

# Directing Shakespeare in America: Historical Perspectives from the Arden Shakespeare

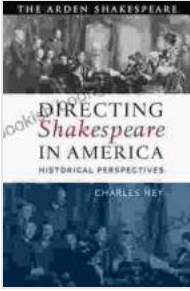


William Shakespeare's plays have been performed in America for over 300 years, and during that time, American directors have developed their own unique approaches to staging the Bard's work. These approaches have been influenced by a variety of factors, including the American theatrical tradition, the American social and political landscape, and the changing tastes of American audiences.

## Directing Shakespeare in America: Historical Perspectives (Arden Shakespeare) by Charles Ney

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 2203 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 259 pages



In this article, we will explore the history of Shakespearean directing in America, from the early days of the republic to the present day. We will examine the work of some of the most influential American Shakespearean directors, and we will consider the ways in which their work has shaped our understanding of Shakespeare's plays.

## **The Early Years**

The first Shakespearean productions in America were staged in the late 18th century, shortly after the American Revolution. These productions were often performed by touring companies from England, and they were typically staged in a traditional manner, with little attention paid to the American context.

However, as the American theater began to develop its own identity, American directors began to experiment with new ways of staging Shakespeare's plays. One of the most influential early American Shakespearean directors was Edwin Forrest, who was known for his fiery performances and his use of elaborate stage effects. Forrest's productions were popular with American audiences, and they helped to establish Shakespeare as a major figure in the American theater.

## **The 19th Century**

The 19th century was a time of great growth and change for the American theater, and Shakespearean productions were no exception. American directors began to experiment with new approaches to staging the Bard's work, and they began to develop their own unique American style of Shakespearean performance.

One of the most important figures in the development of American Shakespearean directing was Augustin Daly, who managed the Daly's Theatre in New York City from 1869 to 1899. Daly was known for his lavish productions, which featured elaborate sets and costumes. He also paid great attention to the text of the plays, and he often made significant changes to the scripts in order to make them more accessible to American audiences.

Another important figure in the development of American Shakespearean directing was Edwin Booth, who was considered one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of his day. Booth's performances were known for their intelligence and their emotional depth, and he helped to popularize Shakespeare with American audiences.

## **The 20th Century**

The 20th century saw the emergence of a new generation of American Shakespearean directors, who continued to experiment with new ways of staging the Bard's work. One of the most influential directors of this period was Margaret Webster, who was known for her innovative productions of Shakespeare's plays. Webster was the first woman to direct a Shakespeare play on Broadway, and she was also the first woman to direct a Shakespeare play at the Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Festival.

Another important figure in the development of American Shakespearean directing was Joseph Papp, who founded the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1954. Papp's productions were known for their accessibility and their focus on the text of the plays. He also helped to popularize Shakespeare with a new generation of American audiences.

## **The 21st Century**

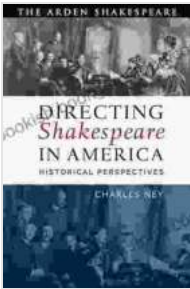
In the 21st century, American Shakespearean directors continue to experiment with new ways of staging the Bard's work. Some directors have turned to new technologies to create immersive and interactive productions, while others have focused on exploring the social and political relevance of Shakespeare's plays.

One of the most important figures in the development of American Shakespearean directing in the 21st century is Bartlett Sher, who has directed numerous Shakespeare productions on and off Broadway. Sher's productions are known for their intelligence and their theatrical flair, and he has helped to popularize Shakespeare with a new generation of American audiences.

Another important figure in the development of American Shakespearean directing in the 21st century is Mary Zimmerman, who has directed numerous Shakespeare productions at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Zimmerman's productions are known for their theatricality and their focus on the human condition, and she has helped to popularize Shakespeare with a new generation of American audiences.

The history of Shakespearean directing in America is a long and fascinating one. American directors have played a major role in shaping our

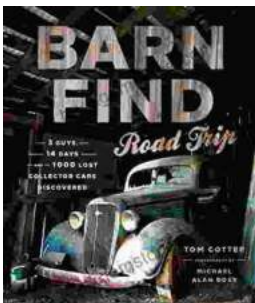
understanding of Shakespeare's plays, and they have helped to popularize the Bard with American audiences. As we look to the future, it is clear that American directors will continue to experiment with new ways of staging Shakespeare's work, and they will continue to play a vital role in the development of the American theater.



## Directing Shakespeare in America: Historical Perspectives (Arden Shakespeare) by Charles Ney

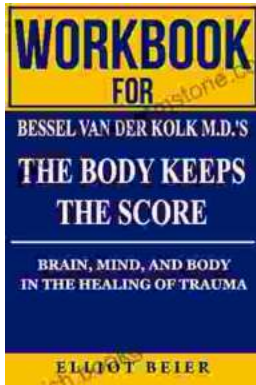
★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2203 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 259 pages



## Barn Find Road Trip: Unearthing Hidden Automotive Treasures

In the realm of automotive enthusiasts, there exists an almost mythical allure to the concept of barn finds - classic or unique cars that have been left...



## Workbook for Bessel van der Kolk's "The Body Keeps the Score": A Comprehensive Guide to Healing Trauma through Mind-Body Integration

Trauma is a pervasive issue that affects millions of people worldwide. Bessel van der Kolk's groundbreaking book, "The Body Keeps the Score," has revolutionized our...