Collections of Plays For Young Audiences

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The field of professional theatre for young audiences has had adherents for well over a century. When the current group of professional theatre companies that focused on young audiences began to appear in the 1960's and 1970's, the cannon of literature was limited. There were a few anthologies of children's plays, such as the early work of Montrose J. Moses, and a collection of children plays from favorite stories intended primarily for production in schools. Some single play titles were published by major houses like Samuel French and Dramatic Publishing Company, but selection was limited. Children's Theatre Press (later Anchorage Press) successfully published some excellent works, and encouraged several writers by making copies of their plays available to a national audience. This company produced its first anthology in 1967. Other anthologies followed.

In the last few years, several new play collections have been published in the United States and in other countries. These collections are scripts of productions staged at professional theaters, and represent current major trends in theatre for young audiences. Many have been, or will be reviewed in The Children's Book and Play Review. Some of the new anthologies are intended to be staged by young people rather than by professional performers. Included are some plays for either classroom production or for those who may have more elaborate staging as resources and energy allow.

New Play Collections For Young Audiences


This is an excellent collection of short versions of international theatre works for a variety of uses, including productions by secondary education groups of abridged classics for contests. Each is introduced by a brief summary about the playwright, the period, and the dramatic style of the script.

Contents: The Second Shepherd's Play adapted by Aurand Harris; Ralph Roister Doister by Nicholas Udall, adapted by Aurand Harris; A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare, adapted by Aurand Harris; A Doctor in Spite of Himself by Molière, adapted by Aurand Harris; The Tricks of Scapin by Molière, adapted by Aurand Harris; She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith, adapted by Aurand Harris; Fashion by Anna Cora Mowatt, adapted by Aurand Harris; The Romancers by Edmond Rostand, adapted by Aurand Harris; Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand, adapted by Aurand Harris; The Importance of Being Ernest by Oscar Wilde, adapted by Aurand Harris; Candida by George Bernard Shaw, adapted by Aurand Harris; and A Toby Show by Aurand Harris.


This is the story of Cinderella as she is known in China, Russia, and by Native Americans. It is three plays in a framework which can be performed together or individually.

Contents: The Chinese Cinderella; The Russian Cinderella; The Native American Cinderella.

This collection represents several professional theaters for young audiences in Canada.

Contents: *The Secret Garden* by Paul Ledoux; *Mandy and the Magus* by Brian Tremblay; *Love and Work Enough* by Peggy Sample and Collective; *Beware the Quickly Who* by Eric Nicol; *The Copetown City Kite Crisis* by Rex Deverell; and *My Best Friend is Twelve Feet High* by Carol Bolt.


These are plays recently commissioned by and produced at the Young People's Theatre in Toronto, Canada.

Contents: *The Nightingale* by John Lazarus; *Naomi's Road* adapted by Paula Wing from the Joy Kogawa novel; and *Pinocchio* by Maristella Roca.


This collection of plays by award-winning playwright Bush presents a range of plays produced between 1985 and 1995.

Contents: *Ghost of the River House; Hansel and Gretel; The Little Brother and the Little Sister; The Emerald Circle; Puss in Boots; 13 Bells of Boglewood; The Crystal; The Boy Who Left Home to Find Out About the Shivers; Rockway Cafe; Rapunzel; and Voyage of the Dragonfly.*

**Theatre for Children: Made in Germany, Nine Contemporary Plays.** Wolfgang Schneider. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Verlag der Autoren, 1996.

Schneider has written a brief, nine-page history of theatre for children in Germany to introduce these excellent new plays produced recently by professional German theaters for young audiences. Several are available for the first time in English in this collection.

Contents: *Violin, Cello, Double-Bass* by Lilly Axter; *Empty Space - Chair Taken* by Horst Hawemann; *The Forest, the Forge and the Dragon* by Rudolf Herfurtner; *Jesper's Luck* by Günter Janowiak; *Wisperloud and Pretysmart* by Gerd Knappe; *Ciggie and Swiggie* by Christian Martin; *Beanpole Really Wants To* by Manuel Schöbel; *EXWYZED* by Friedrich Karl Waechter; and *Pompeenia* by Ingeborg von Zadow.


Thistle has worked for many years with this age group and both the discussion of production techniques and the plays themselves reflect this wealth of experience.

Contents: *The Lion and the Mouse; The Hare and the Tortoise; The Crow and the Pitcher; The Dog and His Reflection; The Wind and the Sun; The Fox and the Stork; The Ant and the Dove; and The City Mouse and the Country Mouse.*


These plays are intended for production by classroom groups to give them limited production experience (using narrative mime) and to expose them to various cultures. Thistle includes an extensive discussion of production techniques (43 pages) and includes detailed production notes for classroom teachers who may not have had drama experience.


**Young Actors Series**

Smith and Kraus, Inc. has published several collections intended for classroom use and other settings where young people will be the performers. Each includes comments on why
production experience is suitable for young people and production notes for each play. Reviews for those not yet published in *Children's Book and Play Review* will be in forthcoming issues. Below are the titles in the *Young Actors Series*.


Contents: *The Adventures of Anansi; Drakesbill; The Firebird, the Horse of Power & Princess Vasilisa; The Great Bear; I Dodici Mesi (The Twelve Months); The Little Red Hen; The Long, Leather Bag; Los Mariachis Mexicanos (The Bremen Town Musicians); Ma Lien & the Magic Paintbrush; and Star Story.*


Contents: *Chat Botté (Puss-in Boots); Da-Hoos-Whee’-Whee (The Seal Hunting Brothers); East of the Sun and West of the Moon; Feng Zhen-Zhu (The Wind Pearl); La Culebra (The Snake); Legend of the Seasons; Mataora and Niwareka in the Underworld; Ne Hölmöslaiset (The Silly Villagers); Tri Zlate Vlasy Deda Vseveda (The Three Golden Hairs of Grandfather Know All); and Vasilisa Prekresnaia (Vasilisa the Beautiful).*

The following titles in this series have not yet been reviewed in the *Children's Book and Play Review*:

- **New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, Vol. 1**
- **New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, Vol. 2**
- **Plays of America from American Folklore for Young Actors 7-12.**
- **Seattle Children's Theatre: Six plays for Young Actors.**
- **Short plays for Young Actors.**
- **Villeggiatura: A trilogy by Carlo Goldoni, condensed for Young Actors.**

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**Works Cited**


Notes to producers:

**Amateur production:** "These plays may be produced by schools, clubs and similar amateur groups without payment of a royalty fee."

**Professional Production:** "For any form of non-amateur presentation (professional stage, radio, or television), permission must be obtained from the publisher."

Bibliography

Selected Play Collections Published from 1968 to 1988


