

## CHECK OUT THE BEST THEATER BOOKS OF THE MONTH FOR DECEMBER 2021

MICHAEL GILTZ | DECEMBER 14, 2021

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### Every month, Broadway Direct spotlights the best theater book of the month, just for you.

It's not too late! If you need a last-minute gift for your theater-loving friends (or just something to dive into when the holidays become too much), here are three books worth checking out.

And make sure you dive into our [Holiday Book Guide for Theater Lovers](#) with another 22 great titles to choose from.

#### [William Shakespeare's The Avengers: The Complete Works](#)

By Ian Doescher

\$34.99, Quirk Books

For that kid who is really into theater *and* Marvel, we've got the perfect title. Author Ian Doescher has made a cottage industry turning out faux Shakespearean adaptations of *Star Wars* and Marvel titles. Is it a gimmick? Heck yeah. Might it turn a fan of *Guardians of the Galaxy* into a fan of the Bard? Maybe! Lord knows that if they read the Thor comics they're already used to the elevated language. Doescher doesn't just toss in a few *thees* and *thous* — he delivers complete plays that include stage directions and the like. It's great fun, peppered with references to actual plays from the First Folio (as opposed to *Captain America: The First Avenger*). In the high school of our dreams, a budding Wes Anderson is fully mounting this even as we speak.

#### [The Impossible Art: Adventures in Opera](#)

By Matthew Aucoin

\$28, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Looking for another crossover? Look no further than theater and opera, which is like theater but longer and filled with even more obsessive fans. (Seriously.) Opera has been on life support even longer than Broadway. But artists like Matthew Aucoin won't let it die. He's a major new talent who has turned the crisis-laden work of mounting a new opera into this engaging behind-the-scenes memoir. Perfect for anyone mounting any sort of endeavor (internet start-up! bakery!), but of course theater buffs go to the front of the line.

#### [The Merchant of Venice: Play on Shakespeare](#)

Translated by Elise Thoron

\$9.95, ACMRS Press

Finally, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (or ACMRS to the cool kids) is in the midst of a hugely ambitious project "translating" Shakespeare into a contemporary language and, often, setting. The latest batch includes the eternally popular comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ("translated" by Tony winner Jeffrey Whitty of *Avenue Q* fame), and *The Merchant of Venice*, translated by Elise Thoron, who is wholly mindful of how of-the-moment this drama addressing prejudice and injustice is. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival commissioned 39 new takes on the works of Shakespeare, and ACMRS Press is in the midst of publishing them all, a gift for all fans of the stage.

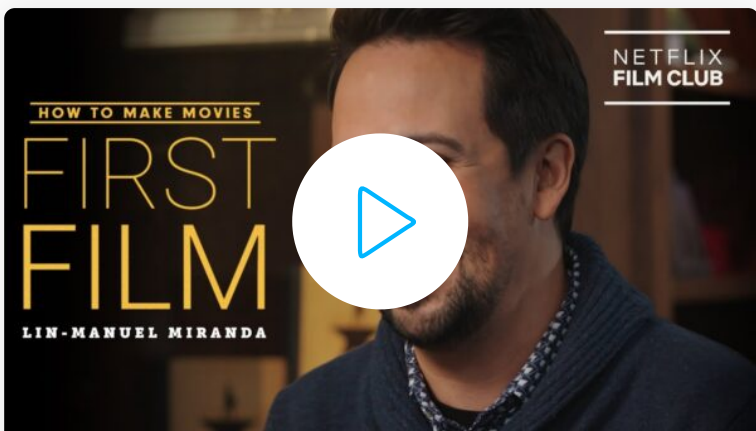
And remember our [Holiday Book Guide for Theater Lovers](#) to get even more great gift ideas.

*Michael Giltz is the cohost of the weekly entertainment podcast Showbiz Sandbox. He covers all areas of entertainment as a journalist, critic, feature writer, and analyst, contributing to numerous outlets including New York Daily News, New York Post, New York magazine, The Advocate, Out, Huffington Post, Entertainment Weekly, Los Angeles Times, Indiewire, Parade, Book and Film Globe, and many others. When Michael's not attending the theater, he's reading about it.*

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