



FINDING THEATRE REVIEWS

Webster University - Emerson Library Fall 2009

Created by Sue Gold, Instruction & Liaison Librarian sgold@webster.edu

LIBRARY DATABASES

Click on [Articles/ Databases](#) on the library's home page: <http://library.webster.edu>

The following databases offer theatre reviews that appeared in magazines, journals, or newspapers.

International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance (Ebscohost)

This database covers theatre & performing arts journals and magazines. Search the name of the play/production possibly combining it with the playwright's or actor's last name. Select "Entertainment reviews" from the "Document Type" menu in the limit section of the search form.

Lexis Nexis Academic

This database has full-text for a large number of national, regional and international newspapers. Years of coverage vary with publication. *The New York Times* is covered from June 1980 to present and *St Louis Post Dispatch*, from 1989 to present. Additional publications include *The Times* (London), *Los Angeles Times* (past 6 months), *Variety* & *New Yorker*. Search tip: Combine name of play with the phrase theater reviews. E.g. "All My Sons" AND theater reviews (Be sure to set appropriate date range to search.)

New York Times (Historical)

This ProQuest database offers full-page-images and article images from the *New York Times* from its first issue in 1851 to three years before the current date. (For current New York Times articles, see the [Lexis-Nexis Academic](#) database). The collection includes digital reproductions of every page from every issue, cover to cover, in downloadable PDF files.

Literature Criticism Online (Drama Criticism)

This is the online format for content from 5 print publications in the *Gale Literary Criticism* series offering modern and historical literary commentary on authors and their works. Select **Drama Criticism** to search your playwright or play. Entries may include production reviews.

REFERENCE BOOKS Level 2 – Emerson Library

Reference books can be helpful for finding reviews of plays produced in the past. If the play was performed before 1980, it may be a good choice to consult these print resources. To locate a review, it is helpful to first know the year of the production. This can be determined by a search of the playwright in the library database *Literature Resource Center* or by consulting theatre reference books.

American Drama Criticism: Interpretations, 1890-1977

REF PS 332 .P3 1979

Index of criticism and interpretation of American plays published between 1890 and 1977.

Salem, James M. [A Guide to Critical Reviews](#) Scarecrow Press: Metuchen, N.J., 1979.

REF PN 2266 .S16 1984

Three volumes list review sources in American and Canadian journals for American plays from 1909 to 1982, musicals from 1909 to 1989, and foreign plays from 1909 to 1977. Coverage includes Broadway, off-Broadway, and off-off-Broadway productions.

Part I: American Drama, 1909-1982

Part II: The Musical, 1909-1977

Foreign plays are covered in a separate volume:

Part III: Foreign Drama, 1909-1977 REF PN 2277.N5 1973

New York Theatre Critics Reviews REF PN 1601 .N4 1958-1994

This set of volumes contains reprinted reviews from a variety of newspapers and magazines for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and regional theatre. To locate reviews, check the index in the back of each volume. Coverage of 1958 to 1994. This source changed its name to **National Theatre Critics Reviews [REF PN 1601 .N4 1995-1996]** offering national coverage of plays produced from 1995 to 1996. Unfortunately, this publication ceased with the 1996 edition.

New York Times Theater Reviews REF PN 1707 .N4

This set compiles the theater reviews that appeared in the New York Times. It also has a section with articles about award winning shows. Coverage: 1920-present. (Reviews are also available in the database **New York Times Online**.)

Slide, Anthony. **Selected Theatre Criticism** Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985-1986.
REF PN 2277 .N5 S44 1985

Volume 1: 1900-1919 Volume 2: 1920-1930 Volume 3: 1951-1950

Collects reviews, reprinted in their entirety on selected New York stage productions (dramas, comedies, musical, and revues). Selections are based the production's contemporary and historical importance. Reviews relate to original productions only with particularly notable revivals included.

WEB SITES FOR THEATRE REVIEWS

A number of sites that provide reviews for currently running productions are listed on the library's Theatre page: <http://library.webster.edu/netresearch/theatre.html#newsreviews>

Aisle Say: The Internet Magazine of Stage Reviews and Opinion

<http://www.aislesay.com/>

Gives the text of theater reviews, as well as some book and recording reviews.

Backstage Online <http://www.backstage.com/>

Web version of the popular weekly for theater people with news, reviews, and job opportunities.

Curtain Up <http://www.curtainup.com/>

A theater magazine offering reviews, features, and annotated listings.

Playbill on-line <http://www.playbill.com/>

Commercial site with theatre listings for On & Off-Broadway, regional, touring, London, & summer stock. Useful for locating and acquiring tickets for productions worldwide.

New York Times Theater Reviews <http://www.nytimes.com/library/theater/>

Links to reviews from the New York Times for current Broadway and Off Broadway theater productions.

Variety.Com <http://www.variety.com/>

Online version of the trade publication covering the entertainment world. For reviews of theatre productions (Broadway, off-Broadway, and regional), follow the "Legit" link under Reviews. Subscribers have access to additional reviews.

PRINT PERIODICAL INDEXES
Level 2 Emerson Library

Print indexes are helpful for locating reviews of productions before 1980 that appeared in periodicals. Indexing for this time period (pre-1980) is not well covered in electronic databases.

Note: Reviews may be located under subject headings such as “Performance Reviews” or “Theater Reviews”. Some indexes may gather reviews under the name of the playwright. After using these indexes, check the library catalog to see if the library has the periodical title and volume that you need.

Humanities Index (INDEXES AI 3 .S61 H8 1974-)

Indexes journals in the humanities from 1974 to present.

Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (INDEXES AI 3 .R48)

Indexes popular magazines from 1901 to the present.