

The Golden Age Of Drama On Broadway 1919-1959

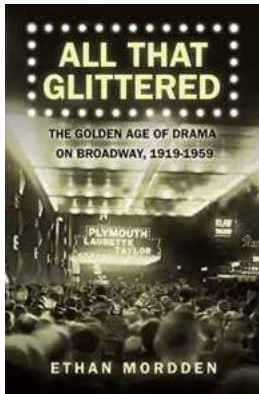


The period between 1919 and 1959 is widely regarded as the Golden Age of Drama on Broadway. It was a time when groundbreaking plays and unforgettable performances took center stage, leaving an indelible mark on the history of theater. Broadway, the heart of American theater, became a hub of creativity and innovation during this era.

The Birth of Modern American Theater

In the aftermath of World War I, American society experienced unprecedented changes. The Roaring Twenties brought a wave of optimism and a newfound sense of freedom. These shifts in society were reflected in the theatrical productions of the time. Playwrights and directors started experimenting with new

forms of expression, challenging traditional norms, and pushing the boundaries of what was considered acceptable on stage.



All That Glittered: The Golden Age of Drama on Broadway, 1919-1959 by Ethan Mordden (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 779 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 421 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



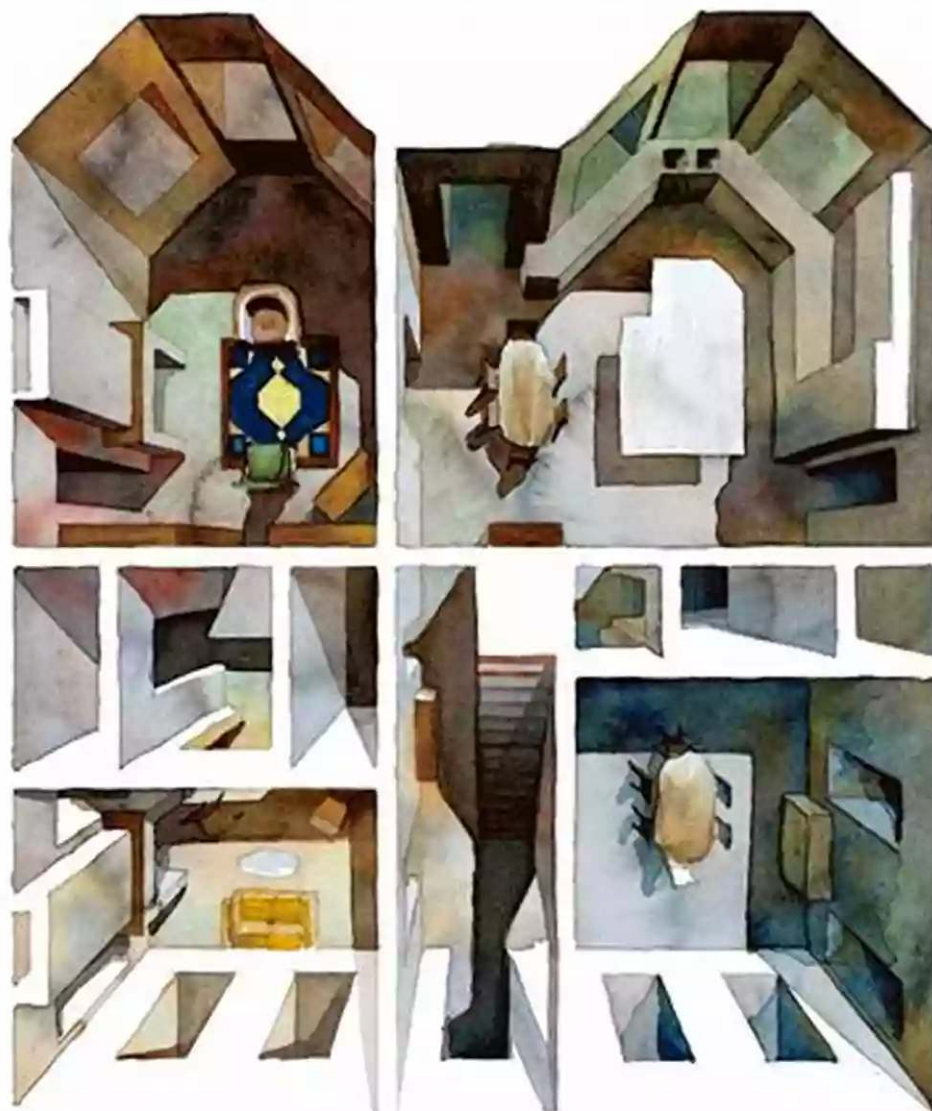
One of the defining aspects of the Golden Age of Drama on Broadway was the emergence of a group of talented playwrights known as the "Theatrical Giants." Writers like Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Lorraine Hansberry paved the way for a new era of thought-provoking and socially conscious theater.



