarkable career. Did you know that before puberty Fierstein was a soprano in a professional boys' choir? A soprano! Just one more fact from a wonderfully impossible life.

Jerome Robbins: A Life in Dance



By Wendy Lesser
\$25, Yale University Press

Choreographer and director Jerome Robbins led a tumultuous, fascinating life. But he will be remembered for his work. If you want gossip about how difficult he was to work with or the drama backstage on *West Side Story*, look elsewhere. This slim volume stays focused on what matters: dance. Author Wendy Lesser looks at his life and career with insight and empathy, always observing the man and the work through the art form that made his name.

The Detroit Project

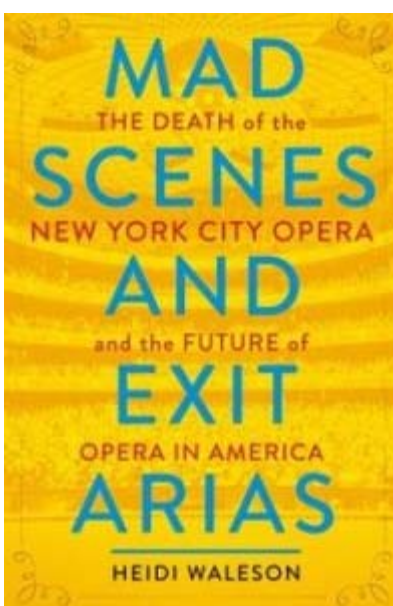


By Dominique Morisseau

\$16.95, Theatre Communications Group

Recently, a survey from *American Theatre* magazine detailed the most performed plays and playwrights of the current 2018–2019 season at regional theatres around the country. (They didn't include Shakespeare or holiday shows like *A Christmas Carol*.) Appearing on both lists? Playwright Dominique Morisseau. So what better time to dive into this collection? It includes three of Morisseau's plays: *Paradise Blue*, *Detroit '67* (both solid), and the brilliant *Skeleton Crew*. The latter play is in the top-10 of most produced plays and Morisseau herself ranks at No. 3 on the list of most produced authors. Find out why.

Mad Scenes and Exit Arias



By Heidi Waleson
\$30, Metropolitan Books

When the New York City Opera went belly-up in 2013, it was a shock — despite 70 years of near-death experiences and enough behind-the-scenes drama to fuel a hundred arias. *Wall Street Journal* opera critic Heidi Waleson tells the story and doesn't stint on the inevitable ego clashes and larger-than-life personalities. However, she also tells a deeper story about the fading presence of orchestral music and opera companies (high art, if you like) and their precarious financial straits. Anyone who misses NYCO, loves opera, or worries about the future of their local symphony should dive in.

Contemporary Monologues for a New Theater

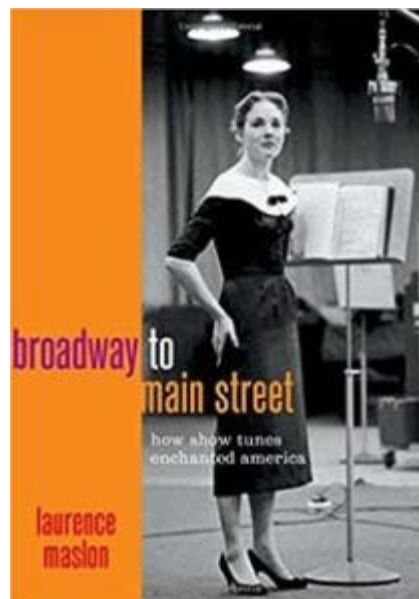


Edited by Cate Cammarata

\$16.99, Applause Theatre & Cinema Books

Every play is political. The mere fact of telling this story rather than that, of giving voice and presence to this person instead of that one, speaks volumes. Applause presents its latest collection of monologues through a spectrum of diversity and insight. Including almost 100 monologues, this compilation, edited by Cate Cammarata, includes a range of mostly new and some established voices perfect for actors looking for work that includes their own experiences and readers looking for work that opens them up to new ones.

Broadway to Main Street



By Laurence Maslon

\$34.95, Oxford University Press

In the 1950s and 1960s, Broadway cast albums were hugely popular, holding their own on the charts alongside Frank Sinatra and the Beatles. Indeed, cast albums held the No. 1 spot on the *Billboard* charts for longer than all the albums by Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles combined. (Smash hits like *The Sound of Music* and *My Fair Lady* will do that for a genre.) Laurence Maslon tells the story of the cast album in this book, subtitled *How Show Tunes Enchanted America*. He delves deep into the influence of technology — how the 78 and the LP changed the way shows were recorded and remembered — as well as the business of Broadway. Far from the usual musical anecdotes, Maslon offers a surprising and rich new angle from which to appreciate the art form and the cold, hard realities of money and profit that make it possible.

