

Theaters and Theater Companies of New York 2008

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Reviewed by Tammy Petty Conrad for Reader Views (5/08)

Reviewing the table of contents and the many theaters listed makes me want to book tickets right now! I love going to the theater, but haven't had the chance to make it to Broadway. I have been a strong supporter of live productions in the West End in London and of various local companies throughout the United Kingdom and here in Texas. My dream vacation is to make it to New York City and see a different play every night. This book provides a quick introduction to the theaters in the area. Or at least the ones which the authors deem worthy!

For each of the over sixty theaters, there is a brief summary of the history of the building and the type of work produced there. All types of contact information are listed for those wishing to view a play as well as for those in the business, including the number of seats. The authors don't mind sharing their opinions of the work produced in the theaters or those producing it. There are sections called "Did You Know?" sprinkled throughout, providing bits of information about theater in general which seemed to be directed to the average reader and kept me turning the pages. For instance, I learned that the only tickets I can afford are Off-Off Broadway union productions at \$18.00 per ticket. But is a thespian really a theater lover and not an actor? There are also black and white photos of various locations, but they are not very interesting and seem only to serve the purpose of taking up space.

I had hoped for more information about the history of the buildings and maybe titillating stories about the actors who had walked the boards. Or even a few ghost tales. I would have enjoyed notes about which seats were best and which ones to avoid. There was no index and the table of contents was not alphabetized making it time-consuming to locate a particular theater. I did appreciate the explanation of the various types of theaters, such as Broadway or Off-Broadway, especially in how it relates to prices.

An annoying feature includes the advertisements for other publications by the publisher. I would rather they were at the end, if included at all. The authors' opinions are very strong about some locations, making me sometimes wonder if they have a vendetta against some of the theater owners.

As I finished reading "Theaters and Theater Companies of New York 2008," I was still curious about who this book was written for. There wasn't enough background for tourists to pick it up in addition to other guide books. Would anyone consider the 105 pages, of which 63 are pictures or advertisements, worth the price charged? Maybe this is a start for someone looking for a location to produce their new play, but I would imagine they would quickly move on to the internet where information is updated more frequently. I think I'd rather save my money for a theater ticket!