



AMERICAN THEATRE WING
Founder of the Tony Awards®

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AMERICAN THEATRE WING
PRESENTS
“THE PLAY THAT CHANGED MY LIFE:
AMERICA’S FOREMOST PLAYWRIGHTS
ON THE PLAYS THAT INFLUENCED THEM”

NEW BOOK DUE IN STORES
OCTOBER 2009

New York, NY (9/01/09) – The **American Theatre Wing** has announced that Applause Theatre & Cinema Books will publish its original book, ***The American Theatre Wing presents The Play That Changed My Life: America’s Foremost Playwrights on the Plays that Influenced Them***. The 224-page paperback, edited by **Ben Hodges** (*Theatre World*), will be released in October 2009 and features an Introduction by **Paula Vogel** and essays from nineteen of America’s most distinguished playwrights on the plays that transformed their lives. Contributors, who have a combined total of some 40 Tony Awards, Pulitzer Prizes and Obies, include **Jon Robin Baitz, Nilo Cruz, Christopher Durang, Horton Foote, Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, John Patrick Shanley** and more.

From **Edward Albee’s** 1935 visit to New York’s Hippodrome Theatre to see Jimmy Durante (and an elephant) in Rodgers and Hart’s *Jumbo*, to **Diana Son’s** twelfth-grade field trip in 1983 to see Diane Venora play *Hamlet* at The Public Theater, from **David Henry Hwang’s** seminal San Francisco encounter with *Equus* to a young **Beth Henley’s** epiphany after seeing her mother in a “Green Bean Man costume,” ***The Play That Changed My Life*** offers readers a unique peek into the theatrical influences of some of the nation’s most important dramatists on stages both professional and amateur, in New York, across the country and overseas.

The 224-page book is filled with tributes, memories, anecdotes and other insights that connect past to present and altogether make this volume an instant “must have” for anyone who adores the theatre. Other contributors include **David Auburn, Charles Fuller, A.R. Gurney, Tina Howe, David Ives, Donald Margulies, Sarah Ruhl, Regina Taylor** and **Doug Wright**.

American Theatre Wing Executive Director **Howard Sherman** commented: “Eighteen years ago, I read a film book with a similar title to ours and was disappointed because the essays weren't by filmmakers, but rather by essayists recalling their youth through films. I decided back then that if I ever had the opportunity, I would see to it that theatre got its own book with this theme -- but one that would tell us about playwrights' formative influences in their own words. I held on to that for a long time, and thanks to the mission of the **American Theatre Wing**, the enthusiasm of the playwriting community, the efforts of Ben Hodges and the support of Applause Books, my long-ago vision will finally be in the hands of theatre students and fans this fall.”

Ben Hodges is editor-in-chief of *Theatre World*, the oldest annual pictorial and statistical record of the American theatre and the recipient of a 2001 Tony Honor for Excellence in Theatre. His other publications include *The Commercial Theater Institute Guide to Producing Plays and Musicals* (with Fred Vogel), *Forbidden Acts: Pioneering Gay and Lesbian Plays of the Twentieth Century* and *Out Plays: Landmark Gay and Lesbian Plays of the Twentieth Century*.

The American Theatre Wing (Theodore S. Chapin, Chairman of the Board of Directors; Howard Sherman, Executive Director) is best known as the creator of the Antoinette Perry “Tony” Awards®, which it presents annually with The Broadway League. The Wing sponsors many activities, all dedicated to recognizing excellence and supporting education in theatre. These programs include “Downstage Center,” a weekly podcast featuring in-depth interviews with the leading artists and professionals working on stage today; “Working in the Theatre,” a weekly television program on CUNY TV which gathers panels of theater artists to discuss their crafts; “Guides to Careers in the Theatre,” a video series developed for schools and libraries; a grants program for New York City not-for-profit theatre companies, which has awarded nearly \$3 million since its inception; the Theatre Intern Group, a career development program for young professionals; SpringboardNYC, a two-week college-to-career boot camp for young performers moving to NYC; and the Jonathan Larson® Grants, given annually to honor emerging composers, lyricists and book writers. Visitors to **americantheatrewing.org** can listen to new and archive episodes of “Downstage Center,” all as free, on-demand streaming audio and podcast, and can view or download an archive of “Working in the Theatre” episodes.

For additional information about all American Theatre Wing programs, go to americantheatrewing.org. You can also find the American Theatre Wing on Facebook (www.facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing) and on Twitter (www.twitter.com/TheWing).

Applause Theatre & Cinema Books is America's foremost publisher of books on the performing arts. Applause books cover the full range of film and theatre topics, including biographies, librettos and scripts, reference books, film and theatre history, critical analysis, and more. An imprint of Hal Leonard Performing Arts Publishing Group, Applause is based in New York. For additional information, visit www.applausepub.com.

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