The Man Who Couldn't Miss



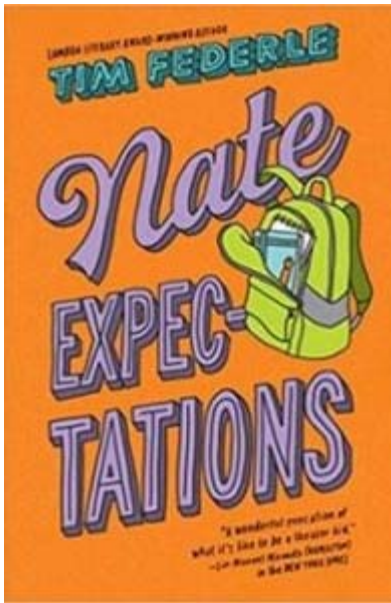
By David Handler

\$26.99, William Morrow

We all love theater, but for those who also love a good mystery, there's a special thrill in seeing those two worlds collide. They simply can't resist a mystery with a showbiz setting. And that means the acclaimed, long-running series starring amateur sleuth Stewart Hoag is already a favorite for many. A ghostwriter in Hollywood, most of Stewart's tales are set in the world of film. But this time Stewart and his beloved basset hound, Lulu, find themselves embroiled in a murder at a summer playhouse in Connecticut, where Stewart's ex-wife (Oscar winner Merilee) is

directing a gala benefit of *Private Lives*. But a dead body spoils the fun (a supporting player, no one terribly important, darling) and Stewart is called in to save the day. If you're already feeling eager to read it, this one's for you.

Nate Expectations



By Tim Federle

\$17.99, Simon & Schuster

Tim Federle's best-selling and beloved series about a middle-grade kid besotted with theater comes to an end with the third and final volume of the trilogy. Nate didn't find fame and fortune when the show *E.T.: The Musical* bombed on Broadway, so he's back in his hometown in Pennsylvania ... and his freshman year of high school. He'd rather be rehearsing his Tony speech (who wouldn't?), but the out-and-proud Nate instead decides to oversee a musical adaptation of *Great Expectations*. Sweet and open to all orientations (as long as you love Broadway), the Nate series shows everyone loves a dreamer.

The Spy of Venice

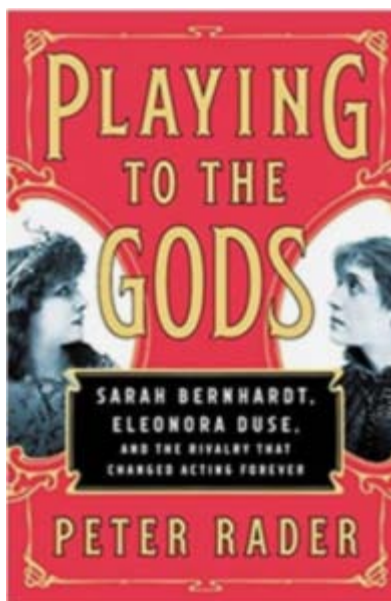


By Benet Brandreth
\$25.95, Pegasus Books

In truth, this tale of young Will Shakespeare—as-spy owes more of a debt to Alexander Dumas than to the Bard, what with the flashing swordplay, scheming popes, honest courtesans who are as beautiful as they are brilliant, and the like. Still, theater buffs will delight in the winking wordplay and count themselves clever for spotting so much of it. And anyone who enjoys a good romp will be satisfied and eager for the sequel.

[Our August Book of the Month: Read the full review here.](#)

[Playing to the Gods](#)



By Peter Rader

\$26; Simon & Schuster

This dual biography tells the stories of two of the greatest stage actresses in history: Sarah Bernhardt (the Divine One, as good at self-promotion as she was at acting) and Eleanora Duse (a self-effacing artist who pioneered modern acting). It's juicy and delightful, so anyone who loves theater, acting in general, and strong women from history in particular will enjoy *Playing to the Gods* very much.

[Our September Book Of The Month: read the full review here.](#)

Michael Giltz is the creator of the website **BookFilter**, a book lover's best friend. He has written for *Huffington Post*, *New York Post*, *New York Daily News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Advocate*, and many other publications, profiling talent, covering the theater business, and reviewing shows in New York City and London. When he's not attending the theater, he's reading about it.

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