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The Best American Short Plays 2015-2016



Synopsis

(Best American Short Plays). Now in its seventh decade, the annals of The Best American Short Plays series now boasts hundreds of groundbreaking one-acts and an alumni list the likes of which other anthologies can only dream. From luminaries like Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee to the brightest stars of today, such as Murray Schisgal, James Armstrong, Billy Aronson, Jules Tasca, Neil LaBute, and Daniel Gallant, TBASP established itself as the standard bearer for its genre by presenting materials that offer a forthright annual reading of our nation's pulse. If The Best American Short Plays 2015-2016, co-edited by William Demastes and John Patrick Bray, proves as portentous as its forebears, suffice it to say that our hearts are pounding. In this volume, DeMastes and Bray have assembled a collection of plays centered on the notion of "Starting Over." Following the 2016 election cycle, which turned centuries-old political mores and traditions on their heads, many Americans especially those in the theatre community feel as though the incoming presidential administration and congress will require our nation to start anew. The feeling that we are beginning again (for better or for worse) has crept into the consciousness of this year's crop of writers. These playwrights individually and collectively demonstrate the vitality and necessity of the theatre as a space where we can ask questions about character and identity on both personal and national scales. Although answers aren't easily forthcoming, the ensuing silences provides a vacuum of sorts an ideal but ephemeral space where any citizen, regardless of persuasion or belief, can stop, sit, and think.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"With 70 years of tradition behind it, this annual compilation of the best new one-act plays in America sells itself. The series has a track record of identifying great talent, including Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. Invariably, it offers a wide range of styles and subject matter, offering a snapshot at the trends that are engaging and inspiring talented writers all over the country. Is surrealism holding sway? Is TV driving them to linked one-acts à la The Kentucky Cycle? Is old-fashioned storytelling coming back in vogue? Or are new ways of telling tales and breaking down the barriers between different media the new norm? Edited by Demastes with an essay on Shakespeare as a starter, these are the questions that you can begin to answer by absorbing the works on tap." --Broadway Direct

WILLIAM W. DEMASTES (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) is alumni professor of English at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. He has published widely on modern theater and drama, including Comedy Matters, Spalding Gray's America, Staging Consciousness, and Theatre of Chaos. JOHN PATRICK BRAY is an assistant professor in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies at UGA in Athens, Georgia. His works have been produced in venues around the country, and published with a number of houses including Next Stage Press, Indie Theatre Now, and Original Works Publishing. Bray is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America, Inc.

A wonderful anthology with plays touching upon relevant themes. Great if you're a drama teacher wanting a short piece for students to work on and present. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Out of 20 playwrights in this book, 13 are white men, and the rest are white women. How this got published in this day and age is beyond me. I was looking for a book of short plays to use in an introductory theatre design class, but I find it unconscionable to ask students to spend their money on a book that, while purporting to be representative of the "best" plays in America in 2014-15, includes absolutely no playwrights of color.

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