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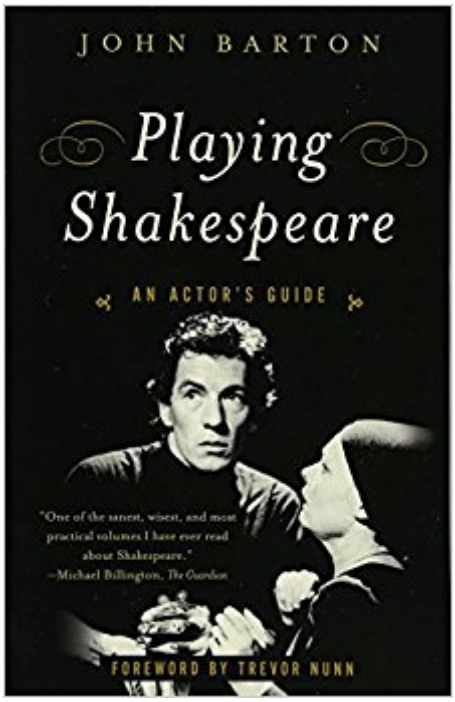
Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide (Methuen Paperback)



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Synopsis

Playing Shakespeare is the premier guide to understanding and appreciating the mastery of the worldâ ™s greatest playwright. Together with Royal Shakespeare Company actorsâ “among them Patrick Stewart, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Ben Kingsley, and David Suchetâ “John Barton demonstrates how to adapt Elizabethan theater for the modern stage. The director begins by explicating Shakespeareâ ™s verse and prose, speeches and soliloquies, and naturalistic and heightened language to discover the essence of his characters. In the second section, Barton and the actors explore nuance in Shakespearean theater, from evoking irony and ambiguity and striking the delicate balance of passion and profound intellectual thought, to finding new approaches to playing Shakespeareâ ™s most controversial creation, Shylock, from The Merchant of Venice. A practical and essential guide, Playing Shakespeare will stand for years as the authoritative favorite among actors, scholars, teachers, and students.

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Customer Reviews

With the help of Judi Dench, Ben Kingsley, Ian McKellen and other actors, associate director of London’s Royal Shakespeare Company John Barton presents Playing Shakespeare: An Actor’s Guide. With over 50 of the Bard’s plays and numerous U.K. and U.S. theater workshops under his directorial belt, the eminently qualified Barton provides a record of nine Royal Shakespeare Company workshops conducted on television in 1984 with the actors listed above. "Acting is built upon specifics," he writes, and proceeds to give specific advice to modern actors on performing

these old but not antiquated texts. This thoughtful guide will be embraced by actors and directors alike. (Aug. 28) Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Walking the boards in a play by the Bard can be one of the most rewarding and frightening experiences of an actor's life. Drawing on 35 years' experience as associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), Barton here offers advice on tackling Shakespeare as a performer. Along with assistance from fellow RSC players, including Ian McKellan, Judi Dench, Ben Kingsley, and Patrick Stewart, Barton offers tips on replicating the often tongue-twisting prose, exploring the characters, understanding the language, handling speeches and soliloquies, and more. A welcome handbook for any theater collection both public and academic. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

An excellent exploration of Shakespeare from the actor's perspective. I frequently use examples from its chapters in rehearsal to start discussions.

A superb learning tool for the beginning, intermediate, and advanced Shakespearean actor.

My daughter is studying Shakespeare at Wellesley College outside of Boston where they have a historic Shakespeare House and Society. I bought this for her for Christmas along with the DVD collection with actor interviews at the recommendation of Eric Powell Holm who directed Hamlet when my daughter was acting in Shakespeare plays with the South High School Theatre Department in Minneapolis. I was grateful to have this suggestion for a Xmas gift and she was very happy to take it back to college with her!

5 stars entails watching the video in conjunction. I was trained in Shakespeare from a literary and philosophic perspective, so this was great. I am, however, not trained in drama, so this was new for me and made the video necessary.

A great companion book if you have the Playing Shakespeare DVD series with John Barton. Plenty of juicy ideas and delightful experience shared to highlight, footnote, etc. One terrific textbook!

I first saw the video on Youtube, the one about The Merchant and I found it amazing. Then, when I read there also was the book. I immediately oredered it. It satisfies my expectations: it is a realistic

way to intepret Shakespeare in a contemporary way.

Though not an actor in the general sense of the word, as a teacher I often act a part in class to initiate attempts from my students. Hence, I am a frequent reader of the available works purporting to an understanding of Shakespeare's plays and the intents of the characters.So it is with some experience that I award this book the five stars; it is simply the best unmasking of Shakespeare's characters and intentions that I've come across; and, because the reader must imagine adjustments players make to the author's suggestions as they work through the lines, it engages the reader actively in the interpretation of scenes from chosen works.If you want to penetrate further into the work of this towering genius who somehow knew so much about the human condition, read this work. I cannot recommend it more entirely.

I was in a Production of Henry V and this book was a godsend. My friend Jesse let me borrow it and when I got to the last chapter I bought my own copy. It has been a tremendous help to read what so many of my favorite actors had to say about Shakespeare (Well they were all in the RSC at that time). If you don't like Shakespeare, 'GASP', the analysis presented can be effective for most other acting. Plus it has McKellen, Dench, Stewart, Kingsley, and Suchet all giving their experiance. A MUST BUY!!!

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