

Ensemble Theatre Making: A Practical Guide

Ensemble theatre is a collaborative form of theatre making that emphasizes the collective process of creation. It is based on the idea that the ensemble is the primary source of creativity in the production, and that each member of the ensemble contributes equally to the development of the work.

Ensemble theatre can be a powerful tool for building community, developing new voices, and creating innovative work.

This guide will provide you with everything you need to know to start creating your own ensemble theatre productions. We will cover the basics of ensemble theatre, including how to form an ensemble, how to develop a production, and how to stage an ensemble performance. We will also provide some tips and resources for ensemble theatre makers.

Ensemble theatre is a type of theatre that is created by a group of artists who work together collaboratively. The ensemble is the primary source of creativity in the production, and each member of the ensemble contributes equally to the development of the work.



Ensemble Theatre Making: A Practical Guide

by Rose Burnett Bonczek

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Ensemble theatre can be any size, from small groups of two or three people to large groups of 20 or more. The size of the ensemble will often determine the type of work that is created. Smaller ensembles are typically more intimate and experimental, while larger ensembles can create more complex and ambitious work.

Ensemble theatre is not a new concept. It has been around for centuries, and it has been used to create some of the most important works of theatre in history. Some of the most famous ensemble theatre companies include the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Berliner Ensemble, and the Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

There are many reasons to create ensemble theatre. Ensemble theatre can be a powerful tool for:

- **Building community.** Ensemble theatre is a great way to bring people together from all walks of life. It can help to break down barriers and create a sense of belonging.
- **Developing new voices.** Ensemble theatre provides a platform for new and emerging artists to develop their voices and share their work with the world.
- **Creating innovative work.** Ensemble theatre is a unique form of theatre that allows for experimentation and innovation. It can be used to create work that is challenging, thought-provoking, and inspiring.

The first step to creating ensemble theatre is to form an ensemble. This can be a challenging task, but it is essential to find a group of people who share your vision and are willing to commit to the process.

Here are some tips for forming an ensemble:

- **Start with a shared vision.** What kind of theatre do you want to make? What are your goals and aspirations for the ensemble? Once you have a shared vision, you can start to look for people who share your interests.
- **Look for people with complementary skills.** Ensemble theatre is a collaborative process, so it is important to find people who have different skills and experiences. This will help to ensure that the ensemble has a well-rounded skill set.
- **Be open to compromise.** Ensemble theatre is not about one person's vision. It is about finding a common ground and creating work that everyone can be proud of. Be willing to compromise and work together to create something that is truly unique.

Once you have formed an ensemble, you can start to develop a production. This process will involve brainstorming ideas, choosing a play or script, and developing a rehearsal plan.

Here are some tips for developing a production:

- **Start with a brainstorming session.** Get your ensemble together and start brainstorming ideas for a production. What kind of play or script do you want to do? What are your goals for the production? Once you have a few ideas, you can start to narrow down your choices.

- **Choose a play or script.** Once you have a few ideas, you can start to choose a play or script. Consider the size of your ensemble, the skills of your actors, and the goals of your production.
- **Develop a rehearsal plan.** Once you have chosen a play or script, you need to develop a rehearsal plan. This plan will outline the schedule of rehearsals, the goals for each rehearsal, and the assignments for each member of the ensemble.

Once you have developed a production, you need to stage an ensemble performance. This process will involve rehearsing the play or script, designing the set and costumes, and coordinating the technical aspects of the production.

Here are some tips for staging an ensemble performance:

- **Rehearse the play or script.** Rehearsals are essential for any production, but they are especially important for ensemble theatre. Rehearsals are a time for the ensemble to come together and work on the performance. It is a time to experiment, to make mistakes, and to learn from each other.
- **Design the set and costumes.** The set and costumes can play a significant role in the overall impact of a production. Work with your ensemble to design a set and costumes that will support the play or script and create the desired atmosphere.
- **Coordinate the technical aspects of the production.** The technical aspects of a production include lighting, sound, and costumes. Work with your ensemble to coordinate these aspects of the production and ensure that they are executed smoothly.

Here are some tips and resources for ensemble theatre makers:

- **Be patient.** Ensemble theatre takes time. It takes time to find the right people, to develop a production, and to stage a performance. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results immediately. Just keep working hard and the rewards will come.
- **Be open to collaboration.** Ensemble theatre is all about collaboration. Be willing to share your ideas and to work together to create something that is truly unique.
- **Don't be afraid to experiment.** Ensemble theatre is a great platform for experimentation. Try new things and see what happens. You may be surprised at what you create.
- **Network with other ensemble theatre makers.** There are many other people who are interested in making ensemble theatre. Network with these people and share ideas. You can learn a lot from each other.
- **Attend ensemble theatre workshops and conferences.** There are many different workshops and conferences that offer training in ensemble theatre. These workshops and conferences can help you to develop your skills and learn new techniques.

Ensemble theatre is a powerful and rewarding form of theatre making. It is a great way to build community, develop new voices, and create innovative work. If you are interested in making ensemble theatre, I encourage you to take the plunge. It is a challenging but rewarding journey, and I promise that you won't regret it.

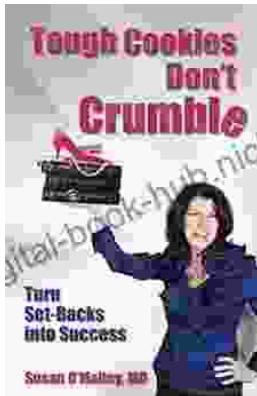


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