



# The Active Text: Unlocking Plays Through Physical Theatre

*Dymphna Callery*

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Many theatre practitioners think of physical theatre as one thing and text-based theatre as another. In this book, Dymphna Callery, author of *Through the Body: A practical guide to physical theatre*, shows how exercises and rehearsal techniques associated with physical and devised theatre can be applied to scripted plays. Working 'through the body' enables performers to discover what really makes a play work.

Drawing on key practitioners, including Jacques Lecoq, Joan Littlewood, Peter Brook and Simon McBurney, *The Active Text* offers a complete approach to working with a scripted play, leading the reader through a process of active exploration and experimentation that includes:

Uncovering a play's internal dynamics Using improvisation and theatre games Exploiting the languages of the body Getting inside the words that are spoken (as well as those that aren't!) Discovering image structures Understanding the impact on the audience

Throughout the book, the author draws on a core selection of well-known texts (from Sophocles and Shakespeare to Brecht, Arthur Miller, Steven Berkoff and Sarah Kane), showing how an active approach to text can challenge assumptions about even the most familiar of plays.

Packed with theatre games, improvisation exercises and rehearsal techniques, *The Active Text* is an inspirational guide for performers, directors, students and teachers. It will revitalise work in the rehearsal room, workshop or classroom – anywhere that dramatic text needs to be brought to life.

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