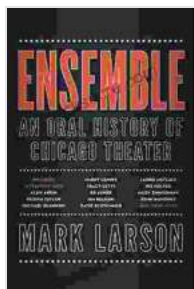


# Ensemble: An Oral History of Chicago Theater

Chicago has long been a hub of American theater, earning a reputation for its vibrant and innovative theater scene. This article, an oral history of Chicago theater, delves into the city's rich theatrical tapestry, featuring interviews with key figures who have shaped its evolution.



## Ensemble: An Oral History of Chicago Theater

by Mark Larson

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 677 pages  
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## The Early Years: From Vaudeville to Broadway



Chicago's theatrical roots can be traced back to the late 19th century, when vaudeville houses flourished throughout the city. These venues showcased a wide range of acts, from comedians and singers to acrobats and dancers.

In the early 20th century, Chicago became a major center for Broadway-bound shows. The city's theaters were home to tryouts for some of the most successful Broadway productions of the era, including "The Front Page" and "Tobacco Road."

### **The Birth of Ensemble Theater**



Ensemble theater has been a defining characteristic of Chicago theater.

In the 1960s, Chicago experienced a theatrical renaissance with the birth of ensemble theater. These companies, such as Steppenwolf and Goodman, were founded by groups of actors who shared a common artistic vision.

Ensemble theater emphasized collaboration and experimentation, breaking away from the traditional Broadway model. These companies often developed their own work, giving voice to new stories and perspectives.

### **The Impact of Steppenwolf**



One of the most influential ensemble companies in Chicago has been Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Founded in 1976, Steppenwolf has produced a wide range of acclaimed productions, including "True West," "Buried Child," and "August: Osage County."

Steppenwolf is known for its ensemble approach, which fosters a sense of community and collaboration among its members. The company has also been a major force in the development of new American plays.

### **Other Notable Ensemble Companies**



The Goodman Theatre is one of Chicago's most prestigious theater companies.

In addition to Steppenwolf, Chicago is home to numerous other notable ensemble companies, including:

- Goodman Theatre

- Lookingglass Theatre Company
- Second City
- Victory Gardens Theater
- Lifeline Theatre
- Rivendell Theatre Ensemble
- Halcyon Theatre
- Bailiwick Chicago

These companies have all contributed to the vitality and diversity of Chicago theater, showcasing a wide range of styles and perspectives.

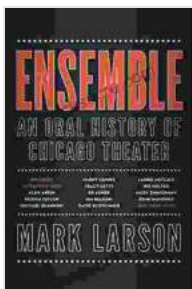
### **The Legacy of Chicago Theater**



Chicago theater has had a profound impact on the American theater landscape. The city's ensemble companies have been pioneers in developing new theatrical forms and giving voice to new perspectives.

Today, Chicago's theater scene continues to thrive, with new and exciting work being produced all the time. The city's theaters offer a wide range of productions, from Broadway blockbusters to intimate storefront productions.

Whether you're a seasoned theatergoer or a first-time visitor, Chicago has something to offer everyone. The city's vibrant theater scene is a testament to the power of storytelling and the enduring legacy of live performance.



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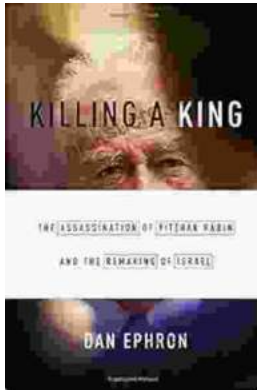
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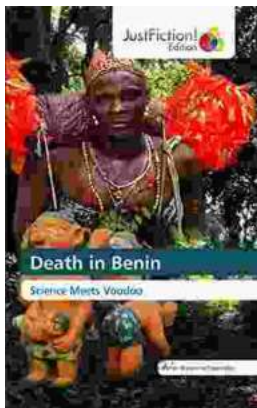






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