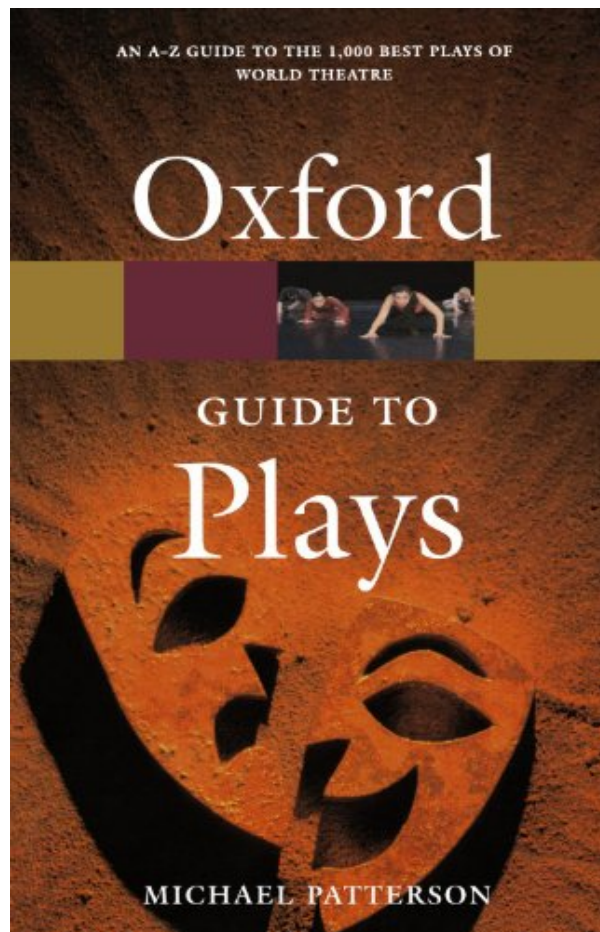
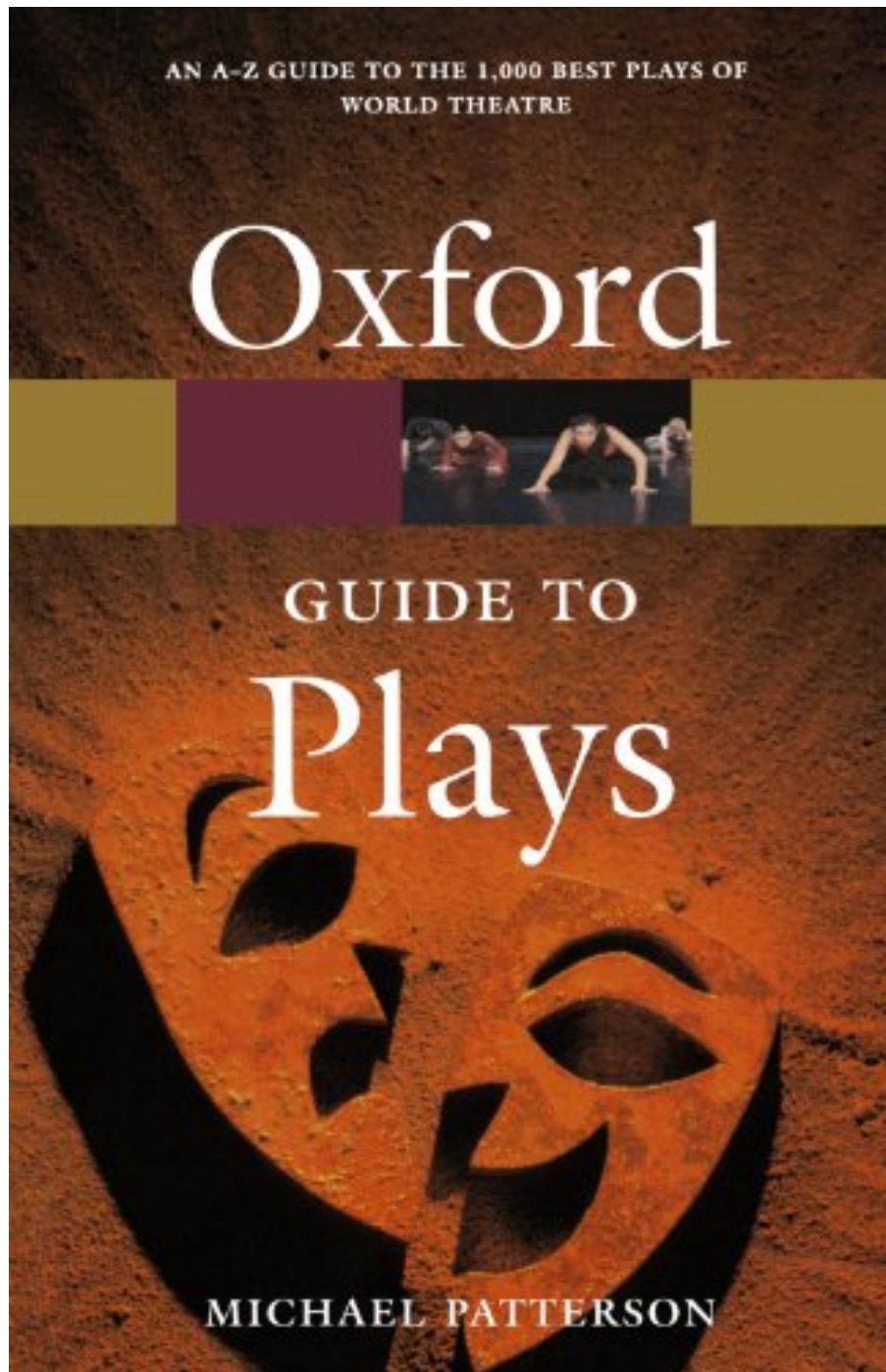


