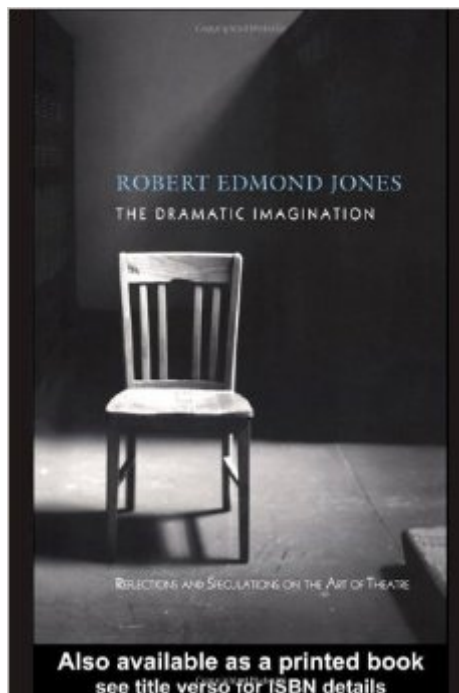


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The Dramatic Imagination: Reflections And Speculations On The Art Of The Theatre, Reissue (Theatre Arts Book)



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

my set design professor described this as the book to read when one is disillusioned with theater and need to restore faith, and I have to agree. It reminds us of the total art of theater, where poetry is expressed verbally, visually, and through the presence of actors in a setting. It describes the curious not-reality that theater should create. It was written in 1941, so some of the references ring a little false and the language can wax florid, but the essence of what theater should be is described here.

Simply put, a must have for the library of anyone interested in theatrical design. Robert Edmund Jones was the father of the New American Stagecraft and has, as such, influenced all scenic and lighting designers who followed - even if they are not aware of it! As someone now entering his 20th year as a college prof, and around his 30th as a professional designer, I am constantly reinvigorated and enthused by the words of Jones. He reminds us of the importance of the arts in our society and why we do what we do. A rough paraphrase from the book - "Do we carry visions of poetry with us as we shout directions to electricians on ladders? Yes."

Bought this for an Intro to Design class, it is a good read. I wouldn't have bought it if not for school though. There are some fantastic quotes in this book that I have carried in my memory bank. I recommend this only for those with interests in theatre, but in particular those with a focus on design.

This book was recommended by a close friend who is a professional theater actor. I'm not a theater actor, nor do I study it, I am a theater enthusiast. I would always prefer a play over a movie. Thus, consider this a layman's review. Jones had enlightened me over an aspect of theater, that I admit, I normally overlooked: the background and stage. Typically, I'm focused on the actors' performance and story unfolding, and pay very little mind to the setting. I mean I would reference it for context of the dialogue, but it carries more of an importance than I originally thought. He also discusses the importance of costuming. This I definitely paid attention in my focus of the actors. The stage setting, the background, the lighting--he discusses their conception and construction quite...poetically. I read the book twice simply because I loved the way he spoke, and to research the plays he cited and worked on. It is a brilliant text that engages one to think dramatically, to think how to be true to context, and enhance the beauty of scenes or moments in life that we typically take for granted. Most layman's may not realize it, but the stage actually transcends the mood of the scene, the actors are secondary to that effect. Anyone who desires to succeed in stage design would make an effort to read this book.

Worth about a million stars at least. Be warned; this is not an instructional text. Rather it is a great and inspiring observation of the (then current) state of the theatre, as well as descriptions of former great productions and the art/set designers, lighting designers and actors who made them that way. Super inspirational, this book will make you work harder.

This book attempts to define a philosophical approach to stage design, to describe the "why" that underscores the "how" of scenery, lighting, sound, costuming. It does not prescribe or describe practical application. The writing style is flowery and a bit to get over initially. Jones's ideas are interesting, if a few are a bit old-fashioned. However, everything old is new again, including theatre design, so the ideas that Jones presents about theatre design's purpose, meaning, and value are useful to consider. This is a book to reference when considering general design goals, or to glean beautifully worded phrases from for research or concept presentations that reveal and elevate the ART in the art of stage design.

As an educator of theatre, I believe this is a must read for all students in all disciplines, especially those in the design areas. I have read this book dozens of times and, each time, I find something to inspire me. While Jones writes of his specific era, his musings are timeless. I have owned dozens of copies, loaned them, lost them, worn them out. This is The Poetics for designers.

Similar to The Empty Space by Peter Brook, I found The Dramatic Imagination to be an arrogant and pessimistic depiction of the flaws of modern theatre, with an ultimate conclusion that, if it isn't flawless theatre, it should be abandoned or thrown out the window.

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