



Theatre of the Unimpressed: In Search of Vital Drama (Exploded Views)

By Jordan Tannahill

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Had I become disenchanted with the form I had once fallen so madly in love with as a pubescent, pimple-faced suburban homo with braces? Maybe theatre was like an all-consuming high school infatuation that now, ten years later, I saw as the closeted balding guy with a beer-gut he'd become. There were of course those rare moments of transcendence that kept me coming back. But why did they come so few and far between?

A lot of plays are dull. And one dull play, it seems, can turn us off theatre for good. Playwright and theatre director Jordan Tannahill takes in the spectrum of English-language drama – from the flashiest of Broadway spectacles to productions mounted in scrappy storefront theatres – to consider where lifeless plays come from and why they persist. Having travelled the globe talking to theatre artists, critics, passionate patrons and the theatrically disillusioned, Tannahill addresses what he considers the culture of ‘risk aversion’ paralyzing the form.

Theatre of the Unimpressed is Tannahill’s wry and revelatory personal reckoning with the discipline he’s dedicated his life to, and a roadmap for a vital twenty-first-century theatre – one that apprehends the value of ‘liveness’ in our mediated age and the necessity for artistic risk and its attendant failures. In considering dramaturgy, programming and alternative models for producing, Tannahill aims to turn theatre from an obligation to a destination.

‘[Tannahill is] the poster child of a new generation of (theatre? film? dance?) artists for whom “interdisciplinary” is not a buzzword, but a way of life.’ – J. Kelly Nestruck, *The Globe and Mail*

‘Jordan is one of the most talented and exciting playwrights in the country, and he will be a force to be reckoned with for years to come.’ – Nicolas Billon, Governor General’s Award-winning playwright (*Fault Lines*)

Jordan Tannahill is a playwright, theatre director, and filmmaker. His plays and

short films have been presented in theatres, festivals, and galleries across Canada and internationally. He received the 2014 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama for his book *Age of Minority: Three Solo Plays*. In collaboration with William Ellis, Jordan runs the alternative art-space Videofag, out of a defunct barbershop in Toronto's Kensington Market.

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