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## About the Author

Michael Patterson is Professor of Theater at De Montfort University, Leicester. He has published six books on German theater and one on political theater.

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- Sales Rank: #1671918 in Books
- Published on: 2007-06-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.10" h x 1.30" w x 7.50" l, 1.20 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 560 pages

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A brilliant as well as a useful survey

By Dr. Richard M. Price

The OUP has a great fondness for the titles 'guide' and 'handbook', but the original title of this work, 'The Oxford Dictionary of Plays', was more apt. For it is a dictionary that covers 1,000 plays in alphabetical order, within 500 pages of double columns and small print (but perfectly legible), and which provides for each one a plot synopsis and a paragraph of critical comment. The synopses give the feel of the plays and not just the bare bones of the plots, while the critical comment is original and thought-provoking. This is a book that all theatre-lovers should have on their shelves.

There is, of course, scope for querying the choice of plays, although such is the number of plays covered and the chronological and geographical breadth of the selection that few readers will complain about omissions. The author is an expert on German theatre, and gives more space to Brecht than to any other dramatist after Shakespeare, but he doesn't force German plays on us: there are only two each by Wedekind, Hauptmann and Hochhuth. The great majority of my favourite European playwrights no longer in fashion even in their own countries are represented by at least one play each, the only error here being the inclusion as the only play by D'Annunzio of his 'Francesca da Rimini', which has never been considered one of his better works. The editor takes a special interest in recent plays that push the frontiers in topic or treatment; in contrast, Jacobean plays (often equally adventurous) are thinly represented. But this book remains hugely helpful for the theatre-goer and a delight to browse in.

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Strange Mixture

By enubrius

Theater lovers and most anyone with a taste for literature will find much enjoyment scanning the plays contained in this thick and satisfying volume. Indeed, if it didn't carry the description "An A-Z Guide to THE (emphasis added) 1,000 best plays of world theatre" it would have merited 4, or even 5, stars. But it does... carry that description. And it's just plain WRONG!!! Sure, any compilation like this is going to generate controversy. It's not only to be expected, but to be welcomed. Your opinion of, say, Shakespeare's or Williams' best play may differ from mine and we can both be right. However, for a listing to be truly credible, there must be SOME criteria we each hold to. This volume appears to have none! Consider just the "As" alone. Whether or not "The Admirable Crichton" is a great play can be discussed. Whether "Abie's Irish Rose" is a great play is not even a question. It was and is gross claptrap. Until this volume, one would be hard pressed to find ANYONE defending it. And even Arthur Miller acknowledged that "After the Fall" was not successful on any number of levels. But it's in here. As I say, readers will have their own takes on whether all of these plays are worthy, but I feel sure there will be a fairly large agreement on the (all too numerous) plays in here that "jest ain't".

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