Innovations in Stagecraft

Alongside the groundbreaking writing came significant advancements in stagecraft. Directors and designers began utilizing new technologies and techniques to create more immersive and visually stunning productions. The use of lighting, sound effects, and intricate set designs became integral parts of the storytelling process.

One of the most notable innovations during this time was the of the "living room drama." Playwrights started focusing on intimate stories set within the confines of a single room, allowing for deeper exploration of complex human relationships. This shift in narrative structure allowed audiences to connect with characters on a more personal level.



The Armitage House in *GET OUT* (2017), director Jordan Peele, production designer Rusty Smith
Painted by Floor Plan Croissant

Memorable Productions and Performances

Some of the most iconic productions in Broadway history took place during the Golden Age of Drama. Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire," Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman," and Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" are just a few examples of plays that continue to be celebrated and studied today.

These productions not only featured exceptional writing but also showcased remarkable performances by legendary actors. Marlon Brando's portrayal of Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire" and Vivien Leigh's interpretation of Blanche DuBois remain benchmarks for aspiring actors worldwide.



The End of an Era

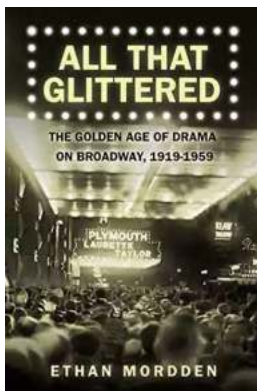
Despite the tremendous success and artistic achievements of the Golden Age of Drama, the period eventually came to an end. The rise of television in the 1950s led to a decline in theater attendance, as people found entertainment within the confines of their homes. Additionally, the cultural shifts of the 1960s brought forth

new forms of experimental and avant-garde theater, diverting attention from the traditional plays that had defined Broadway for decades.

However, the legacy of the Golden Age of Drama on Broadway continues to influence and inspire generations of theater artists. Its contributions to American theater and its enduring tales of human struggles and triumphs remind us of the power of live performance and storytelling.

The Golden Age of Drama on Broadway, spanning from 1919 to 1959, was a period of immense creativity and artistic growth. Playwrights, directors, and actors pushed the boundaries of traditional theater, exploring complex themes and engaging audiences on a deep, emotional level. The legacy of this era continues to shape the world of theater today, reminding us of the power of the stage and the importance of storytelling in our lives.

Article by Broadway Enthusiast | Published on November 15, 2022



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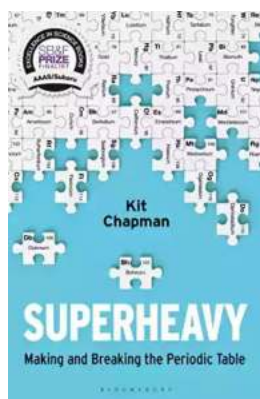
From the late 1920s to late 1950s, the Broadway theatre was America's cultural epicenter. Television didn't exist and movies were novelties. Entertainment took

the form of literature, music, and theatre. During this golden age of Broadway, actors and actresses became legends and starred in now classic plays. Laurence Olivier, Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontaine were names to remember, etching plays into memory as they brought the words of Tennessee Williams or Eugene O'Neill to life. Joseph Cotton romanced Katherine Hepburn in Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story* while Laurette Taylor became *The Glass Menagerie's* Amanda Wingfield. Frederic March, Florence Eldridge, Jason Robards Jr. and Bradford Dillman showed us life among the ruins in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. In *All That Glittered*, Ethan Mordden, long one of Broadway's best chroniclers, recreates the fascinating lost world of its golden age.



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